



ALIANZA SOCIAL CONTINENTAL

The Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) is a coalition made up of social organizations, issue-based networks, and sectoral organizations from throughout the American hemisphere, from Canada to Chile. It was formed to exchange information, define strategies and promote coordinated actions. Initially, the Alliance's work was focused on stopping the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the different modalities of so-called free trade. From there, it was decided that neoliberal policies need to be thoroughly questioned and challenged, and that the Alliance would struggle to build a development model that guarantees the peoples' economic, social and cultural human rights; strengthen social movements; work for the welfare and rights of the population with an eye to social and environmental justice; and transform the hemisphere's integration policies.

Currently, the Alliance is made up of more than fifty large networks from throughout the American hemisphere, whose members include dozens of organizations. The HSA has a rotating secretary that facilitates the Alliance's operation. Currently, the secretary is the Colombian Action Network in Response to Free Trade (RECALCA).

The Alliance was formed in April 1997 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Since then, it has been the nucleus that promotes the "Summits of the Peoples" parallel to Presidential Summits. The Summits of the Peoples so far have included Santiago de Chile in 1998; Quebec, Canada in 2001; Mar del Plata, Argentina in November 2005; the First Social Summit for the Peoples' Integration in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in December 2006; the Summit for the Friendship and Integration of the Peoples in Chile, November 2007; the Latin American and Caribbean Peoples' Summit (Enlazando Alternativas 3) in Peru in May 2008, held in parallel to the European Union - Latin America Summit; the Summit of the Peoples in Trinidad in 2009; and the Enlazando Alternativas 4 Summit in Madrid in May 2010, among others. The Alliance has also promoted actions with global networks such as Our World Is Not For Sale (OWINFS), the Bi-regional Network Enlazando Alternativas, the Seattle to Brussels Network and Climate Justice Now.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance's activities come from the agendas of social organizations and popular movements in the American hemisphere, including union, small-scale farmer, indigenous, Afro-descendent, student, and women's movements, NGOs, environmentalists, think tanks, and continental associations with diverse focuses including free trade, climate change, integration, mining, migrations, overcoming discriminations, criminalization of social protest and militarization, economic crisis, transnational corporations, agriculture and food sovereignty.

The HSA is in an exceptional position to facilitate coordination processes given its extensive connections throughout the Americas, its links to diverse social movements, and the fact that the continent's principal organizations participate in the Alliance and commit their capacity and accumulated experience to its work.

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FREE TRADE

The United States and European Union have sought to sign free trade agreements with Latin American countries to gain an institutional framework that guarantees their multinational corporations access to privileged investment conditions and considerable profit margins in strategic areas such as the financial, mining and public services sectors. They also seek to open developing countries' markets to their surplus production (grains, milk, industrial goods, for example), which is useful for these two powers in the context of the world economic crisis.

At the beginning of the century, and given the failure of its plan for a single free trade area for the hemisphere, the United States modified its FTAA proposal to include a series of bilateral Free Trade Agreements (Colombia, Chile and Peru), and regional agreements (NAFTA and CAFTA-DR). The European Union, meanwhile, has pushed Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with its former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP). In Latin America, the EU has been promoting Association Agreements, which are essentially the same as FTAs. Some Association Agreements have been enacted (Mexico and Chile), and others are in the process of negotiation or ratification.

The developing nations' governments have accepted these agreements, arguing that they are a tool for their countries to be inserted into the international market, achieve economic growth and overcome poverty. The implementation of these agreements has shown that given the asymmetries, free trade is nothing more than an illusion, since the capacity and equal conditions for competition on the international market do not exist.

To the contrary, free trade has weakened national economies, particularly small-scale agriculture, putting food sovereignty at risk. It has destroyed jobs with the re-primarization of production, caused the price of medicines to increase, limited access to public services, increased the level of worker exploitation and the violation of labor and union rights, all with differential effects on women due to their historic discrimination. States have renounced their right to exercise their sovereignty to defend their natural resources and the rights of their peoples against the power of transnational corporations.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) has coordinated the resistance to these new forms of FTAs using political debates in social movements' meeting spaces such as the Summit of the Peoples, the World Social Forum, and the Americas Social Forum. It has also facilitated the coordination of efforts between American organizations and European networks, in particular working with the Bi-regional Network Enlazando Alternativas and the Seattle to Brussels Network. The capabilities developed by social movements linked to the HSA to stop the FTAA are now being projected to the efforts to stop the FTAs.

The HSA currently is monitoring the implementation of CAFTA, NAFTA, the US-Chile FTA, US-Peru FTA, Canada-Colombia FTA, and the EU-Chile and EU-Mexico Association Agreements.



The Alliance is also monitoring and working to influence the negotiation, signing and ratification processes for the US-Colombia FTA, European Union Multiparty Agreements with Peru and Colombia, and European Union Association Agreements with Central America, Mercosur and Canada.

The HSA develops the follow lines of action against the FTAs:

- **1. Training, raising awareness and spreading information on the risks that the FTAs present for the economic, social and cultural rights of the peoples of the Americas.**
- **2. Mobilization of social organizations and networks to express their disagreement with free trade and the urgent need to prioritize the rights of individuals, peoples and Mother Earth over the rights of multinational companies.**
- **3. Advocacy work to influence decision makers in governments and legislative bodies, using studies on the negative effects of FTAs in countries that have already implemented FTAs, and on the potential risks the FTAs pose for those countries where FTAs are being proposed.**
- **4. Strengthen alliances for joint actions on regional, continental and bi-regional levels to connect local and national resistance processes to international processes to enhance the voice of social movements.**
- **5. Document the harmful effects of the FTAs to have accurate and rigorous information supporting the social movements' resistance.**
- **6. Develop alternatives to free trade that seek to integrate peoples and nations using complementary intra-regional trade.**



MINING

For several years, the Hemispheric Social Alliance has made a central part of its work the rigorous study and monitoring of transnational large-scale mining companies and their activities, which has included the collection and dissemination of communities' and social movements' success stories struggling against these mines. This work has promoted connections between local and national movements against large scale mining projects. Through meetings, forums, workshops and mobilizations, much progress has been made in raising peoples' awareness of the enormous impacts of mining developed under the current economic model.

The majority of Latin American countries' mining legislation and codes were modified in recent years due to World Bank requirements, with the objective of permitting large-scale foreign investments in open-pit mining. The world's most powerful countries have gained interest in Latin America's abundant natural resources, making it a major destination for multinational mining companies.

Today, much of the economic and export growth that these nations are experiencing is from the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, whose extraction is generating serious and irreversible environmental, economic, social and political instability impacts.

Mining, with few exceptions, is at the center of tragic conflicts that involve local communities, indigenous, peasant farmers and Afro-descendant communities, workers and the general population. These communities are impacted by powerful transnational mining companies' activities, which follow identical patterns of behavior that disregard economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. The royalties and taxes paid by these mining companies are meager and insufficient as they don't compensate for the damage caused by their activities. Furthermore, this mining deepens a model that is based on the exportation of commodities, which will never raise these countries out of poverty.

This problem is based in the fact that some Latin American governments do not exercise any sovereignty over their resources: they don't exercise control over the exploitation and sale of their resources, and they don't even require these global companies to comply with labor rights or be accountable for the environmental damage they cause.

Currently, the Hemispheric Social Alliance is promoting the creation of the Continental Coordination against Transnational Large-scale Mining, which includes European networks due to the growing presence of European companies in Latin America. The Continental Coordination is a place of confluence for the major national and regional processes that work to stop the current mining policies, legislation, and the Free Trade Agreements that govern it.

