

Economic Integration: FTAA Secretive, Like the MAI

QUESTION

Isn't this like the MAI all over again? Why don't you have hearings or some kind of information campaign to tell Canadians what you want to accomplish with the FTAA? Will there be Parliamentary hearings?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- By definition, the FTAA, like all international agreements, will result from negotiations between governments. However, these negotiations will be more transparent than previous negotiations in two respects.
- They are being launched following more than three years of very open preparations that have been widely reported on in the press.
- The preparations have been assisted by the three institutions of the Tripartite Committee (Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank and the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) which have all prepared and released numerous public documents on the FTAA.
- Much public information is also readily available on the official FTAA Website at [HTTP://www.ftaa-alca.org/](http://www.ftaa-alca.org/).
- Also, FTAA nations have agreed to set up a committee of government representatives that will accept ideas/submissions from a broad cross-section of civil society -- individuals and groups interested in business, labour, environment, human rights and other areas. This committee will present its views directly to Ministers.
- Canada has made it very clear that it considers the FTAA to be a grand project that will affect all the citizens of the region, so it is vital to hear from all sectors of our society on how they want to see the FTAA unfold.
- As chair of the FTAA trade negotiating committee for the first 18 months, Canada will be in a position to suggest how all aspects of the FTAA negotiations should unfold -- including how civil society is consulted.
- The trade minister has said that a parliamentary committee might be an appropriate venue for further consultations.