

Summary of Conference Proceedings (Main Points)

1) Ms Mariclaire Acosta Urquidi, Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights.

A) There is growing national and international recognition of the human rights problem in Mexico.

B) While human rights abuses in Mexico have existed for decades, there have been two important developments during the NAFTA Years: 1) Human rights abuses have escalated throughout the country, but especially in Southern Mexico, since the appearance of the Zapatistas and the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army); 2) NGOs interested in human rights have proliferated considerably during these years. Hence, not only have human rights abuses escalated, they have been more widely reported by the various agencies that are now operating in this realm.

C) Although the human rights issue has generally attracted more attention, within Mexico and internationally, the human rights situation in Mexico has been getting steadily worse. Most human rights abuses are committed by the State (police and military), and increasingly, by paramilitary forces (Ms. Acosta's agency