



U.S.-Colombia FTA talking points

In Colombia the FTA will:

- Undermine human rights and fuel the fires of conflict. Colombia is still a country at war. Its record on human rights is dismal. Attacks on civil society, union leaders, Afro-Colombians and Indigenous people continue with impunity. The FTA will deepen the economic disparity, which is a root cause of the conflict, and diminish human rights.
- Destroy small farmers. The agreement will favor only a small sector of Colombia's large industrial farmers who export to the U.S. Overall income for small farmers would drop by more than 50%, whipping them out as happened in Mexico where 1.3 million farmers have been displaced since NAFTA. Farmers forced off land will add to Colombia's 3.8 million internally displaced people, which is already second only to the Sudan, and disproportionately impacts Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities.
- Harm poor consumers. A corporate monopoly on basic grains as a result of the FTA could provoke a steep price climb in food staples, as occurred in Mexico in the case of tortilla as a result of NAFTA.
- Lock in corporate take over of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian territories. The internal conflict has disproportionately displaced Afro-Colombian and Indigenous peoples from their resource-rich, ancestral territories, violating their constitutional and legal rights. Laws put in place in anticipation of the FTA to attract investment dismantle these legal rights. For example, the Rural Development Law allows displaced people's land that is claimed by corporate interest and their armed backers to gain legal title if occupied for five years. FTA investment rules will make it too costly to reverse these legal reforms.
- Harm workers and environment. Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for union and labor organizers. There is little that the labor chapter can do to address the continued violence and impunity in the country. Moreover, the government has demonstrated little will to promote the labor laws and policies which are necessary for the full exercise of the international core labor rights
- Hinder access to life-saving medicines. People in developing countries need affordable access to essential medicines, not only for pandemic diseases like HIV/AIDS, but for a whole variety of serious health conditions. The Colombia FTA undermines the right to affordable medicines. This will further weaken the Colombian health system that only covers 10% of Afro-Colombians.
- Increase the burden on women, children, and the poor. The FTA promotes the privatization and deregulation of essential services such as water, healthcare and education. As rates increase, these services become less accessible, women and the poor.
- Undermine U.S. and Colombian sovereignty. Like NAFTA, this FTA allows corporations to sue governments that pass environmental and public health laws that might reduce corporate profits.
- Threaten the Amazon and wildlife. The FTA will stimulate an increase in logging and other extraction projects in the Colombian Amazon rain forest that mostly reside in Afro-Colombian and Indigenous territories. This will further endanger the lungs of the globe and precious species.

- Pirate traditional knowledge. The FTA will pave the way for large pharmaceutical and agribusiness corporations to patent traditional knowledge, seeds, and life forms. This opens the door to bio-piracy of the Andean-Amazon region and threatens the ecological, medicinal and cultural heritage of Afro-Colombians and Indigenous peoples.

In the U.S. the FTA will:

- Increase drug trafficking. Colombia is the world's largest producer of cocaine. Corporate monopoly over Colombia's basic grain market will leave some small farmers with no other alternative than to join the lucrative drug trade.
- Increase forced immigration to the U.S. Almost all people everywhere want to stay in their home country. However U.S. government economic and military policies are a critical factor in uprooting people from their homes and livelihoods. In the context of 3.8 million internally displaced, the FTA will increase forced migration abroad and to the U.S.
- Expand export-driven agriculture. The FTA benefits U.S. corporate agribusiness and industrial farms, accelerating agricultural consolidation and further undermining family farmers in the U.S. and in developing countries.