The HSA's task is to support, make visible and accompany the social movements' agendas so that their demands, expectations and proposals are heard throughout the continent, and their success stories are known and replicated by other movements. The lines of action are:



- **Study and monitor: extractive industries' activities and the environmental and social impacts caused by them; the modification of national mining legislation; corporate actions undertaken within the framework of free trade agreements; and national incomes from mining.**
- **Collect and share successful experiences led by communities and social movements.**
- **Campaign on a national and continental level to denounce multinational mining companies and to defend the environment, jobs and local communities.**
- **Conferences for training and skills-building for communities in technical, economic and political aspects of large-scale mining and transnational corporations.**
- **Strengthen information-sharing and communication between the continent's organizations with meetings, bulletins, the webpage and emails.**
- **Support mobilizations and resistance processes on the local, national and international levels.**
- **Monitor and evaluate Corporate Social Responsibility commitments in extractive industries.**



INTEGRATION

In recent years, Latin America has had an intense debate about integration. Following the failure of the FTAA proposal in 2005, other projects have emerged that point in the same direction, giving priority to FTAs and trade. These projects aim to reinforce dependence on the United States and increase trade relations and investment with the European Union as a mechanism to build interaction between the economies. This is seen in proposals such as Bush's "Pathways to Prosperity" initiative, several countries connecting with the "Pacific Rim," some countries joining APEC, the integration of the Chilean, Peruvian and Colombian stock exchanges, and the recently launched Deep Integration Agreement between Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Peru. These projects share a common interest in trade liberalization and investment protection, thus departing from the spirit of integration based on brotherhood among nations and mutual benefit.

As an alternative and a response to these projects other integration processes have emerged or deepened, including ALBA, Mercosur, Unasur, and the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean States (OEALC in Spanish). These are integration efforts that seek to strengthen the region's autonomy and to value our own potentials, holding these ideals above capital flows and trading with the economic powers. These processes have also shown an interest in promoting social movements' participation, although it has not always been put into practice.

For their part, social movements have maintained a critical support, demanding that stable participation mechanisms be created with reinforced autonomy. They also demand that the agreements be deepened through changes in the productive model and the energy matrix, the promotion of food sovereignty, the strengthening of domestic and sub-regional markets, the enabling of the free circulation of people, and the construction of integration processes that are based in human rights and the interests of the people.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance has promoted dialogue on these integration processes and has participated in the institutional mechanisms as well as the alternative spaces that question the institutions. These alternative integration processes each have their strengths and weaknesses, but they unarguably reflect a greater protagonism for popular movements in the construction of new societies in the continent.

The lines of work in this area include:

- **Enhance the movements' capacity to analyze and participate in integration processes.**
- **Draw attention to and debate regional integration as an alternative to crisis, and the need for integration to be linked to a change in economic model.**
- **Promote mechanisms for the analysis, participation and positioning of the integration processes, and give importance to the topic in movements' agendas.**



FOREIGN MILITARY BASES, MILITARIZATION AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF SOCIAL PROTEST

Throughout its history the population of the Americas has suffered the repression of its social movements, the installation of military dictators and the presence of foreign military bases. These events and policies have been used to preserve and reproduce an economic model that concentrates wealth and impoverishes the majorities. They have also been used to avoid having to respond to the demands of the people, or to attempt to solve social conflicts using military means. In the name of security, the militarization of civilian life has become a threat to the peoples' intent to have an active role in the construction of new societies and seek regional integration.

In the recent past, the coup in Honduras, the Costa Rican Assembly's authorization for US troops to enter its territory, Plan Colombia and the now-suspended plan to install new US military bases in Colombia, the militarization of the fight against drug trafficking in Mesoamerica, as well as the criminalization of social protest in several countries such as Honduras, Colombia, Peru, Mexico and Guatemala, represent a worrying trend. The massive presence of foreign troops to militarize regions in the name of humanitarian assistance, such as in Haiti, and the persecution and violation of human rights of social leaders in several parts of the continent are obstacles to both the democratic development of the countries and the ability for social movements to have a significant role in social life.

To counter this trend, national movements' efforts are not enough, and it is necessary to coordinate a continental campaign with educational efforts and mobilizations to guarantee the preservation of human rights throughout the continent as it experiences important transformation processes.

To this end, and with the support of the most important social organizations and networks in the continent, the Hemispheric Social Alliance has launched the Continental Campaign Against Foreign Military Bases, Militarization and the Criminalization of Social Protest. The Campaign has formed a continental coordinating committee that is using a comprehensive approach that tackles the many nuances of this struggle.

This campaign requires the following:

- **Resources for managing and administering a website.**
- **Production of a regular continental bulletin.**
- **Strategizing meetings and timely mobilization in response to issues and events.**
- **National, sub-regional and continental meetings or conferences.**



TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES

During the 90s, there was an increase in foreign investment in Latin America that was principally directed towards extractive industries, public services and financial sectors. Contrary to expectations, in the majority of cases, these investments have not created better jobs, progress in infrastructure or strengthening of productive capacity. Also, as a result of these activities, the populations and local communities were negatively affected by the increase in the prices of public services, the degradation of the environment and the displacement of communities from their territories. The rights of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) have been prioritized over the rights of persons, including the rights of peoples and communities, labor rights, the respect of territories and the environment, and in many cases, the right to life.

This has been possible thanks to the permissiveness of many Latin American governments. It has been promoted by multilateral financial institutions with the support of global North governments, using Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), Bilateral Investment Treaties (BIT), and arbitration courts (such as the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes – ICSID), with the goal of guaranteeing the necessary conditions for making profits and reducing costs for the TNCs.

Peoples and communities have developed struggles in defense of their territories and rights, confronting the actions of TNCs on the local level. These strategies have been repeated throughout the continent, where peoples from different areas have common experiences. These peoples and communities can work together to share, accompany and support each others' local demands, a strategy that helps raise awareness of the problems and link the broader struggles.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance has accompanied these processes, particularly through participation in campaigns against specific TNCs such as Union Fenosa, pharmaceutical, food and water-business companies and Spanish multinationals. This accompaniment has included holding sessions of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) to judge the violations of human, economic, social and cultural rights committed by European companies in Latin America. These Tribunal sessions were held in Vienna (2006), Lima (2008), and Madrid (2010), and concluded with an opinion that condemns the European companies, the multilateral institutions and the European and Latin American governments for their complicity with the companies.

The PPT sessions helped bring to light the TNCs' actions, generate convergence among local struggles, and create important spaces for denunciation given the absence of suitable legal bodies. However, it is necessary to continue the work already developed and to widely disseminate the PPT's opinion so that society itself condemns the companies' actions. To do so, we propose the following actions:



- **Print and widely spread the PPT's opinion on local and regional levels.**
- **Continue looking for spaces for legal enforceability of the States' and TNCs' violations of human rights.**
- **Continue the campaign to suspend the Bilateral Investment Treaties (BIT) and the legal frameworks that protect investment and don't protect states and citizens.**

In terms of existing conflicts:

- **Develop legal actions.**
- **Make local struggles visible on a global level using campaigns and denouncements.**
- **Work to stop the privatization of public services.**
- **Promote the creation, coordination and exchange among groups that monitor TNCs.**
- **Hold meetings to discuss and coordinate between organizations to develop the above activities.**
- **Analyze the real scope of TNCs' "Corporate Social Responsibility" programs.**



CLIMATE CHANGE

It is increasingly evident that climate change is a reality that affects people and nature. Extreme climate phenomena are repeated ever more frequently with effects that have become absolutely devastating, as seen in 2010 in Pakistan, Central America and Haiti, among others. Climate change is largely caused by human activity that produces greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels for industrial and agro-industrial production, etc.

The solutions that have been proposed do not correspond to the urgency of this problem. Industrialized countries have not recognized their historic responsibility in the generation of climate change. To the contrary, they seek strategies to maintain their rhythm of production and shift their responsibility to the countries of the South. They have promoted false solutions to climate change, such as paying countries of the South to conserve their natural reserves to “compensate” for the developed world’s polluting practices. Far from targeting the real causes of the climate crisis, these mechanisms have turned nature and life into a market, creating new areas of financial speculation.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) together with social organizations and movements have demanded climate and ecological justice, understood as the recognition of the responsibility held by the countries of the North and the necessity to adopt real solutions that generate changes in the methods of production and consumption.

