

Choluteca Declaration

Representatives of the various social and popular organizations from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that met in the city of Choluteca, Honduras on 22 and 23 June declare that:

1. We form a part of a global solidarity movement, united in the determination to fight against an economic and political model that concentrates wealth and generates and spreads poverty and the destruction of the planet. Diversity in thought combined with unity of action in this struggle form the basis of our power.
2. We emphatically reject the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)) and any other form of annexation disguised under the purported benefits of free trade, because: It is untrue that they create sustainable and stable development or better jobs.
 - They threaten our peoples' historical, cultural, and natural wealth
 - They destroy national sovereignty.
 - They hinder the process of building the complete democracy to which our peoples aspire.
 - They deprive people of the right to food sovereignty.
 - They increase foreign debt and its social costs.
 - They increase unfair trade and trade deficits for our people and our countries.
 - They are projects that cede control of our hemisphere to the large multinational corporations based in the United States, Europe, and Asia.
3. We base our position on the failures of twenty years of neoliberalism in Latin America, in addition to the seven years of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has produced negative impacts on the majority of Mexicans, as well as on workers and rural people in the United States and Canada.
4. We condemn the protectionist policy and the cynicism of the subsidies for agricultural and industrial production in the United States and Europe, and more concretely the recently passed U.S. Farm Bill, in contrast to the policy of complete liberalization of agricultural production imposed on our countries' governments.
5. We struggle against a system based on violence and that favors the interests of capital over people' needs and aspirations.
6. We believe that the resistance and unity of the various sectors of our countries is of vital importance in confronting the dangers of new forms of colonization and exclusion. It is not enough just to protest against the FTAA; we must build a social movement with proposals.

In light of this situation, we propose:

1. To reject the privatization of public and natural services, the FTAA, PPP, and FTAs.
2. To fight to change the model of dependence and foreign debt, and to support the alternative proposals put forth by the World Social Forum.
3. To build an alternative of Central American and Continental Union based on the proposals of the Hemispheric Social Alliance and that gives continuity to the unifying philosophies of Bolivar, Morazan, and Marti.
4. To reject the presence of foreign troops in the region and any attempt to remilitarize our society.
5. To reconstruct an economic base in our countries by means of true incentive and production protection programs.
6. The immediate work is to organize the Central American people to not elect officials and delegates who are a part of or in the service of neoliberalism.
7. To fight for the rights and autonomy of the indigenous people in the context of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization.
8. Governments should protect, encourage, and finance the social sector of the economy. We have the resources to achieve high standards of living for this and future generations.
9. It is criminal to keep instituting policies that do not protect our consumers and favor the consumption of imported goods.
10. To radically transform the structure of land use, encouraging agrarian reform, protecting and promoting access to resources for production, marketing and solidarity both with and between the true producers of national wealth.

Another Central America is possible.

Choluteca, Honduras, 23 June 2002

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