

## **SUBMISSION NO 12**

Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House, Canberra.

Please accept this submission which is late because of the short time allowed for the expression of comment. Indeed, the very short submission period is a mockery of consultation process about which I strongly object.

The bilateral treaties "Agreement with Uruguay on Promotion and Protection of Investments" and an "Agreement with Egypt on Promotion and Protection of Investment" contain investor-state complaints mechanisms which allow corporations to challenge government legislation and to sue governments for damages. These provisions undermine democratic governance and expand the legal powers which corporations exercise to economically influence governments.

The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) has not been debated by the regional public or their Parliaments. NGOs in the Pacific Islands have raised the following questions:

- ◆ the impact of a free trade agreements on communal ownership of land and on the ability to regulate use of natural resources such as minerals and timber
- ◆ the impact of free trade in government procurement on the ability of governments to encourage local development through purchasing products from local firms
- ◆ the impact of liberalisation of food imports on food security and health. In Fiji and Tonga cheap food imports have undercut local products driving farmers out of business leading to higher consumption of fatty and high carbohydrate foods with consequent ill effects on health

The committee is asked to consider these matters carefully and not be rushed to ill-considered conclusions.

Yours sincerely,  
Ron Clifton.