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The Nation *March 9, 2013 1:00 am*

**Business representatives from around the Asia-Pacific region, gathered for the current 16th round of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations in Singapore, urged negotiators to show flexibility and narrow the range of differences so that the talks can be brought to conclusion as soon as possible.**

"It is to the businesses' interest that the negotiations should be concluded sooner rather than later so that companies can benefit and help their businesses to grow. However, bearing in mind that the TPP should be a high-quality agreement, we don't want to sacrifice substance for speed," said Ho Meng Kit, chief executive officer of the Singapore Business Federation.

"We welcome new parties to join the TPP but we hope that the inclusion of new participating economies will not slow down the current negotiation process," he added.

Business representatives from TPP member economies joined government negotiators and other representatives of civil society at a TPP Stakeholder Event in Singapore yesterday.

Business organisations supporting the call to bring the TPP to a substantive conclusion as soon as possible include the Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, the Emergency Committee for American Trade, the Foreign Trade Association of Peru, the US National Center for Apec, the New Zealand International Business Forum, the Singapore Business Federation, the US-Asean Business Council and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

These national business organisations, representing thousands of companies and millions of employees from their respective Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation economies, are consolidating their efforts in support of a speedy conclusion of the negotiations.

"We support the TPP because it can provide a framework that enables business to create the conditions for growth in the region," said Calman Cohen, president of the Emergency Committee for American Trade.

"The TPP is about eliminating barriers to trade and investment, reducing the costs of doing business and enhancing the operation of regional supply chains. Addressing these issues will allow business to invest, expand and support and create jobs."

Alexander Feldman, president of the US-Asean Business Council, said: "The TPP should not be seen as an exclusive club - it is in fact meant to be a living agreement.

"While 11 economies are currently involved, we hope others in Asean, sharing the vision of a high-quality, comprehensive and ambitious agreement will join over time, thus creating a pathway to an even wider agreement in the region."

Monica Whaley, president of the US National Center for Apec, noted: "The TPP will serve as an important building block for Apec's long-term vision of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

"It will establish high standards for the rules that govern trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific and will solidify economic ties between countries on both sides of the Pacific Ocean."

Jayson Myers, president and chief executive officer of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, said: "The bottom line is that businesses need a comprehensive and ambitious TPP that opens up opportunities, strengthens trade rules and improves business conditions in the region just as much as the world trading system needs a 21st-century trade agreement that effectively addresses behind the border issues.

"We urge negotiators to maintain momentum and deliver a high quality agreement as soon as possible."