In the last two years, social movements in Latin America have opened up the topic of climate change to raise awareness and promote debate within the movements. In Latin America, organizational progress was made while preparing the activities parallel to the COP16 in Cancun, but continued growth is needed to build a stronger grassroots base. Further action is also needed to strengthen the critical analysis coming from the social movements to make more explicit the relationship between our daily problems, the global crisis and climate change. This analysis reveals the true causes of climate change and confronts the false solutions, and will also strengthen the global resistance and the search for alternatives.

The HSA has promoted taking a strong position on this issue and supports mobilization on a continental level, helping to place the issue on the agendas of social movements and organizations. The Alliance has also worked to demonstrate the links between climate change and the region’s historic struggles.

The diverse participation in preparing for the continent’s two main climate justice activities in 2010 (the First Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, and the activities parallel to the COP16 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), contributed to the given objective. However, it is necessary to strengthen the discussions and begin a process to more broadly disseminate the issue in social organizations within countries.



The HSA has decided to continue working on climate change focusing on three core activities:

- **Climate Justice Tribunal**
- **Process towards a global consultation on the rights of Mother Earth and climate change.**
- **Campaign "World Bank: out of the Climate"**

We propose to develop these three activities with the following lines of action:

- **Discussion and analysis: deepen the debate on climate change within social movements. In terms of alternatives, advance the reflections on climate justice and good living.**
- **Produce materials, carry out activities to spread information, and provide training on local, national and regional levels, to help position the topic on social movements' agendas.**
- **Monitor negotiations: participate in parallel activities and monitor the results of UNFCCC negotiations. Advocate with regional governments to influence their position in the negotiations.**
- **Coordination and mobilization: Strengthen the exchange among regional and international networks. Hold discussion and coordination meetings, and participate in global events and mobilizations.**



ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE G20

Facing the global crisis, most clearly shown by the financial earthquake at the end of 2008, there was an immediate response from the world powers who coordinated efforts to save the system that is responsible for increased inequality and poverty in the world. The leaders of the most powerful countries, who gathered in the G8¹, decided to reconfigure the G20² by inviting the Heads of State of this group, made up of large economies and “emerging” economies, to self-proclaim itself the “new forum for global economic governance.”

With this expansion, far from wanting to truly include countries of the South, the G8 has sought to save and stabilize the world economic system without generating any changes to the existing economic structures. Specifically, the G8 countries expect: 1) to impede progress in creating south-south alliances and silence the questioning of the liberal model, 2) regain some of their diminished legitimacy by including 12 “emerging” countries while also excluding over 170 others, and 3) access foreign exchange that accumulates in so-called emerging countries. These efforts have been futile, seen by the fact that the crisis has not yet been overcome, and to the contrary, the crisis deepens every day as seen in different parts of the world. In the second half of 2010, countries such as France, Spain, Portugal and many in Eastern Europe faced protests due to increased unemployment and cuts in social rights. Beginning in 2011, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen and Albania witnessed popular mobilization against rising food prices.

In this situation, social movements and organizations demand a structural change, which implies among other things: regulating the financial sector, ending tax havens, and creating a new financial architecture; halting market-based “solutions” to climate change, the anti-democratic Copenhagen Accord, and the false agreement of Cancun; ending the global food system that is based on agribusiness price speculation; and suspending all trade negotiations underway in the WTO and the bilateral and bi-regional trade and investment treaties.

The HSA has coordinated efforts with global networks and organizations, such as OWINFS and S2B, developing actions parallel to the G20 meetings and denouncing the continuation of their policies. In this regard, we have produced analysis and positions that have contributed to mobilization on a continental and global level.

Continuing this work, we propose the following lines of action:

1. G8 countries: Canada, United States, UK, France, Japan, Germany, Italy and Russia.

2. G20 countries: Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Australia, China, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Turkey and the European Union.



