

TRADEJUSTICE

New York Metro

For Immediate Release
9/21/10

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Activists Protest Presidents of Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Dominican Republic for Free Trade Policies and Abuse of Environment and Indigenous Communities

Who: TradeJustice NY Metro, Glassbead Collective, Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, New York Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Rainforest Relief, New York Climate Action, Group, Citizens for Fair Trade in New York, and The Tikisi Group.

What: Activists will stage protests, leaflettings, and candlelight vigils at Council of the Americas sponsored receptions featuring the presidents of Peru, Colombia, Chile, and the Dominican Republic.

When/Where:

Wednesday, September 22, Noon - 2:30 p.m. Protest Sebastián Piñera, President of Chile
AS/COA, 680 Park Ave @ 68th St (6 to 68 Street-Hunter College /Lexington Avenue)

Wednesday, September 22, 2010 7 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Protest Alan García, President of Peru
AS/COA, 680 Park Ave @ 68th St (6 to 68 Street-Hunter College /Lexington Avenue)

Thursday, September 23, 2010 8 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia
Essex House, 160 Central Park South (59th Street) between 7th and 6th Avenues Q to 57th Street and 7th Avenue or F to 57th Street and 6th Avenue.

Friday, September 24, 2010 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Leonel Fernández, President of the Dominican Republic
AS/COA, 680 Park Ave @ 68th St (6 to 68 Street-Hunter College /Lexington Avenue)

Why: With heads of state from around the world in New York this week for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly, the Council of the Americas, an alliance of corporations pushing for the expansion of free trade, will hosts a series of talks with the presidents of Chile, Peru, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic - all countries facing environmentally devastating resource extraction projects linked to human rights violations. The talks are sponsored by corporations directly linked to human rights and environmental atrocities, including oil giant Chevron and mining companies Barrick Gold and Freeport-McMoRan.

NAFTA-style free trade agreements, which encourage foreign investment by extractive corporations include state-investor provisions that give corporations the right to sue governments for enforcing their environmental laws. These provisions have emboldened environmentally destructive corporations, increased the repression of indigenous peoples, and exacerbated the destruction wildlife, pristine ecosystems, and the lands of peasant and indigenous communities. Chile, Peru, and the Dominican Republic currently have free trade agreements with the US (the agreements with Peru and the Dominican Republic were passed under the current sitting presidents), and a free trade agreement with Colombia, strongly supported by President Santos, awaits a vote in the US Congress.

Free trade agreements have contributed to job loss in New York and also impede New York's sovereignty. Governor Pataki committed New York to side agreements to the free trade agreements that require New York state and municipal governments to adhere to free trade rules in government purchasing. As a result of these rules, New York risks lawsuits from foreign corporations if it chooses to implement selective purchasing rules based on human rights or environmental criterion. New York City is a major consumer of tropical rainforest wood for municipal projects and thus a major driver of Amazon rainforest destruction. Environmentalists have pursued selective purchasing legislation to prohibit government procurement of rainforest wood for years, but this legislation is now impeded by the threat of a legal challenge from a Peruvian corporation, as Peru is the largest supplier of rainforest wood used by New York City.