agreement: what could we do to prevent that such an agreement was signed? That was our line. If you think that an agreement is negative anyhow, as was the case of FTAA, even for the other TUs of the continent, it is risky to tactically only work on the social clause issue. What if all of the governments would accept to have this social clause within the FTAA?38

We will analyze the different strategies of TUs in more detail in the second part of this report. Here we want to underline that, as already suggested, the CUT Brazil played a key role in the creation of the Hemispheric Social Alliance39, whose main focus from the beginning was to coordinate the struggles against the FTAA.

3. Trade Union Instruments and strategies to face FTAs: achievements and problems

To consider the instruments and strategies used by the TUs we must consider the political dynamic and context and its evolution in the last decades. After NAFTA went into effect in 1994, the U.S. started to negotiate several other FTAs with Latin American countries. After first discussions on the FTAA at the Miami summit in 1994, negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an extension of the NAFTA to all of the countries of the Americas (excluding Cuba), were launched in 1998 and immediately found strong opposition that included many trade unions. The FTAA project finally collapsed after the failure of the heads of states summit held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005, following years of mobilization by a large coalition of social movements and trade unions across the whole continent. Although 26 of the 34 governments present at the Mar del Plata negotiations pledged to meet again in 2006 to resume negotiations, no such meeting took place.

Another framework modification of the last decades is the increased negotiations by Central and Latin American Countries and/or areas with the EU. It would however be impossible in our short report to analyze these negotiations in detail, since it would also need a deeper analysis of the EU TUs strategies and positions.

38 Kield Jacobsen, Interview on March 3rd, 2009, by Bruno Ciccglione
39 The Hemispheric Social Alliance was created in 1997. For details and members see information at http://www.asc-hsa.org/