- **Analyze and take positions on the crisis and the policies implemented to resolve it.**
- **Participate in discussion and coordination spaces with other social networks and organizations, including the Social Forums and the alternatives parallel to the G20 meetings.**
- **Training and dissemination of the discussions about the crisis, its effects and the possible alternatives that emerge from social organizations.**
- **Strengthen social movements' mobilizations and coordination on the crisis and the policies promoted by the G20.**
- **Analyze and discuss among the social movements the participation of countries of the South in the G20 and the policies addressing the crisis.**
- **Advocate and lobby Latin American governments (those in the G20 and those that are not) to gain a change of position.**



AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Large transnational capital advances over rural spaces at an accelerated pace:

It controls the entire chain of production, the processing and sale of foods and diverse agricultural products. Using large investments and regulations, it takes possession of high quality lands and seeds. It subjects farmers to dependence on production inputs and it monopolizes channels for the sale of products, defining their purchase and sale prices. According to its own needs, it distributes agricultural production throughout the world based on each place's comparative advantage.

Moreover, transnational capital creates region by region a new rurality that is adapted to its interests, where food production takes a back seat. Mining, oil and gas exploitation, agro-fuel plantations, and building dams, highways or tourist investments have become the core activities that subordinate and displace local communities, who have had no place in the decision-making process about their own destiny.

Transnational corporations try to establish and control productive nucleuses in rural areas. They direct governmental efforts to support development to benefit their nucleuses, and they reorient population patterns and all of the economic and social activities in the area. These are understood to be the socio-economic processes generated around a central activity, and the population is integrated into the business sector's productive projects to guarantee their competitiveness and investors' success. Thus capital establishes in its own interests the comparative advantage of each region, working from the point of view of the reorganization of the international division of production and markets.

For the communities, this vision results in a high level of de-territorialization and an absolute absence of decision-making power over their own lives and territory.

To achieve hegemony over the agricultural sector and rural areas, large transnational capital imposes legislation that expands with their growing political influence. They push mining codes, intellectual property rights laws, and forestry laws. This legislation is linked to free trade agreements that guarantee transnational capital: its extraterritoriality in disputes with nationals, "legal certainty" or immunity from changes in the laws of each country, complete access to the ownership of essential public services and public procurement, and absolute freedom to circulate capital and goods. This means that ever more local farmers, peasants, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and small businesses are displaced, whether due to unequal competition with imports or mega-projects and the environmental damage they produce.

Mexico's experience, for example, indicates that substituting national and local food production for a dependency on imports, with the pretext of accessing cheaper food, not only ruins national farmers but also ultimately leads to rising food prices, known in Mexico as the "Tortilla Crisis." Dependence on food imports leads to hunger, mass emigration and the rejection of sovereignty.



Faced with these facts and trends, the continent's social organizations, especially indigenous and small-scale farmer organizations, have presented proposals for alternative models for the rural sector and food production. The Andean Coordination of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI in Spanish) has presented a program for the Good Life, which emphasizes that capital profits as the principal motor of production must be replaced with the care of Mother Earth and life, respect for the fundamental rights of peoples, the healthy production of foods, and meeting the basic needs of all people. Small-scale farmer organizations have insisted on the need to recognize the role of farmers in supplying healthy foods, and they propose that strengthening small-scale agriculture will counter climate change and its devastation.

The Hemispheric Social Alliance continues its project to unify the social organizations' efforts in support of alternatives proposed by indigenous, Afro-descendant and small-scale farmer organizations. The Alliance has been present in international and regional meetings to try to exchange proposals and construct unifying positions that foment mobilization and civil resistance to the transnational corporations' model, doctrines and neoliberal policies.

Moreover, the Alliance has facilitated the training of the continent's rural community leaders on the main issues that affect their future and their territories. This work needs to be continued with the following lines of action:

- **Strengthen joint efforts to build unifying positions among different rural organizations.**
- **Document and disseminate information to shine a light on the rural problems and food production issues among rural movements.**
- **Reflect on the alternatives to stop speculation and the financialization of agricultural production.**