

**FTAA - COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

**COVER SHEET**

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ISSUES ADDRESSED (Check all that apply)

Agriculture		Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties	
Competition Policy		Civil Society	✓
Dispute Settlement		Electronic Commerce	
Government Procurement		Smaller Economies	
Intellectual Property Rights		The FTAA Process	✓
Investment	✓	Other: WORKER RIGHTS	✓
Market Access	✓	ENVIRONMENT	✓
Services		TRANSPARENCY	✓

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - 2 pages maximum - (see Open Invitation):	2 pages
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**Statement of the  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and  
Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
to the  
Committee of Governmental Representatives  
on Civil Society Participation  
Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)**

**September 2000**

**Executive Summary**

The UAW represents 1.3 million active and retired workers in the automobile, aerospace, agricultural implement and various other industries in the United States. Our headquarters is located at 8000 East Jefferson, Detroit, Michigan, USA 48214. We maintain an office at 1757 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, which is the location of the UAW Governmental and International Affairs Department.

In our March 1999 submission, we questioned the effectiveness of this Committee as a vehicle to incorporate the views of civil society into the FTAA negotiating groups and into any final agreement. The experience of the past 18 months has only reinforced our earlier concerns. The issues we raised in our submission were not injected into the relevant negotiating groups, they did not shape the development of text in those groups, and the critical subject of worker rights and standards remains outside the structure and objectives on any negotiating group.

We commented extensively in our earlier submission on the relationship between achieving the goals of the San Jose Declaration and incorporating worker rights and standards into the negotiating process, as a separate negotiating group and by adding worker rights provisions into each of the existing negotiating groups.

Inaction on this critical issue by the FTAA governments and the negotiating groups, and the failure of this Committee to serve as a means to influence them, has already seriously undermined the legitimacy of the FTAA negotiations. As the negotiating groups have each completed outlining their tasks and are expected to have draft text soon, it has become clear that the views of workers were ignored. The governments of the region have adopted the goals of corporations, especially multinational corporations, as the basis for their model of economic integration. This reality would lead to serious economic problems for workers in the Hemisphere and to weakening democratic debates on important social and economic policies. The San Jose Declaration's goals are undermined by this approach.

The FTAA negotiating process has failed to provide an acceptable level of transparency. The information made available to concerned citizens by governments and the Secretariat is simply inadequate to develop an informed assessment of the impact of government proposals on workers in the region. With the text of many of the negotiating groups advancing toward completion, it is imperative that this information be available to those who have a stake in the implementation of those texts and are concerned about their impact on the region's citizens. Opening up the FTAA negotiating process to effective scrutiny by civil society requires the release of much more information than is currently available.

The negotiators' failure to address worker rights issues is matched by their failure to incorporate environmental standards. The living standards and conditions of the citizens of the region are at stake and inaction constitutes a lack of compliance with the San Jose Declaration.

Last year, we proposed that the Investment negotiating group recognize the importance of achieving an appropriate balance between the rights of governments to regulate their economies and rights for corporations. It appears that only the concerns of corporations are being taken into consideration in this group. Civil society, through the democratic process of elections, should determine the appropriate role for government in assuring improved living standards and equitable economic development. Reliance on this democratic process must not be weakened or precluded by FTAA rules concerning expropriation, dispute resolution, privatization, deregulation, economic restructuring and other economic and social policies.

Equally important is recognition of the responsibilities of investors to the citizens and communities where they invest. Any investment rules must include mandatory respect for the rights of workers covered by the International Labor Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This is an essential pre-requisite for meeting the San Jose Declaration's promise of raising living standards for workers in the region. Investment group negotiators have also failed to consider adopting additional responsibilities for investors that may be essential to economic development and social equity. The negotiators must address these issues.

We continue to insist that the Market Access negotiations incorporate safeguard measures that can be quickly implemented in order to prevent rapid and extensive dislocation due to increased imports. We are extremely dissatisfied with the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Exchange rate volatility and crushing international debt obligations are problems that face countries in the region and impose serious economic burdens on working people. Mechanisms to successfully address these problems must be found by the negotiators and included in any regional economic integration agreement.

In light of the broad international opposition to corporate-dominated globalization that has been on display in every region of the world since the first round of submissions to this Committee, it would be reasonable to expect that the FTAA negotiations would have moved toward incorporating the protesters' critique. Yet, there is no evidence that the initial agenda of the FTAA process has been changed in any significant way by the protests and the growing popular opposition to that agenda. If the absence of transparency in the process and the absence of fundamental change in the negotiating agenda continue, the objectives of the San Jose Declaration, to raise living standards and promote prosperity, will not be achieved. Instead, the UAW and the millions of others who put the interests of working people, their families and communities above the interests of financial speculators and profit-maximizing corporations and their executives, will search for an alternative mechanism to achieve these goals through democratically-adopted trade and investment policies.