

1.4. Case Study: Mexico

Mexico is an important and integral economic partner for Canada. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has facilitated and encouraged greater exchanges of expertise, and closer cultural and social ties, in addition to the liberalised economic relationship. However, the economic situation in the country for the vast majority of Mexicans has worsened. The peso crisis in December 1994 illuminated the precarious financial condition of the country. Reductions in basic food subsidies have resulted in increasing social protest, which has been met with repressive police and military actions. In the case of a protest by middle-income farmers in Chiapas over the market price of corn, protesters were killed, injured and arrested by police and soldiers. These kinds of situations indicate the continued precarious nature of political and civil rights and their links to economic, social and cultural conditions.

The research paper: "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in a Neoliberal Mexico" was written to express the lived reality of this situation, the effects of the neoliberal model and the abuses of the model on economic, social and cultural rights. (Please see Annex E)

1.5. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Americas.

The final phase of the research which ICCHRLA undertook related to economic, social and cultural rights culminated in our participation at the Santiago Summit (both the official and the People's Summit). The Santiago Summit, or Summit of the Americas took place in Santiago, Chile on April 19-20th. The official Summit, which brought together all of the leaders of the countries of the Americas (except Cuban President Fidel Castro) to discuss policies and programmes for the establishment of agreements related to free trade for the hemisphere. ICCHRLA joined with dozens of other Canadian church, human rights, labour, anti-poverty, women's, development and environment organizations, as well as hundreds of similar organizations of civil society from countries throughout the Americas who are forging a broad hemispheric social alliance to call for an Alternative People's Agenda. Participation at the People's Summit afforded us the opportunity to forge new links of solidarity with groups which are working on the issues of economic, social and cultural rights.

Through our participation, ICCHRLA hoped to participate in the development of a broad hemispheric social alliance which would call on the various governments to respect economic, social and cultural rights in all of their trade agreements.