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## NGOs concerned over medical issues related to TPP agreement

**MALAYSIAN** non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have reiterated their concern over medical-related issues which come under the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. Malaysia AIDS Council Policy executive, Fifa Rahman, said the Malaysian government has not engaged with the industry people or the NGOs on the issues.

"We are worried that the person assigned to negotiate on the agreement might not be somebody from the field and in the end, Malaysians will suffer," she said at a

public forum on "The impact of TPP Agreement on the Accessibility to Affordable Medicine" in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

The forum panel consisted of officials from the Malaysian AIDS Council, Breast Cancer Welfare Association Malaysia and the Third World Network, an independent non-profit international network of organisations.

She said among the possible negative impacts from TPP were expensive patent protection, patent linkage that prevented registration of generic

medicines and border measures that could lead to their unjustified seizures. Fifa said the US, via the TPP, wanted strict provisions that would reduce access to affordable medicines.

She also claimed that the US planned to extend the exclusive rights period to 25 years and this would stop Malaysians from getting more affordable medicine.

"The US is demanding strict border control measures, which will enable TPP governments to seize generic medicines when imported, exported or in

transit so long as they looked confusingly similar to trade-marked goods," she said.

Fifa said Malaysia has agreed to sign the agreement because it would bring in

more foreign direct investments and provide more jobs to the locals.

TPP is a multilateral free-trade agreement that aims to further liberalise the economies of the Asia-Pacific region.

Among the countries that have joined the negotiations are Chile, New Zealand, Singapore, Brunei, Australia, Vietnam and Peru. — *Bernama*