



NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby Overview Position on INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

BACKGROUND: NETWORK'S involvement in the free trade debate began with its opposition to the passage of The North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. NETWORK advocated for people of good will to work together in the political arena to craft trade agreements and institutions that would advance the common good with special attention to the needs of the poorest. NETWORK called on Western democracies to regulate domestic economies and foster international cooperation through democratic public policies.

TODAY, NETWORK works in conjunction with the Interfaith Working Group on International Trade and Investment (IWG), an alliance of religious denominations, religious communities and organizations to bring the voice of communities of faith to public policy statements on international trade and investment. Many of the coalition have members who work in poor communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and experience the effects of US trade policies on the people with whom they serve.

PRINCIPLES:

The economic development for the world's poor and marginalized should be the prime consideration of both U.S. and international trade policy. Therefore, trade policies and agreements should:

- 1) Place people first, furthering social and economic development for our neighbors around the world while preserving and creating good jobs at home;**
- 2) Enable governments to adopt policies to protect food, sovereignty, public health and the natural environment;**
- 3) Strike a balance between creating a predictable structure for international trade and preserving the policy space necessary for governments to foster and secure economic, social and human development for their peoples.**

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS: Given this criteria, NETWORK, opposed passage of The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) and subsequent trade agreements – Oman, Peru and the pending agreement with Columbia .

RECOMMENDATION TO PRESIDENT OBAMA:

NETWORK encourages President-elect Obama to review NAFTA and the whole scope of U.S. trade policies. Further, we strongly recommend that in that process, he give full consideration to the legislative initiative developed by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Representative Michael Michaud (D-ME), "The Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act." It raises awareness about the detrimental impacts of current agreements and provides an opportunity for the new Administration to initiate a much-needed comprehensive analysis/ debate about U.S. trade policy.

Further, NETWORK and its coalition partners in IWG would welcome a meeting with the Obama trade analysts.

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