

## **Globalization of Human (In)security?: Protecting Public Goods in the Emerging Economic Integration of the Americas**

**Abstract By: Obijiofor Aginam\***, for the Conference on “Re-Mapping the Americas: Globalisation, Regionalisation and the FTAA”, hosted by the University of the West Indies & the University of Alberta, 19 – 21 October, 2005, Trinidad and Tobago

*Integrative tendencies in international life, combined with the widely imagined future of a cyber world, ensure that a global civilization in some form will take shape early in the twenty-first century. But this probable world is a civilization only in a technical sense of being bound together by a high rate of interaction and real time awareness, with reduced relevance being attached to distance, boundaries, and the territorial features of the domains being administered by sovereign states. ...The current ideological climate, with its neo-liberal dogma...suggest that the sort of global civilization that is taking shape will be widely perceived, not as fulfillment of a vision of unity and harmony, but as a dysutopian result of globalism-from-above that is mainly constituted by economic ideas and pressures – Richard Falk<sup>1</sup>*

**This above charge is an implicit challenge to globalization that is driven by neo-liberal dogma of free trade, minimization of intrusions on the market, and the marginalization of the capacity of the state to provide public goods to its vulnerable populations. This charge presents complex challenges in the Americas because of the inequalities and disparities between the countries in the region. This paper assesses the tension between trade liberalization and the provision of public goods based on merging trade principles that seem to constrain national policies on the environment, labour standards, human rights and public health. The paper assesses some of the cases from the jurisprudence of the World Trade Organization to critique the marginalization of public health imperatives by regime of free trade. The paper seeks ways “humanize” free trade to reflect the emerging “norms” of human security and global public goods, especially in the Americas, a region characterized by socio-economic disparities.**

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<sup>1</sup> “The Coming Global Civilization: Neo-Liberal or Humanist” (1998)