



**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**What we see:** The growing inequalities within the global economic system have been reinforced and exacerbated by U.S. trade policies which are skewed to benefit large corporations and multilateral debt payments and serve only to siphon off scarce resources from impoverished countries leaving the natural world, developing governments, family farmers and working people with little hope. We are hopeful about the renewed debate surrounding free trade agreements, both pending and already in existence. It is urgently necessary to reconsider current U. S. trade policies in order to find trade solutions that benefit both the U.S. and our global sisters and brothers.

- In the last year, the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement sparked conflicts between government forces and indigenous peoples because of the implications of the agreement for the Amazon region and the livelihoods of the indigenous people living there.
- As of 2008, under NAFTA's Chapter 11, a legal option that gives foreign investors the ability to sue federal governments directly, more than 50 potential cases worth over \$28 billion have been filed against the three governments. These potential cases have had a chilling effect; keeping them from enacting public policy initiatives.
- NAFTA requirements and U. S. subsidy programs have severely hurt Mexican farmers. Close to two million have been pushed off their land, corresponding to a substantial increase in immigration to the United States. Having nowhere else to turn, they attempt to cross the U.S. – Mexican border each year, resulting in an increase of deaths along the border.

**What our faith tells us:** In his 2009 encyclical, Pope Benedict XVI states that “today's international economic scene, marked by grave deviations and failures, requires a profoundly new way of understanding business enterprise.” Trade policies must reflect the principles of solidarity and justice so that trade is not an end in itself but a means to promote the well-being of all people.

**What we hope for:** Trade policy should be fundamentally re-conceived in light of the common good, centered on principles of human dignity and respect for creation. The rights of farmers and workers, the dignity of work, and the fair distribution of profits must be upheld, while sustainable development and care for the natural world should take precedence over corporate profits.

**Legislation:** We call on Representatives to support and cosponsor HR 3012, the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development, and Employment (TRADE) Act of 2009. The TRADE Act will:

- Create policy space for a more balanced approach to trade policy.
- Require an assessment of economic, social, environmental, security and human rights outcomes of all major trade pacts made under the current model, including NAFTA and DR-CAFTA, before new agreements can be met.
- Establish standards on what types of provisions must be included and what types cannot be included in a trade agreement.
- Replace Fast Track to allow Congress a stronger role in setting trade criteria.
- Renegotiate current trade agreements under the new criteria.