

NAFTA serves corporations: Civil Society will hold their own discussions in Mexico City May 26-28th

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While Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland undertakes private NAFTA renegotiation meetings in Mexico City, civil society will also hold their own discussions in the same city from May 26-28th.

Networks from Canada and Quebec, representing labour unions; Indigenous, farmers, and migrant groups; environmentalists; women's organizations; international solidarity groups; student movements; and human rights organizations will join their American and Mexican counterparts at the historic Antigua Escuela de Medicina in Mexico City.

"Since the implementation of NAFTA, we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in profits, and economic inequality in Canada – it's time for alternatives to the current neoliberal free trade model," said Raul Burbano, Program Director of Common Frontiers.

"The economic, social and environmental impacts of NAFTA have been devastating to people in all three countries, including an increase in poverty and inequality, the weakening of labour rights while corporate rights have been strengthened, and the erosion of environmental protections," said Nadia Ibrahim of the Trade Justice Network.

"For 30 years, NAFTA has been a backroom deal for those at the top. So far, the pattern has repeated itself, with the Canadian government enlisting the support of corporate Canada and former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Yet, NAFTA affects not only our jobs but the planet," explained Sujata Dey, Trade Campaigner from the Council of Canadians.

The renegotiation process has to be transparent and participatory and any NAFTA replacement must ensure respect for human rights, improve peoples' lives and livelihoods, and protect the environment in all three countries," said Ronald Cameron, coordinator of the Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale.

A paradigm shift from the current global economic model is imperative in order to mitigate the threats of economic and environmental disaster.

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Participating organizations from Canada and Québec:

- Canadian Labour Congress
- Council of Canadians
- Trade Justice Network
- Common Frontiers
- BC Teachers' Federation
- Unifor
- Canadian Union of Public Employees,
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- National Farmers' Union
- Public Service Alliance of Canada
- Justicia for Migrant Workers
- Office of Romeo Saganash, Member of Parliament
- United Steelworkers of Canada
- Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide aux Citoyens (ATTAC-Québec)
- Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO)
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)
- Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN)
- Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale (RQIC)