

The FTAA is not a sure thing. Several countries in Latin America, including Brazil, are lukewarm. "Fast tracking" in the United States is important before countries are comfortable trading with the US. There are internal problems in the USA over intellectual property rights. Canada has been a champion of the FTAA although it isn't clear why as Canada hasn't too much to gain from increased trade with Latin America. The crucial matter for Canada is that Canada does 86 % of its' trade with the United States. The USA has made it clear their trade laws are not part of any negotiations. Canada in turn has been distancing itself on any contentious issues, such as dispute settlement and intellectual property rights. In conclusion, Marc Lee said the FTAA embodies the worst aspects of the WTO, disarms citizens and should be rejected because it is undemocratic.

Paul Mably, international trade advisor with the British Columbia Ministry of Employment and Investment, has been deeply involved in the FTAA agreement in his position with the BC government. He outlined the three major sticking points to which the provincial government objects to in the proposed agreements. These are:

- **Coverage of all levels of government** (national, provincial/territorial and local). Although the different levels of governments in Canada talk to each other during trade negotiations, the federal government is the only player at the negotiating table. This is problematic because provincial and municipal governments, institutions and others in Canada are impacted by free trade agreements but currently don't have a voice at the negotiating table.
- **Potential impact on public health and education.** Health and education need an airtight agreement where language is not unclear and open to legal technicalities and tinkering.
- **The investor-state dispute resolution mechanism.** If private companies can sue governments for violations of agreements on investment and only international law, not domestic, is used, then this is a closed process which is tantamount to expropriation.

Paul Mably confirmed the BC government supports increased trade and investment, which strengthens the public's well being. However, an open and transparent process must be a condition of negotiating trade agreements. Although the Canadian government supports a modified investor-state mechanism, British Columbia does not support having an investor-state dispute resolution. In conclusion he said the FTAA should have a complete carve-out for health, education, social services and culture, the BC government should be at the table to sign any agreements that impact on provincial jurisdiction and the Province reserves the right to implement in these provincial areas.

Wilder Robles (PhD candidate), a political scientist at Langara College who has expertise in international development and Latin American politics, gave an overview of the growing impact of globalization on the poor in Latin America. He began by outlining the problems facing the region. Latin America is entering the 21st Century confronting severe social, political, economic, cultural and ecological insecurity. The region remains one of the most unequal societies in the world where more than 240 million people are living in absolute poverty. These people are unlikely to become 'potential' consumers in the short or long run. The transition to democracy has not led to fundamental changes in the structures of power within society and globalization of market relations is exacerbating human suffering and environmental destruction and contributing to increasing social marginalisation and poverty in the region.

It is important to transform economics and politics in Latin America and effect democratic change at all levels. Democratization must be the starting point in the struggle for global human and environmental security. Globalization may be unstoppable but it is making more and more people uncomfortable. Alternative models of social change are steps to solving these increasing problems. A radical concept of democracy for changing relations in the private and public spheres of human life is needed. There are grassroots movements in Latin American today responding to this challenge such as the Landless Peasant Movement (MST) in Brazil. Free or fair trade agreements that lack social ethics such as justice are unlikely to be sustainable in the short or long run. Mr. Wilder concluded by saying agreements such as the FTAA will not solve the marginal and social exclusion of the poor in Latin America. He leaves this motto: "maintenir la solidarité, réduire la dépendance, agrandir la réciprocité"