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Declaration of social movements of the Andean Region, Latin America and Europe on the CAN-EU Association Agreement

Monday 17 September 2007, by [Movements \(international\)](#) (Date first published: 16 September 2007).

The first round of negotiations of the CAN-EU Agreement is due to start next Monday (17th September) in Colombia. Please SIGN-ON to the Declaration of social movements of the Andean Region, Latin America and Europe calling for No to a new FTA with the EU! (see below).

If you want to sign on this declaration, please write to Gonzalo Berron from the Hemispheric Social Alliance (secretaria asc-hsa.net) and Enrique Daza, coordinator of RECALCA (edazag etb.net.co).

While this declaration has been initiated by organisations, networks and movements in LA and Europe, we very much look forward to support from organisations and networks of other regions fighting EU FTAs.

Unfortunately, we don't have too much time as the Declaration needs to be presented next week, so please send your signature by no later than Wednesday 19th September.

Best regards,

Cecilia

The social movements and civil society organizations of the Andean Region of Latin America and those of Europe are deeply concerned over the consequences that an Association Agreement between the Community of Andean Nations (CAN) and the European Union (EU) (which currently includes a Free Trade Agreement very similar to the FTAA, which we laid to rest some time ago) would bring to our peoples. To us, the new initiatives being created to expand free trade will only bring about a deterioration in the situation of countries which are attempting to ensure the dignity of our peoples and the right to sovereignty. As an extension of neoliberal policies, these initiatives represent a grave danger to the region, in that they threaten to frustrate the capacity of States to bring about policies of social and economic development, and make it more difficult to reverse the measures that have harmed our peoples.

We regret that the negotiations are based on the EU trade strategy Global Europe: Competing in the World, which only seeks to install an "ambitious" area of free trade; and which, even if it refers to the respect for human rights, proposes to extend the agenda of the WTO by privileging profitability and commercial interests without taking into account that the Andean countries are home to diverse realities, completely different from those of European models.

The European proposal presupposes rapid reductions across the entire scope of tariffs and the inclusion of issues such as governmental purchases, investments, competition policy, the opening of services, and the expansion of protection for intellectual property. These issues were included in the

treaties that the EU signed with Chile and Mexico. The EU also has particular interest in creating protection for its investments within the parameters set out by European countries in various Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs), and also in the respective chapters on investment in the agreements with Chile and Mexico. This protection, which goes far beyond that defined by the WTO, is identical to that agreed to by Peru and Colombia in their agreements with the United States. Such protection will be widely beneficial to European transnational corporations, and promote the privatization of health, education, public services, agriculture, knowledge, culture and the traditions of indigenous communities. All of these things, we reject.

The countries of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) recently issued Resolution 667 which established that, in any negotiations with the EU, they would take into account asymmetries, the diverse degrees that countries will be willing to commit in various thematic areas (including the possibility that some may exclude themselves entirely), and that decisions that affect the norms of the CAN will be adopted by consensus amongst its members. This decision, even if it allows for the possibility that some countries will not sign the FTA as currently proposed by the EU in its entirety, also allows that those that want to do so will simply submit to the proposals predefined by the EU.

The preservation of cooperation and the strengthening of political dialogue are a necessity and are advisable objectives for both regions; but dialogue and cooperation should not be mere preconditions to trade objectives, nor used as pressure tactics to oblige Andean governments to make economic concessions.

In spite of the demands of diverse sectors, and the official announcement that mechanisms to keep civil society informed and to ensure civil society participation would be sought, on the eve of the first round, no such mechanisms related to participation of any nature have been defined. This leaves the civil society of the region at a disadvantage, and sets out for it the role of merely legitimating the process.

It is obvious that the effort to alter the negotiating framework defined by the EU, and to ensure that the CAN does not deepen its adherence to neoliberal formulas nor become stranded in the project of global trade liberalization, will demand the very strong presence and mobilization of civil society. It will also demand a strong effort to maintain the advances of regional integration made to date, and a defence of integration based on the respect for national sovereignty, in terms of which the governments of the region do not have the same interests.

We seek an integration between our peoples, but one that is based on solidarity that contributes to unite our nations, respecting human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of migrants, protecting the balance with nature and, above all, the national differences and processes that we experience in our region.

We are not against the striking of trade relations with Europe, as long as it is on the basis of balance and reciprocity. We demand that the voices and proposals of our peoples be taken into account when it comes time to setting the new rules of integration and trade. We firmly believe that an agreement has to be inspired by the principles of solidarity, justice, complementarity and harmony with *la Pachamama*, Nature.

We want to be assured that whatever agreement is reached will strengthen the fight for the recuperation of control over natural resources, that it will truly benefit the peasant and small producer sectors, and that it will seriously confront the complex issues surrounding migration. We reject the immigration policies of the EU which demonstrate a disrespect for human rights and a discriminatory and racist attitude towards Latin Americans.

Our countries and communities are not for sale. We want trade between nations, but a trade that is based on solidarity and fairness. We want a true integration that, on the basis of cooperation and solidarity, implies changes to the model that until now has only served to destroy nature and collective ways of life. We want that the union of the peoples serve to truly construct a better world, and not to benefit only a very few.

The Andean countries should concentrate their efforts on strengthening their ties, deepening Latin American integration, and bringing the countries of the South closer together; and not on the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements (with guidelines) that exclusively benefit the powerful and the Transnationals.

In the Andean region, Latin America and Europe, broad social sectors, including certain governments, have categorically refused proposals that grant benefits to transnationals and cause harm to the peoples. We have already lived with these formulas and know very well their consequences. We don't want them any more!