

To members of the United States Congress:

We the undersigned want to communicate to you that the Central America Free Trade Agreement will hurt the ordinary citizens of our countries. We understand that in the United States promoters of this agreement say that our people will benefit; however, we believe CAFTA will benefit only the most wealthy and powerful in our countries at the expense of the majorities of our populations.

Specifically, we believe CAFTA will:

- Bankrupt millions of small farmers and deprive our countries of the ability to grow our own food;
- Destroy small businesses, making them prey to large national and transnational corporations;
- Particularly hurt women who endure poverty wages and abusive treatment in the maquila sectors;
- Accelerate the privatization of essential public services, making essential resources and services unaffordable;
- Increase emigration to the United States of Latin Americans who can't make a living in their own countries;
- Subject our natural resources and the very seeds we use to plant our food to patent by large foreign companies;
- Cripple our governments' ability to insist on health, safety, environmental and labor protections for our citizens.

This petition was signed by over 800 members of social organizations at the Fifth MesoAmerican Forum of the People, July 19-21, 2004, in San Salvador, El Salvador.

Representative organizations

From Guatemala:

Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), Committee for Peasant Unity

Coordinadora Nacional Indígena y Campesina (CONIC), National Coordinator of Indigenous and Campesino Organizations

Federación Sindical de Trabajadores de la Alimentación, Agro Industrias y Similares (FESTRAS), Federation of Union Workers of the Food, Agriculture and Similar Industries

Asociación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo de la Comunidad (CEIBA), Association for Community Promotion and Development

Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA), National Coordinator of Guatemalan Widows

Alianza por la Vida y la Paz, Alliance for Life and Peace

Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (CNOC), National Coordinator of Peasant Organizations

From Costa Rica:

Encuentro Popular, Popular Encounter

Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones Alforja, Alforja Center for Research and Publications

Asociación Servicios de Promoción Laboral (ASEPROLA), Association for Labor Services and Promotion

Comite Cívico de Occidente, Western Civic Committee

Asociación de Profesores de Segunda Enseñanza (APSE), Association of Secondary School Teachers

From Nicaragua:

Red Nacional de Defensa de los Consumidores, National Consumers' Defense Network

Centro Ecuménico Antonio Valdivieso (CAV), Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center

Vía Campesina--Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo, Peasant Way--Association of Farm Workers

Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense (MCN), Nicaraguan Community Movement

Convergencia de Movimientos de los Pueblos de América (COMPA)--Nicaragua, Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas--Nicaragua

Federación Maquila Zona Franca CST-JBE, Federation of Free Trade Zone Maquilas

Mujer y Comunidad, Women and Community

From El Salvador:

Las Dignas, Women for Dignity

Asociación de Comunidades Rurales para el Desarrollo de El Salvador (CRIPDES), Association of Rural Communities for the Development of El Salvador

Fundación para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Comunal de El Salvador (CORDES), El Salvador Foundation for Cooperation and Community Development

Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria de El Salvador (CONFRAS), Confederation of Agrarian Reform Federations

Sindicato de la Industria del Turismo, Hostelería y Similares (STITHS), Tourism, Hotel Industries and Allied Workers Trade Union.

Movimiento Popular 12 de Octubre (MP-12), Popular Resistance Movement of October 12th

From Honduras:

Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH), Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations

Bloque Popular, the Popular Block

Red de Comercialización Comunitaria Alternativa (Red COMAL), Network of Alternative Communitarian Commercialization

Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras (CUTH), Unitary Confederation of Workers of Honduras

Coordinadora Nacional de Resistencia Popular (CNRP), National Coordinator of Popular Resistance