

## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **North American organizations call for an immediate suspension of the accelerated NAFTA talks until negotiating climate improves**

**OTTAWA, TORONTO, MEXICO CITY, WASHINGTON - May 7, 2018** The political and economic climate under which Canada, Mexico and the United States began the NAFTA renegotiations in 2017 has deteriorated drastically in 2018. Organizations from all three countries call on their governments to immediately suspend the NAFTA talks until a proper climate for trade negotiations can be reestablished.

“The NAFTA renegotiations have accelerated recently to a 24/7 pace under the intense pressures from the United States, including its threat to impose hefty tariffs on steel and aluminum from Canada and Mexico starting June 1st. Negotiating under such extreme conditions is always problematic and can lead to decisions being taken under duress that are not in the long term best interests of the populations in all three countries” said Rick Arnold, a long-time Canadian fair trade campaigner.

The organizations launched a joint Tri-National Statement containing observations on a quarter century of NAFTA ‘contributions’ to economic and social inequality, environmental degradation and worsening conditions for farm communities throughout North America. The most damaging provisions currently in NAFTA need to be debated, such as putting an end to the investor-state dispute settlement found in Chapter 11.

“We call on all three governments to suspend these negotiations and to reject the arguments that a NAFTA 2.0 must be completed before either the July Mexican elections or the November U.S. mid-term elections. These deadlines are nothing more than pretexts to force the trade negotiators, particularly those from Mexico and Canada, into highly problematic compromises,” said Mexican University professor Alberto Arroyo Picard of the coalition Mexico Better Without FTAs.

“These negotiations are being carried on with the public being left in the dark. We insist that any already agreed upon texts be published right away, and that these rushed and secretive talks be suspended and replaced by an authentic consultative process involving legislators and civil society. The end game should be ensuring sustainable development that addresses the inequalities that currently face most people in North America,” said Manuel Perez Rocha, Associate Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies.

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