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10 PRINCIPLES FOR TRADE

Globalisation affects all of us. The current global trade and investment regime imposes high social and environmental costs on people and planet. In many cases, governments favour trade over social and environmental standards, including regulation designed to promote and protect the public interest.

To bring about a transparent, just and fair trade system, globalisation must be governed by rules. These rules must respect national and cultural values, enable sustainable development and effectively implement the aims of United Nations agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals. Environmental treaties, human rights agreements and international labour standards – with principles of equality and intergenerational responsibility at their heart – must take precedence over trade rules.

International exchange of goods and services - but also of ideas - can help make the world a more open and con-

nected place. However, trade must no longer be an end in itself, but a means to achieve social and environmental objectives which keep us within our planetary boundaries.

Greenpeace calls for a rebalancing and restructuring of trade and investment rules. Corporate responsibility, accountability and liability, including enforceable obligations for investors and corporations, must be at the core of any trade agreement. Any agreement has to support decent work and living wages, and must be compatible with the development of new and fair economic models, with binding global rules for corporations and human rights, tax reform and regulation against tax fraud and tax evasion.

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To ensure that trade works for people and the planet, and not the other way around, trade and investment policy should as a minimum adhere to the following principles:

1. Trade and investment agreements are transparently and democratically mandated, negotiated, agreed upon, and reviewed.
2. Trade and investment agreements respect the Earth's planetary boundaries. They ensure the equitable, sustainable and responsible use of natural resources. By upholding the 'polluter pays' principle, they ensure that society does not have to pay the environmental costs of trade and investment.
3. Trade and investment agreements actively contribute to sustainable development, climate change mitigation and environmental protection. They fully uphold international agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals, rather than undermine or ignore them.
4. Trade and investment agreements define the precautionary principle¹ as a legal obligation to protect public health and the environment, to be applied by all parties to the agreement.
5. Trade and investment agreements enforce and guarantee protection standards for the environment, impacted communities, consumers and workers, health, and public services. They enable and ensure the continuous improvement of these standards.
6. Trade and investment agreements distinguish between goods based on how they are produced or harvested and caught. They provide mechanisms to prevent the adverse impact of production systems on human and social rights and the environment. They also encourage the labelling and traceability of products, services and investments.
7. Trade and investment agreements reinforce fair and equal access to justice and legal protection. Investors and corporations must respect the rights of communities, workers and the environment. Business entities do not have greater rights than others and must settle investment disputes in domestic courts. Public interest laws and policies are excluded from investment protection disputes.
8. Trade and investment agreements explicitly recognise social and environmental regulations as necessary protection measures, not as barriers to trade. If trade and investment agreements encourage the harmonisation of existing and future social and environmental standards, they must ensure that this takes place in a democratic and transparent way.
9. Trade and investment agreements take the specific needs of the Global South into account. They cannot be imposed on countries and communities against their will. They allow market protection measures to strengthen domestic economies and regulations to protect food sovereignty, biodiversity and cultural differences. Rules and regulations reflect a variety of development paths across different countries, and they offer policy flexibility, especially for the least developed countries and in defence of indigenous peoples and community rights.
10. Trade and investment agreements and draft negotiating texts for such agreements are subject to independent impact assessments, evaluating effects on human rights, the environment, and social protection. Civil society organisations are consulted in a meaningful manner. The outcomes of impact assessments are taken into timely consideration to influence negotiating mandates, ongoing negotiations, or in the review of existing agreements.

These principles have a strong focus on environmental protection. They are by no means exhaustive and are not intended to compete with those developed by other civil society actors.

Rather, Greenpeace aims to complement the work of others, and work towards common standards for trade and investment agreements.

¹ The precautionary principle applies where scientific evidence is insufficient, inconclusive or uncertain and preliminary scientific evaluation indicates that there are reasonable grounds for concern that the potentially dangerous effects on the environment, human, animal or plant health may be inconsistent with high levels of protection.