

KOREAN AMERICANS AGAINST WAR AND NEOLIBERALISM (KAWAN)

53-22 Roosevelt Ave., Second Floor, Woodside, New York 11377

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 29, 2006

CONTACT: Young Choe, 347-885-9226, choeyoung@gmail.com
Cheehyung Kim, 646-831-0385, cheehyungkim@gmail.com

**KOREAN FARMERS AND WORKERS, AMERICAN LABOR AND ACTIVISTS TO PROTEST
SOUTH KOREA - U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT TALKS IN SEATTLE**

What: From Sept 6th to the 9th, hundreds from across the US will join a 55-member South Korean delegation of workers, farmers, and activists to protest the biggest Free Trade Agreement since NAFTA. The Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KorUS-FTA) negotiations, hosted by the Washington Council on International Trade, will take place at the WA State Convention and Trade Center during this time.

When and where:

Wed 9/6 at 9AM - Press Conference, *WA State Convention and Trade Center, (FTA negotiation site)*, with KoA, KAWAN, and Korean laborers, farmers, women, and environmental groups

Wed 9/6 at 12:30PM - Opening Rally and March, *Westlake Park*, with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, the King County Labor Council, and the AFL-CIO

Wed 9/6 at 6:30PM - International Cultural Performance and Candlelight Vigil, *Westlake Park*, with Dohee Lee, SKIM, Abyssinian Creole, Cuchata, and performers from South Korea

Fri 9/8 at 1PM - Sam-bo Il-bae March, *Westlake Park*, Sam Bo Il Bae literally means "three steps, one bow." Originally born from the Buddhist tradition, participants do the entire march by taking three steps, then a full bow to the ground. In the process, we demonstrate our deep commitment to the struggle.

Sat 9/9 at 1PM - Funeral March and Closing Rally, *WA State Convention and Trade Center, Federal Building, Steinbrueck Park*. A Korean funeral procession will leave from the Trade Center to the Federal Building, where hundreds of supporters will join the march and continue to Steinbrueck Park for a rally.

Who: The Korean Alliance Against Korea-US FTA (KoA), a South Korean coalition of 280 organizations, and Korean Americans Against War and Neoliberalism (KAWAN), a U.S. coalition of progressive Korean-American organizations joined by over 70 other groups and contingents from across the United States, representing unions and women, environment, and immigrants groups.

Why: The Seattle negotiations are the 3rd round of FTA talks between Korea and the U.S. KoA and KAWAN's joint protests began during the first round of talks in Washington DC in June, and by the second round of talks in July in Seoul, over 100,000 people protested in the streets.

Free trade policies like the proposed KorUS-FTA have had devastating effects on the lives of Americans as well as workers in the FTA partner countries. Though Free Trade Agreements are widely touted for encouraging foreign direct investment, creating jobs and jump-starting economies, most of these investments are in mergers and acquisitions, resulting in job losses. NAFTA sent formerly high paying manufacturing jobs to Mexico, forced Mexican subsistence farmers to the cities, drove wages down, leading many to risk their lives immigrating to the U.S.

South Koreans fear a similar fate for their farmers, as well as the worsening of working conditions. The upcoming FTA negotiations address some 17 trade categories; the primary issues for Koreans are agriculture (especially rice and beef), automobiles, pharmaceuticals and the film screen quota. The two coalitions, KoA and KAWAN, formed this year in response to the KorUS-FTA, but the main actors—the farmers, workers, students, and activists, have a shared history of struggle starting with the anti-WTO protests in Seattle (1999), Cancun (2003), and, more recently, Hong Kong (2005).

###