

Top 10 Reasons to oppose 'free trade'

Prepared by Common Frontiers

10. Lack of transparency

Negotiations take place behind closed doors. The Canadian government is keeping quiet on its position in current negotiations and has failed to consult with the Canadian public.

9. Regulatory roll back

Just like under NAFTA, current negotiations encourage business to invest where labour and environmental standards are weak, thus driving down labour and environmental standards.

8. Public pay out

As the NAFTA accord has already shown, foreign companies will seek compensation from national governments for any laws (public policy) that restrict their profit-generating activities.

7. Big pharma makes a killing

The 'free trade' agreements that Canada is pushing in our hemisphere make it more difficult for governments to license the production of cheap generic copies of brand-name pharmaceuticals.

6. Privatization: no way back

As medical services become increasingly privatized, 'free trade' agreements like NAFTA make it very costly to bring these services back into the public sector.

5. Human rights squeezed out

Labour, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, including the right to an education, are absent from the current trade talks that Canada is engaged in.

4. Kiss expanded Medicare goodbye

The future provision of a comprehensive pharmacare or home care program in Canada has been put at risk by NAFTA's requirement to compensate private providers for any lost market share. Canadian negotiators are 'exporting' this dangerous precedent in their negotiations elsewhere.

3. The market reigns

Canada's 'free trade' negotiators are dealing with public services (health care, public education and water services) as big business opportunities rather than as basic human requirements.

2. Global inequity

These trade deals benefit larger industrialized economies, leaving poorer developing countries struggling to pay off unmanageable debts. The U.S. and Europe have demanded that small nations remove agricultural tariffs, while they subsidize their own farmers and dump produce on the newly unprotected markets.

1. Lack of public support for the 'free trade' in our hemisphere

Communities around the Americas are speaking out to express their concerns about 'free trade'. Listen to the Brazilians –98% of almost 10 million people voted against the adoption of the FTAA. In Bolivia and Ecuador governments have been toppled recently for trying to sell the country out to transnational corporations, the big 'free trade' winners. Venezuela has begun a nation to nation 'fair trade' initiative called ALBA. Shouldn't Canada's trade stance change?