

**FTAA - COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON PARTICIPATION BY CIVIL
SOCIETY**

COVER SHEET

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	Chile
Organization (if applicable)	
Country/ Region	

Number of pages	3	Language	Spanish
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TOPICS COVERED (Indicate all topics delat with)

Agriculture	Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duty	
Competition Policy	Civil Society	X
Dispute Settlement	Electronic Commerce	
Government Procurement	Smaller Economies	
Intellectual Property Rights	FTAA Process	
Investments	Other: Assignment and access to economic and political rights	
Market Access		
Services		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – maximum two pages – (See Open Invitation)

In response to the invitation to submit proposals to the FTAA, the Centro de estudios de Desarrollo suggests that one of the essential aspects to be taken into account in this trade process is that of participation by the public at large.

This is because the effects of the agreement involve the entire population. By the same token, some sectors will be favored more than others by the trade agreement, and it is possible that certain sectors may be harmed in the short term. It follows that this trade agreement could even give rise to conflicts between the nations involved.

However, the capacity for organization by civil society differs from that of business and/or financial associations, so that it is not easy to predict the demands of civil society with respect to these trade agreements. This lack of organization on the part of civil society also generates costs for governments intent on communicating the benefits and potential costs of these agreements. Consequently, once the trade agreement becomes reality and during the natural process of adjustment in the markets for goods and services, it is likely that these agreements may fall out of favor with the population. For generally the process of adjustment will necessitate labor mobility, and inevitably some productive sectors will lose out and see their incomes reduced along with their capacity to generate employment.

In this context the Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo believes it appropriate to identify methods that will permit the public to:

- 1- Understand what the FTAA means in terms of commitments and future obligations.
- 2- Understand the potential effects of the FTAA. This requires discussion based on the differing evaluations of this integration process.
- 3- Generating opinions on the part of the public. The first two steps will enable each citizen to develop an informed opinion on the topic of the FTAA.
- 4- Conveying their opinion. Once citizens have formed their opinions, it is possible to conduct a survey to ascertain this. At the same time, to the extent that this surveying of opinions is not a mere gathering of information but that this information is used for decision-making, it will help to legitimize the FTAA in advance, as well as to detect potential points of conflict and design strategies for eliminating them.

It should be emphasized that this process cannot be conceived solely as an instrument to permit validation of the FTAA. It is therefore necessary that there be a commitment to give serious consideration to the opinions of the public in the free trade agreement.

The CED believes that in this process it would be advisable to apply different methods and media. In the first stage, it would be sufficient to use deliberative surveys to gather information before expanding the debate. In a second stage, it is proposed that both virtual and tradition fora be established for deliberation and the holding of discussions by means of the communications media.

The CED is open to participating in activities of this type which could favor the legitimacy of the trade agreement. Finally, we thank the organizers for the opportunity to voice our opinions on this topic.