

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) yesterday assailed the government's landmark trade deal with China, saying the economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) would benefit the interests of larger corporations at the expense of small and medium-sized businesses.

"The [government] has only taken into account the needs of large corporations. It doesn't care about the damage to small and medium-sized businesses, which will be unable to adapt [to an ECFA]," DPP ECFA response team spokesperson Julian Kuo (許國) told a press conference yesterday.

The DPP also released a poll saying that up to 43 percent of the public believe that an ECFA would decrease personal incomes, against 26 percent who believed it would result in an increase.

The DPP poll said that 53 percent of respondents agreed that the nation's unemployment problems would become worse following the signing of the agreement, compared with 38 percent who believed otherwise.

At the same time, 86 percent said they believed the income gap would grow if an ECFA were signed.

This shows Taiwan is not ready to accept the impact of the trade deal, the DPP said, adding that it should first be subject to a public referendum before coming into force.

Kuo also said that while cross-strait negotiators have said that up to 17 of Taiwan's more fragile industries would not be included in the agreement, this could be revised as soon as six months after it is signed when the ECFA is reviewed.

"Even though they are not included in the early harvest list, China has made no promise that it won't force Taiwan to open its market to goods from these 17 industries in the future," Kuo said.

An ECFA is the first step to an eventual "one China market" and the integration of the economies either side of the Taiwan Strait, he said, adding that it could lead to common taxation and financial policies in future.

Saying that the agreement was modeled on Hong Kong's Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), Kuo added that the ECFA abandoned WTO practices as cross-strait trade disputes would be handled by a joint committee instead of the WTO.

DPP spokesperson Lin Yu-chang (林郁昌) said the publication of the early harvest list further showcased the legitimacy of the DPP's protest rally against the ECFA to be held tomorrow in Taipei.

ECFA panders to large corporations at expense of small companies, DPP says

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