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Fair Trade for a Better World

Comments on Negotiating Objectives Regarding Modernization of North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico Docket ID USTR-2017-006 Submitted June 7, 2017

Fair World Project is a nonprofit organization that advocates for a just global economy. Based on our extensive work on sustainable agriculture issues alongside farmer and farmworker organizations, we have compiled the following comments on the Negotiating Objectives for NAFTA.

- **All stakeholders must be at the table.** Previous trade agreements, including TPP and NAFTA, were created by large corporations for large corporations. Future agreements need to be created with a broad range of stakeholders at the table, especially those who have been harmed by past trade agreements, including low-wage and middle class workers, but also small-scale, sustainable farmers, farmworkers, consumer advocates, environmental protectors, and indigenous communities from all member countries.
- **Preference should be given to agroecology and food justice.** In the decades after NAFTA went into effect, millions of agricultural jobs were lost in Mexico as the U.S. dumped cheap corn and other crops into Mexican markets, and farmers in all three participating countries lost income on average. The next round of trade agreements must prioritize agricultural systems that ensure fair payments for farmers, decent agricultural jobs, biodiversity and regenerative agriculture, and healthy food.
- **The climate crisis must be addressed.** This is especially important now that the U.S. has renounced and withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement. If we are serious about addressing the climate crisis, climate goals must receive priority in binding trade agreements. Otherwise, corporate profit motives will continue to trump environmental concerns, and marginalized rural communities are already disproportionately feeling the negative impact of the climate crisis.
- **People must be prioritized over profits.** Previous trade agreements drove a race to the bottom, encouraging companies to move jobs to where wages are lower and labor rights not enforced. In this scenario, no one wins. Fair trade means fair payments, living wages, and dignified work for people in all participating countries. Provisions such as Investor State Dispute Settlement, which allows companies to sue over regulations that interfere with profits, prioritize corporate profits above people.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. We look forward to a fair renegotiation process that benefits farmers, working families, and consumers in the United States as well as Canada and Mexico.