



Alliance for Global Justice

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Quick Links

CALL CONGRESS:

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May 6th, 2009

AFGJ ALERT

*** IMPORTANT NOTE (or...Why am I receiving this email and who is the Alliance for Global Justice?)**

The Campaign for Labor Rights and the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign (formerly Network) are both, along with the Respect for Democracy Campaign, and the Nicaragua Network, parts of a larger, umbrella organization: the Alliance for Global Justice. We are going through a reorganization that puts greater emphasis on the AFGJ, while keeping the various "campaigns" intact. This allows us greater flexibility and outreach, while making us more efficient and broader in outlook. Let us know if you have any questions or comments about these changes!

STOP THE PANAMA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!

Stop the Panama Free Trade Agreement!

Tell President Obama and the Democratic Congress it is time to Rethink Trade and not move forward on the failed Bush agenda. [Email the President](#) and your [Member of Congress](#) today and tell them we voted for change-and we expect change.

SEE BELOW FOR A SAMPLE LETTER AND A DECLARATION FROM A PANAMANIAN CIVIL SOCIETY GROUP!

In spite of campaign promises to engage in a thorough re-thinking of our trade model, word has it that the Obama administration is planning to introduce, maybe as early as this week, the Bush era Panama Free Trade Agreement. There is also talk that the Colombian FTA may soon follow. With many Democratic candidates having been elected promising a re-thinking of the model, it seems difficult to believe the Obama administration would do this.

The current trade model, as embodied in the NAFTA and CAFTA agreements is rife with negative impacts, heavily impacting workers in North as well as South countries. The model needs a thorough reworking. The Panama FTA would flood Panama with subsidized U.S. grains, as previous FTAs have done in signing countries. This is debilitating in terms of food production. In economic crises such as this one, it is imperative that we act in ways that will increase food security, for ourselves and our neighbors.

Destroying the livelihood of farmers here and abroad is never a good idea.

[Write Congress](#) and [President Obama](#) today. Say YES to Rethinking Trade and say NO to business as usual.

Sample letter:

Dear ,

I am discouraged to hear the U.S. government may move forward on trade agreements left over from the Bush administration such as the Panama and Colombia FTAs.

This past November I voted for change in our trade policies and I expect change. More agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA that put U.S. jobs at risk and destroy the livelihood of farmers around the world by flooding their markets with U.S. subsidized grains are never a good idea.

Please to do not allow the Panama Free Trade Agreement to be introduced in Congress and follow through with the change we expect in U.S. trade policy.

Sincerely,

PANAMANIAN CIVIL SOCIETY GROUP PROTESTS FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!

[From a declaration that was released by the Panama Sovereignty Front (FRENTE PANAMA SOBERANO) on January 9, 2007, shortly after the negotiations of the trade agreement had been completed.]

The Panama Sovereignty Front (FPS) notes with alarm and concern the tactics used by our government with relation to the trade agreement with the United States negotiated and signed on December 19, 2006. The so called "Free Trade Agreement" is the product of 10 rounds of negotiations with both countries coming to an agreement that would permit the United States access to the internal market of Panama. In

exchange the U.S. does not offer any opening for Panamanian goods or services to gain access to the market of that country in a favorable and expedited manner.

According to the information released by the U.S. government, the agreement would mean that the people would have to assume the burden of higher prices for health care (medicine, doctors' visits), education, social security, transportation and food.

The agreement would also have a direct impact on specific sectors of the population such as farmers, professionals and workers. In the case of Panamanian farmers, they would lose their access to the national market and would have to abandon their land. The Panamanian market would be inundated with U.S. farm products that are in surplus in that country. Our country would be totally abandoning its policy of food security and we would not be consuming our own rice, beef and other products.

In the case of professionals, the pact would allow U.S. specialists to work in Panama as if they were Panamanian citizens. According to U.S. officials, "it will give us access to the professional service area that previously was reserved exclusively to Panamanians."

The labor sector would also be impacted. For 20 years, the policies of labor flexibilization have decreased by 50% Panama's labor force. This agreement with the U.S. would mean an even greater increase in the informal sector which lives below the poverty line and now represents 40% of the economically active population.

To this we must add that Panama would accept that its policies would be inspected and penalized by the United States. Committees of Trade Support would be created, a Council of Environmental Affairs and arbitration mechanisms for investors and the U.S. Customs Department would also participate in monitoring Panama.

Panama would also concede to U.S. companies the right to participate in running the Panama Canal and in the management of the Social Security pension fund as if they were Panamanian nationals.

The Panamanian people will not accept a pact with the United States that damages the interests of our workers and farmers. We will not accept an accord that means going backwards in terms of advances achieved after generations of struggle (social security, the Panama Canal, education among other).

Panama Sovereignty Front
FRENTE PANAMA SOBERANO
Panama, January 9, 2007