FTAs, Civil Society and Access to Medicines

Germán Holguin
Director Misión Salud (Colombia)
Miembro de AIS-LAC
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The Landscape

• FTAs between countries with different degrees of development pose a real threat to access to medicines in weak countries

• As to IP FTAs intend to establish TRIPS plus standards, in order to strengthen multinational pharmaceutical companies’ monopolies

• This results in costs to public health, as it slows down the entry of generic medicine
Expected impact of the original Colombia-EU FTA

• Increase of protected active ingredients from 4% to 30% of the market
• Increase in medicine prices: 46%
• Increase in health spending: up to US$ 1.000 million annually
• 5 millions Colombians would lose access
• In AIDS/HIV, 12.000 patients would see their life expectancy decrease between 5.3 and 9.9 years
• When aware of these studies, Paraguay and Bolivia asked what would happen if they would negotiate a FTA with the US. My answer was: **the same or worse**

• *Ladder strategy*:
  - TRIPS foundation for NAFTA
  - NAFTA > > EU-Chili
  - EU-Chili > > CAFTA
  - CAFTA > > US-Colombia/Peru
  - EU-Colombia > > next FTA

• This is a **universal risk**
  - US: Singapore, Morroco
• Civil Society has the possibility to avoid the threat posed by the FTAs

• This happened in the Colombia-US FTA;
  – CS attending negotiation rounds,
  – Development of studies,
  – informing public opinion
  – visit to nearly 50 members of US Congress

• Alliance of CS Colombia with OXFAM America and the Catholic Church in Washington DC
Association Agreement Andean Community (AC) with EU

• Statement by EU: the objective is to negotiate the highest standards of IP protection in the world
• This would cause a health disaster in the Andean populations.
• An alliance between Andean CS and Europe CS could avoid this
• Mision Salud would coordinate in AC, HAI Europe in EU.
Conclusion

• The FTAs pose a threat to the population’s health in developing countries
• CS has the possibility to neutralise this threat.
• In the AA AC-EU this work could be done by Andean CS and European CS
• Difficult task but we have to try. *CS does not have the duty to win the battle. It does have the duty to fight it.*
Mision Salud
misionsalud@yahoo.com
www.misionsalud.org