

POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE ENCOUNTER OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS OF CANADA, UNITED STATES AND MEXICO^[1]

The participants in the Encounter of Social Organizations of Canada, the United States and Mexico, facing the likely prospect of renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), condemn this model which has seriously affected national development in a manner contrary to the interests of our peoples, the environment, and our democratic system. Moreover, free trade agreements have failed politically, as they have broken the promises and expectations of prosperity for rural and urban workers and created a severe social crisis.

We call for the construction of a new model of integration, cooperation and exchange among nations that guarantees that any agreement be negotiated with the democratic participation of society, that it be transparent in all of its terms and conditions and that it promote the reconstruction of national, regional and local production chains, on the basis of international cooperation and the sovereignty of each country and with full respect for human, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. In addition, it must guarantee decent work and living wages, irrespective of national origin or migratory status.

Since the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, it is the working people, communities and the environment in all three countries who have suffered, while wealthy investors, big corporations and their executives have reaped more profits and acquired more rights and power. That power has had a negative effect on our democracies.

Any trade agreement must reverse these undeniable trends and lead toward sustainable and broadly shared development in all North America.

Thus far, signs are not encouraging that a new NAFTA will contribute to the needs of North America's people and communities and the environment we all share. Officials in the United States have mentioned using the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a starting point for revision. Workers and communities widely opposed the TPP with concrete arguments and good reasons.

The organizations and movements of civil society and indigenous communities reject not only the technical details of the current NAFTA and subsequent US-led trade agreements in the Americas, but also the belligerent, militaristic, xenophobic and misogynist positions of President Trump. We demand full respect for international law and non-intervention to guarantee world peace.

We oppose any border walls in North America and defend the human and labor rights of people who migrate as well as their right not to be forced to migrate by poverty and insecurity.

For these reasons, any Treaty and negotiating process must:

- 1) Advance through a transparent, democratic and participatory process involving the public and the legislative branch of each country.
- 2) Include in the text of the agreement clear and effective, time-bound, binding and enforceable labor and environmental rules that meet and exceed established international standards.
- 3) Eliminate privileges for foreign investors such as the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS) and respect the right of people to exercise democratic control over public policies in each country.
- 4) Establish binding norms that guarantee the preeminence of human rights established in international pacts and agreements.
- 5) Create integral gender policies that guarantee equity and non-discrimination as fundamental principles, as well as the active participation of women in all spheres of life.
- 6) Guarantee participation and prior informed consent for indigenous peoples and communities with the aim of respecting the sovereignty of peoples over their resources, territories and cultures.
- 7) Include measures in law and practice that raise wages and increase access to decent work in all three countries, promoting trade union democracy, freedom of association, and transnational collective bargaining in cases where an employer operates in two or more countries.
- 8) Guarantee free public education at all levels as a social right, indispensable in the construction of democratic and socially just societies and for the liberation of our peoples. Education must be excluded from free trade deals, as it is not a commodity.
- 9) Promote a North American industrial policy that effectively protects shared production, by increasing quantitative requirements for rules of origin and strengthening monitoring to guarantee the North American origin of components in key industries.
- 10) Safeguard food sovereignty, mechanisms of production and supply management, rural livelihoods and the right to know about what is in our food and how and where it is produced.
- 11) Guarantee the delivery of quality public services - education health care, energy, water, etc., protect public procurement, and protect the rights of nations to expand public ownership of resources and services.

12) Include shared commitments to the rights of migrant workers and indigenous people and enforceable mechanisms to protect them, including the right to form trade unions.

13) Reject chapters on intellectual property and electronic commerce that violate the right to free expression, privacy and access to information and medicines. Preserve a free and open internet, prevent the criminalization of end users and do not allow copyright to become a mechanism for usury.

14) Include shared commitments to improving public infrastructure and sustainability in all three countries, promoting tax justice to achieve that objective through fair, equitable and progressive taxation of profits.

15) Include strong binding and enforceable obligations to address climate change, deforestation, contamination of air and water, emissions of greenhouse gasses, and to preserve the social property of forests, lands, biodiversity and water. Each country must be required to fulfill its nationally determined contribution to the Paris climate agreement.

North American civil society organizations will not accept a toxic NAFTA and will cooperate across borders to monitor, mobilize, educate and advocate to demand these objectives are achieved.

We will strengthen our commitment to work together to implement a tri-national action plan including demonstrations, mobilizations, campaigns, political declarations and the use of all legal, political and advocacy methods to push for a new model of trade that puts people and our planet before corporate profits.

On this basis, we call on the peoples of the three countries to construct a broad and diverse movement to develop strategies of mobilization, proposals and political action to achieve a greater influence in the course of globalization, in public policies and in the construction of sustainable development alternatives.

[1] This *Declaration* was unanimously approved in general terms by the participants in the Encounter of Social Organizations of Canada, the United States and Mexico held in Mexico City on may 26-27, 2017.