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## **PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE THREE NAFTA COUNTRIES ANNOUNCE TASK FORCE ON NAFTA RENEGOTIATION**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Following a conference held on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, which took a critical look at how NAFTA has impacted the North American region, legislators from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico agreed today to launch a Task Force to push for renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The Task Force on Renegotiating NAFTA, will be chaired by NDP Trade Critic, Peter Julian (Burnaby-New Westminster), U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), the Honourable Yeidckol Polevnsky (Senator for Mexico State and Vice-president of the Mexican Senate), and the Honourable Victor Quintana (Deputy of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico), with support from their respective political parties. Members of the Task Force undertake to promote within their respective legislatures the renegotiation of NAFTA.

The objectives of the Task Force include transforming and rebuilding NAFTA in order to achieve a fair trade policy. This fair trade model is designed to safeguard the sovereignty of the three countries, and includes enforceable measures for the protection of workers and the environment, and allows for all three governments to regulate in the public interest.

“In the United States, Mexico and Canada, income inequality has grown dramatically in the almost fifteen years since the free trade agenda took effect. In Canada, families are worse off today than they were when the first agreement was implemented in 1989,” said Julian. “More and more Canadians work harder without being able to keep up. Over 291,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Canada since 2002 with increasing hardships in softwood lumber communities and elsewhere in Canada.”

“NAFTA has sucked good American jobs away, destroyed the Mexican countryside, deepened our immigration crisis, wiped out the Mexican and middle and small business classes, not brought about promised investments in infrastructure, and hammered communities across the continent. It’s time for Mexico, Canada, and the United States to work together to change this flawed trade model”, said Kaptur.

“It is indispensable that legislators from all three North American partner countries work together to design an alternative project that takes into account each nation’s sovereignty, environmental protection, economic competitiveness, migration, and labor rights,” said Polevnsky. “We must work hand in hand with civic organizations to launch a progressive program that considers the well-being of human beings as the *raison d’être* of public policy. The Mexican Senate is looking forward to host this Trilateral Task Force in the near future”, she said.

“I am pleased that our three nations are working together to build better trading partnerships that support the principles of social justice, environmental sustainability, and human rights”, stated NDP Leader, Jack Layton.

Members of the Task Force are scheduled to meet in the spring 2008, at a location to be announced soon.

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