

# ***INTERFAITH WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT***

✠ A WASHINGTON-BASED WORKING GROUP WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM A RANGE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTED TO ASSERTING A STRONGER PRESENCE OF COMMUNITIES OF FAITH IN PUBLIC POLICY DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT ✠  
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The Honorable Charles Rangel (D-NY)  
Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee  
House of Representatives  
Washington D.C.

January 17, 2007

Dear Representative Rangel,

On behalf of the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment, a coalition of faith based organizations that are concerned about a just U.S. trade policy. We want to congratulate you on the gains made by your party in the recent elections and your subsequent chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee.

We know that you will be under tremendous pressures in your new role as Committee Chair. Because we have seen in the media that you will be meeting with Susan Schwab later this week, we want to bring our concerns about U.S. Trade policy to you. IWG has in the past clearly articulated to you our serious objections to the current trade model, which needs a clear rethinking and reorientation. U.S. trade policies have clearly not worked for the people of the Global South.

We urge that when you meet with Ms. Schwab you bring up the many concerns which have been raised by the Interfaith Working Group and others relevant to the Free Trade Agreements and the model in which they are imbedded. The accompanying document, which we produced last fall outlines, our many disagreements with the Peruvian Agreement, but the same logic applies to other FTAs under consideration.

Our concern is that Congress, in the spirit of finding middle ground on the agreements, will settle for minor adjustments, such as adding labor and environmental clauses. We want to state emphatically that this kind of accommodation is totally unacceptable to the IWG and the people whom we represent. We trust that you will not resort to this tactic, but will insist on a full renegotiation of the agreements in order to truly address the many problems inherent in the current model.

We are watching closely for the outcome of this meeting and subsequent positioning and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss our concerns.

Sincerely,

Maria Riley, OP  
Co-chair  
Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment