

**DECLARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
CONFERENCE ON “THE ROLE OF TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS IN THE
FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY”**

The representatives of the international trade union movement and national organisations affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation and the Global Union Federations gathered in Guatemala from 29 to 31 January 2008 for the above conference,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:

- That in light of the impunity for the high level of violence against trade union, social and indigenous leaders in Guatemala, and the repeated denunciations and appeals made to the international community by Guatemalan and Central American unions, the international trade union movement has come together in Guatemala and held this Conference to mark its solidarity and support for the trade unions and people of Guatemala and its condemnation of impunity.
- That the new President of Guatemala, Álvaro Colom Caballeros, has expressed his political will and commitment to fight for social justice and genuine rule of law in Guatemala, a position welcomed by the union movement.
- That the situation in Guatemala is the most drastic manifestation of the growing disrespect for human and trade union rights in the Central American region, with blatant violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, requiring united action at regional and international level, together with a real commitment by the governments of the region to fulfilling their obligations to respect and protect the fundamental rights of their citizens.

The Conference therefore affirms and DECLARES:

1. The firm position of the national and international trade union movement in its rejection of all types of violence and rights violations, and its condemnation of the impunity in Guatemala and the rest of Central America.
2. Our resolve and commitment to continue to assist and support the Guatemalan trade union movement, to promote the development of united bodies and channels through which they can confront the challenges raised by the human and trade union rights violations affecting men and women alike.
3. The firm and unswerving commitment of all the trade union representatives here present to the demand for an urgent and full investigation into the murders of trade unionists Pedro Zamora, Marco Tulio Ramírez, Rosalío René González Villatoro and Raúl Castro Bocel, as well as into the other acts of violence, threats and attacks against trade unionists, their homes and offices, and for all those responsible to be brought to justice and punished for their crimes.

4. The fundamental importance that the Guatemalan and international trade union movement attaches to supporting and promoting the mission of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), at all levels, including the United Nations, the European Union and its Member States. It is committed to present all the information available on the murders of Pedro Zamora, Marco Tulio Ramírez, Rosalío René González Villatoro and Raúl Castro Bocel, as emblematic cases of the trade union movement.
5. That it shares the view of President Colom regarding the urgent need to lay solid foundations for social dialogue, as a means of generating trust between the trade unions and employers, both national and multinational.
6. That it welcomes the commitment made by President Colom to strengthen the Labour Inspectorate, equipping it with the capacity to enforce the relevant legislation and the resources required to operate effectively.
7. That the international trade union movement, through the ITUC, its regional organisation for the Americas and the GUFs, shall develop a concrete and effective mechanism to monitor the commitments made by the president of Guatemala, with a view to regularly assessing the situation.
8. In light of the constant rise in the murder of women in Guatemala and the rest of Central America, the trade union movement must make the fight against “femicide” a priority, adopting concrete measures to help eradicate this tragic violation of the right to life.
9. The trade union movement’s commitment to establishing a clear strategy of action against impunity and in favour of human rights, including the rights of workers and indigenous peoples, in the relevant regional and international bodies such as the OAS, the EU, the UN and its specialised agencies, particularly the ILO.
10. The need to wage a strong international campaign in Guatemala and Central America to strengthen the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, as established in Conventions 87 and 98 of the ILO.
11. The importance of supporting and strengthening the lobbying and advocacy mechanisms influencing the negotiations underway on the EU-Central America Association Agreement, in order to ensure the inclusion of a human and trade union rights clause. The need to promote exchanges with the European trade union movement.
12. The imperative need for unity within the Guatemalan trade union movement, in order to strengthen its presence and voice within society.

We hereby assume these challenges, with the profound commitment and solidarity expressed at this Conference in Guatemala City, on 31 January 2008.