

Backgrounder on Common Frontiers

Prepared by Common Frontiers

Common Frontiers, a multi-sectoral organization involving churches, unions, international development organizations and social organizations, is leading an initiative to review NAFTA after its decade in operation, while at the same time proposing alternatives to current 'free trade' models.

Common Frontiers grew out of the opposition movement to the original Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. To be effective, Canadian organizations realized that they needed to cooperate across sectors nationally, and also across borders. Common Frontiers has had a historic role in opposing NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and more recently has collaborated in the successful continental effort to derail the Jan. 1st, 2005 implementation of the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas). Common Frontiers is the Canadian representative of the Hemispheric Social Alliance (H.S.A.) and as such has been participating in an extraordinary experience in cross-border social movement building.

A look at a few of our member organizations.

The Canadian Labour Congress is the voice of trade unions in Canada and represents 2.5 million working men and women in all sectors of the Canadian economy.

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives is an organization of 11 member churches and church congregations working jointly to promote social justice issues. Kairos has more than 100 local groups across the country with thousands of activists who are putting their faith into action.

Founded in 1985, the **Council of Canadians** is Canada's pre-eminent citizens' watchdog organization, comprised of over 100,000 members and more than 70 chapters across the country. Strictly non-partisan, the Council lobbies Members of Parliament, conducts research and runs national campaigns.

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation is a coalition of some 100 Canadian organizations who seek to change the course of human development in ways that favour social and economic equity, democratic participation, environmental integrity and respect for human rights.

A sense of our work.

Common Frontiers representatives bring a wide spectrum of experience to both the activist and policy work. We have contributed to ground breaking Canadian research on the impact on people's lives of 11 years of NAFTA. Common Frontiers has also contributed regularly to the analysis found in documents published by the H.S.A., in particular the Alternatives for the Americas document which is a blueprint for a fair trade system that would create closer ties between peoples and nations in the Americas