

# Indigenous Peoples of Central America Oppose Free Trade Agreement

Last month indigenous grassroots organizations making up [Via Campesina Central](#) (the Central American component of the International Peasant Movement) met in Guatemala to discuss the intention of the Central American governments and the European Union to negotiate and sign an Association Agreement. Via Campesina Central, as a result of this meeting, issued the following statement:

The conquest and colony meant for our peoples the breakdown of a political process, organizational, economic and cultural development on the basis of our own reality and vision of the world. Our land and its natural resources were seized, looted and expropriated, and made available to the interests of the international market and not to meet the needs of its own.

From its negative effects realize statistics widely known.

The event was a formal act independently determined by the interests Creoles who were in conflict with the Spanish crown. Nothing to do with freedom, equality and socio-economic development of our peoples. The theft and plunder of our lands depending on the production of coffee in the world market, was again the factor that determined the institutions, laws, infrastructure and the whole economic model exploitative and predatory, which has caused so much pain our peasant and indigenous communities.

The FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) have become an instrument of new colonialism, pillaging and looting economic, social, cultural and political development. At present us transgenic seeds, agrofuels, blatant theft of our natural resources - mining, water, forests, air, land -. Everything that is related to nature is regarded as a commodity to service national and transnational capital. The Association Agreement is nothing more than the continuation of free trade, as reflected farce and demagoguery since its inception. As the DR-CAFTA, FTAA, NAFTA, all are tools of big business to expand and deepen poverty, misery and exploitation of those who produce wealth through our work. As the effects of DR-CAFTA that two years of its operation, has had the effect of increased imports of products in our countries, higher prices for products, lower income tax by the tariff reduction, which affects less social investment . Central American agricultural products, alleging false phytosanitary reasons. It also has increased the inhumane deportation of our compatriots.

The implementation of the [NAFTA](#) and the neoliberal model is based on the criminalization and repression of peasant and indigenous movement covered in anti-terrorism laws which punish social strife, primarily the struggle for Mother Earth.

For the foregoing say NO to the negotiation and signing of the Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union for being contrary to the interests of our peoples.

To help mitigate this pending agreement, the Via Campesina Central also issued this statement of action and solidarity:

We reaffirm our commitment to fight for the unity and integration of our peoples on the basis of unity, justice, equality between men and women, equality, solidarity, democracy and full protection and rational use of our resources.

We want a trade and exchange fair, sustainable, the benefit of the people and not the corporations. We demand respect for the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples and communities and peasant food sovereignty, integral agrarian reform, respect, access to and control of our territories: the right to land, water, forests and seeds. We demand the right to decent work and a model of integrated rural development according to our identity.

We agree to develop and/or strengthen broad alliances with other social movements in Central America and other regions of the world, aim to increase mobilization against AdA and any other instrument of domination and exploitation of peoples.

Our history is of struggle and rebellion against exploitation, looting and pillaging.

The agreement was signed by the Guatemalan organizations National Coordinator of Peasant Organizations (Cnoc); National Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator (CONIC); the Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC) and the National Coordinator of Widows of Guatemala (Conavigua).

Representatives of the Coordinator Council of Peasant Organizations of Honduras (COCOCH); the National Council of Countryside Workers of El Salvador (CNTC); The National Peasant Board and the National Farmers' Union of Costa Rica (UNAG); and the Association of Rural Workers and the Farmers' National Board of Nicaragua, also attended the meeting.