



REPORT SUMMARY

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Globalization at the Crossroads in
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GLOBALIZATION AT THE CROSSROADS

Ten Years of NAFTA
in the
San Diego / Tijuana Border
Region



GLOBALIZACIÓN EN LA ENCRUCIJADA

Diez Años del TLCAN
en la Región Fronteriza
San Diego / Tijuana

Environmental Health Coalition
Coalición de Salud Ambiental

Globalization at the Crossroads

Ten Years of NAFTA in the San Diego/Tijuana Border Region

SUMMARY

Globalization at the Crossroads documents the impacts of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the San Diego/Tijuana border region. A case study of TV manufacturing in Tijuana, the “TV Capital of the World,” illustrates the global flow of corporations, goods and workers. The report exposes how today’s corporate globalization puts profits above health, the environment, workers’ rights and democracy.

The promises of NAFTA

- New jobs
- Lower prices for consumer goods
- Improved public health
- Improved environmental quality
- Reduced migration from Mexico to the U.S.

The reality of NAFTA

Economic instability. In the TV industry in the U.S. in 1967, there were 90,000 good paying, factory jobs. Today, there are barely 3,000 left. The initial boom in Mexico as jobs moved there from the U.S. ended when factories began moving to lower-wage countries, especially in Asia. In Tijuana’s TV plants, 3,446 workers lost their jobs between 2001 and 2003.

Poverty. Pockets of poverty more than doubled in San Diego during NAFTA. 35,000 more children live in poverty in San Diego County than in 1989. In Tijuana, full-time factory workers live in squatters settlements without running water, sewage, electricity or garbage pickup.

Worker injustice. The 28 petitions filed under NAFTA’s labor commission since 1994 failed to correct one health or safety issue or support the recognition of a single independent union. Worker

injury and illness rates are 250% higher in Mexico than in comparable U.S. factories. There are no independent unions in Tijuana’s factories. Negative pregnancy tests are routinely required as a condition of employment in Tijuana’s maquiladoras.

Environmental injustice. Mexico’s spending on pollution monitoring and factory inspections is down 45% since 1994. Only 5% of companies required to report industrial toxic discharges do so in Mexico. The border toxic waste tracking system Haztraks was cancelled in 2003. There are 66 documented toxic dumps along the border. Tijuana’s Metales y Derivados is the landmark case of the failure of NAFTA to protect the environment, proving that the petition process can document toxic dumps endangering communities, but has no authority to clean them up.

Principles of Fair Trade

Today, trade agreements based on the failed NAFTA model are being negotiated around the world. EHC calls for a halt to unfair trade agreements like NAFTA and recommends that the following **five fair trade principles** be incorporated into trade agreements.

- Include enforceable environmental protections
- Conform to International Labor Organization standards
- Give precedence to citizens’ rights over investor rights
- Defend democracy through transparency and public participation
- Transfer economic resources to reduce inequality between signatory countries

