

December 7, 2007

To: President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
President George W. Bush
Prime Minister Stephen Harper
Legislative leaders of all three countries
Chief trade negotiators of all three countries

From: The undersigned Canadian, Mexican and U.S. civil society organizations

We write to support the aims of all Mexican farmers' and indigenous organizations to halt the agricultural trade liberalization that is destroying the Mexican countryside, rural communities, indigenous peoples and farmers, driving them into economic exile. We support their proposals to rebuild Mexican agriculture, food sovereignty and rural development.

It is not too late for the governments of Mexico, Canada and the United States to halt the removal of tariffs on white corn, beans, powdered milk, and other foods of the "basic basket" of household food security, scheduled to take place on January 1, 2008. As Mexican farmers' and indigenous organizations have proposed, announcement of the suspension should be accompanied by a plan and schedule to renegotiate the agricultural chapter of the North American Free Trade Agreement in light of the recognition that an increase in trade volume has not brought market-based prosperity to farmers or rural communities in the NAFTA countries. Indeed, the National Farmers Union of Canada reported at the "Lessons of NAFTA" conference in October in Minneapolis (U.S.A.), that market-based Canadian farm income is lower than at anytime since the Great Depression. Furthermore, Canadian agriculture faces a "generational time bomb," as a great majority of farmers approach retirement with very few young farmers taking their place.

A Mexican government proposal to exclude all foods in the "basic basket" from liberalization under NAFTA would be an important first step in improving Mexico's capacity to feed itself. The "basic basket" exclusion would create demand for domestic Mexican production presently satisfied in part by dumped U.S. exports. Enhancing domestic supply in basic foods will lower their price, providing some respite from sharply increasing food prices, especially for tortillas (a 738% increase since 1994, far outstripping wage increases). Suspension, combined with Mexican government support for the modernization of Mexican agriculture with the participation of peasant and indigenous farmers, will help revive Mexican agriculture and rural development. Mexican rural revival will reduce the forced migration of the half million Mexican

economic exiles that seek to migrate for survival to the United States annually despite a militarized U.S. -Mexican border.

The current government and industry response to NAFTA's failures, the Security and Prosperity Partnership being negotiated and implemented without legislative, much less democratic participation, will exacerbate the economic, environmental and social damage NAFTA has wrought.

The undersigned believe that the proposals of Mexican farmers' and indigenous organizations for rebuilding Mexican agriculture and renegotiating NAFTA are necessary first steps towards providing true prosperity and security for our three countries. We congratulate these organizations on their work in support of Mexican farmers, indigenous peoples and rural development. We look forward to finding new ways to support their struggle for food sovereignty, fair and just trade, sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Sincerely,

United States

Agricultural Missions, Inc.

Alliance for Democracy

Alliance for Responsible Trade

American Agricultural Movement

American Corn Growers

Campaign for Labor Rights

Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health

Center of Concern

Church World Service

Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras

Committee for Social Justice in Colombia

Democratic Socialists of Central Ohio

The Development GAP

Family Farm Defenders

Food First

Food & Water Watch

Global Exchange

Grassroots International

Greater Kansas City Fair Trade Coalition

Holy Cross International Justice Office

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Institute for Policy Studies, Global Economy Project

International Labor Rights Forum

Labor – Religion Coalition of New York State

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy

Mexico-U.S. Solidarity Network

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office, USA

Movement for Peace in Colombia

Minnesota Citizen Organized Acting Together (COACT)

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

New York City People's Referendum on Free Trade

National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture

National Family Farm Coalition

National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.

National Lawyers Guild

Nicaragua Network

Oakland Institute

Ohio Conference on Fair Trade

Partners for the Land and Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples

Pesticide Action Network North America

Polo Democrático Alternativo-NYNJCT

Quixote Center/Quest for Peace

SHARE Foundation: Building a New El Salvador Today

United Church of Christ – Justice and Witness Ministries

Washington Office on Latin America

Wetlands Activism Collective

World Hunger Year (WHY)

Canada

Beyond Factory Farming Coalition

Common Frontiers

Council of Canadians

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Mouvement d'éducation populaire et d'action communautaire du Québec

National Farmers Union

Okanaga Greens

Quebec Network on Hemispheric Integration

Saskatchewan Organic Directorate

Stop the Hogs Coalition

International

Bharatiya Krishak Samaj (Indian Farmers' Organisation)

Council of Canadians London Chapter

Encuentro Popular / Alianza Social Continental (Costa Rica)

El Grupo de Trabajo de Agricultura y Comercio de Alianza Social Continental

Heifer International

Indian Society For Sustainable Agriculture And Rural Development

Mesa Global de Guatemala

Non Violence International (Program on the Americas)

Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña

Red Internacional de Género y Comercio – Capítulo Latinoamericano

Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC)

Red Sinti Techan (El Salvador)

Solidarité (France)

Xàrxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (Spain)

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