

The use of the verb “to delegate” is important as it clarifies the relationship of media to the people. Having a voice and publishing in media are a delegated right, therefore media has the responsibility to respond to what people want and to give them voice.

But one right and responsibility that cannot be delegated, but needs to be undertaken by all, is the need to save our “species in extinction” so that corporate globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism cannot deal the final blow. ♪

*María Suárez Toro, a Puerto Rican and Costa Rican feminist journalist and professor of communications, is with Feminist International Radio Endeavour, more popularly known*

### **Update on the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)**

■ On 25 January 2004, the U.S. Trade Representative Office (USTR) and Costa Rican representatives announced that, after two additional rounds of intense negotiations that were held this month, Costa Rica was ready to join the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Costa Rica had been the sole Central American country to leave the official CAFTA negotiations in December 2003 without agreeing to the CAFTA, saying that it needed more time to work out some of the sensitive issues in the agreement which included the telecommunications and insurance sectors and various agriculture and textile goods. In order to reach an agreement, Costa Rica had to abandon its earlier hard-line position against opening up its telecommunications sector. The country agreed to the gradual opening of its telecommunications market in three sectors: private network, internet, and wireless services. It is expected that private network services and internet services will be opened by 2006, by which time the country must create a regulatory framework. Wireless services will be liberalised the following year. Costa Rica did, however, manage to hold firm in not opening up mainland telephone services to competition. The U.S., yielding to demands for slower liberalisation of Costa Rica’s state monopoly on insurance, has agreed that country’s insurance market will be opened by 1 January 2008, with the remainder to open by 1 January 2011. (Farah Nageer, Center of Concern, IGTN Secretariat)

■ Following the announcement that Costa Rica had signed the CAFTA, trade union and civil society representatives from the country reaffirmed their commitment to publicly oppose the agreement. Fabio Chaves, a union leader for a group of employees of the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICU), the state telecommunications enterprise, has said that they will now focus their efforts on street protests. Chaves stated that “liberalising the telecoms market would only benefit the big transnational companies in Latin America, to the detriment of consumers.” (Mora, J. E., “Costa Rican

*as FIRE, which has been innovating in web-streaming of radio for years.*

*Margaret Thompson an associate professor in the Department of Mass Communications and Journalism Studies at the University of Denver, and teaches international communication. She has coordinated a special study to determine FIRE’s role in the context of the challenges that alternative media in Latin America face amid the pressure of privatisation, militarisation and globalisation in the region.*

*Note: This was presented by FIRE at WSIS in December, 2003. Since that time and when this was published in mid-2004, much has happened with regards to the examples of communications, fundamentalisms and militarization in Costa Rica. What follows is an update by María Suárez Toro.*

Activists Pledge to Keep up Strike against Trade Deal,” South-North Development Monitor, January 30, 2004)

■ In 31 June 2004, more than 12,000 people, representing civil society, marched through the streets of the capital city of San José, demanding their government not to sign the free trade agreements.

### **Update on the priest involved in the radio scandal**

■ In December 2003, the controversial priest, Father Minor Calvo Aguilar, was put in prison in Costa Rica, arrested by judicial officials for being the principal planner in the murder of journalist Parmenio Medina Pérez, who was assassinated in July of 2001.

### **Update about the International Law Enforcement Academy of the Americas**

■ In 6 June 2003, the United States and Costa Rica had signed an agreement to create an international law enforcement academy for the Americas. The academy was to be located in the Costa Rican capital of San Jose. Its stated objective was to train police officers throughout the Americas to handle transnational crime issues, such as drug trafficking, money laundering, sexual exploitation of children, and violence against women. The school would have been ran by the U.S. State, Treasury and Justice Department, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. According to Costa Rican law, the agreement would have to be approved by the Costa Rican legislature before going to effect.

■ Ever since the agreement was signed and people began to know about it, numerous civil protests began to emerge in the country, stating that a country with no army could not host such a school.

■ Legislators in a special parliamentary commission established to address such issues began to listen to their constituencies, thus deciding to write a letter to the U.S. Administration requesting clarification as to the fact that the school would never become a military institution.

■ Since a response to such a request never came, the project was archived for good.