

March 27, 2003

Resolution REGARDING COLOMBIAN TRADE UNIONISTS

Whereas: Over 30,000 people, among them over 3,900 Colombian trade unionists have been assassinated since 1986 and 184 in 2002, including members of the Union of University Workers of Colombia (both faculty and administrators) as well as public school teachers in the Colombian Teachers Federation of whom 48 were killed in the last two months of 2002; and

Whereas: According to the Human Rights Watch recently published Country Report on Colombia the vast majority of killings and attacks on labor leaders are committed by paramilitaries which have ties to the Colombian Armed Forces who have failed to take concrete action to sever the systematic ties between its members and the paramilitary forces; and

Whereas: The Colombian Government has failed to take effective action to investigate, arrest and prosecute the killers of the union members, and have adopted inadequate measures to protect union leaders; and

Whereas: Members of the Colombian Teachers Federation have been not only victims of assassination, but also of kidnapping, disappearances, threats from armed groups, and constant harassment and have issued an appeal for international solidarity; and

Whereas: As part of "Plan Colombia," United States President George W. Bush on January 10, 2002 signed Public Law (P.L.) 107-115, which authorized \$380.5 million in aid to Colombia, the bulk of it for Colombia's military; and weeks later, President Bush requested from the U.S. Congress an emergency supplemental package that included \$35 million more for Colombia; and

Whereas: The Professional Staff Congress is a member of the Civil Society Network for Public Education in the Americas, a hemispheric solidarity group of academic unionists.

Therefore be it resolved: The Professional Staff Congress oppose funding by the United States Government of the Colombian Armed Forces under "Plan Colombia," and participate in the AFL-CIO efforts to provide solidarity and protection for Colombian trade unionists.

Respectfully submitted by
Anthony O'Brien for the International Committee