

Behind the Barricades: An FTAA Sustainable Development Agenda Executive Summary

Governments of the Western Hemisphere plan to conclude a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement by January 2005. This FTAA will be the world's largest trade grouping, with over 800 million people and nearly a third of world's economic output. The present initiative for closer cooperation in the Americas crystallized at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994. Along with democracy, trade liberalisation and sustainable development were adopted in the 1994 Miami Declaration of Principles: Partnership for Development and Prosperity: Democracy, Free Trade and Sustainable Development in the Americas.

At the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada from the 20-22 April, 2001, heads of state from 34 North, Central, and South American and Caribbean countries reaffirmed their political commitment to strengthening hemispheric relations in a number of areas, including environment, development and democracy. In the streets below, protestors gathered and expressed their opposition to a liberalisation they perceived as causing adverse impacts on the Americas environment and communities. Beyond the barricades of Quebec City and other trade decision making forums, a new, constructive agenda was and is being debated and developed on trade and sustainability issues in the Americas.

This book, 'Beyond the Barricades: A Trade and Sustainability Agenda for the Americas', reflects the diversity of perspectives, and the richness of expertise on environment and development issues among governments, businesses and civil society organisations in the Western Hemisphere.

The first chapter lays a foundation for the debate, laying out the state of play in the current Summits process and some of the main issues involved in the development of a hemispheric trade and sustainability agenda. The second chapter offers diverse perspectives, and lessons learned based on existing experiences of integration and sustainable development from four sub-regions of the Americas. These views draw on practical, concrete problems, and illustrate the tone of the debates.

Two procedural issues are extremely important for a trade and sustainability agenda in the Americas. First, how can governments and other actors ensure the highest level of civil society participation possible in the debates? This chapter, on civil society participation, presents recommendations based on experiences at domestic, hemispheric and sub-regional levels, and also expresses NGO concerns with the FTAA negotiations. Second, how could such an agenda be financed, and how will investment facilitation in the Americas contribute to this effort? The next chapter addresses issues of financing and

investment. How to finance sustainable development in the Americas, and how can new investment law and policy in the Americas support sustainable development?

Certain specific issues must also be addressed, as in many areas, there are possibilities for increased hemispheric cooperation and specific links between trade and sustainable development debates.

The fifth chapter raises sustainability related questions regarding agricultural policy, trade in genetically modified organisms, consumer protection and biosafety, and suggests elements of a regional cooperation on these issues. The sixth chapter, on hemispheric policy related to intellectual property rights and biodiversity, addresses the potential for intellectual property rights systems to protect indigenous knowledge, cultural and biological diversity, and provides a case study, from Costa Rica, of how IPR laws can be used to protect biodiversity.

The seventh chapter, on sustainable water management in the Americas, draws on experiences from Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago to lay out ideas for a future cooperation agenda. The eighth chapter, on mining and stakeholder participation, covers environmental but especially social issues related to more sustainable mining and minerals development in the Americas, and presents experiences from Chile with impact assessment, as well as the experiences of a company, Placer Dome, which operates in the region. The ninth chapter, on climate change policy in the Americas, explains the importance of resolving this major global challenge from the perspective of Antigua and Barbuda, a small Caribbean island, and gives examples of solutions being developed in Argentina and Brazil for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Though it would be impossible to bring together all these diverse perspectives and contributions in one unified recommendation, three concluding chapters develop ideas for certain concrete next steps in a hemispheric trade and sustainability agenda for the Americas. One makes recommendations for an environmental cooperation mechanism for the Americas. Another provides space for IUCN to put forward a unique contribution to the debate, as an organisation which, according to recent surveys, has hundreds of members cooperating between North and Latin America.

A final concluding section develops recommendations for strengthened environmental and social development cooperation agendas and brings forward proposals for a more socially and environmentally sustainable FTAA. This chapter requests the creation of a forum to continue these debates, and ensure that the policy recommendations developed in these valuable exchanges can reach the ears of policy-makers on all levels of our new Americas community.