**48th REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

Washington D.C., June 3 to 5, 2018

**WORKERS’ DECLARATION**

1. The trade union movement of the Americas, represented by its continental organization, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) and the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE), presents this Declaration, which contains a set of ideas and recommendations on the present and future of the Organization of American States, to be presented to the authorities of the member states of the Organization of American States that will meet in the General Assembly during June 3 to 5 month in Washington DC .
2. We consider it necessary, before entering into the subject, to present our vision on the complicated political, economic and social moment that our continent is experiencing. Considering it as totally current and adequate to our vision, we will use, in general terms, the analysis carried out in the 3rd. Congress of the TUCA (April 2015), in the process of informal debate by the Platform for the Development of the Americas (PLADA) and our involvement in the Continental Conference for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism.
3. We are still under the effects of one of the greatest economic crises of capitalism that erupted in 2008. The impact of this crisis was felt immediately and firmly in the Latin American countries in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates, which showed negative signs. According to the most recent information, in 2016 the number of poor people in Latin America reached 186 million. This means that 30.7% of the population is poor, while extreme poverty affected 10% of the population, equivalent to 61 million people (Information available from the Household Survey Data Bank - BADEHOG). These figures reflect an increase from 2015.
4. In addition, we are facing an economic scenario in which low rates of economic growth or recessionary tables are projected for most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This scenario poses even greater challenges to promote genuine development, exercised in a way that responds equitably to the environmental needs of present and future generations, with social justice and increases in the share of wages in national income.
5. The crisis has as one of its main vectors the highly deregulated international financial system. The phase of neoliberal globalization and the financialization of wealth that accompanies it, have increased inequalities throughout the world, reversing even the trend that had been verified after the Second World War in some countries of the North. A recent study by the NGO Oxfam International, (published in January 2018) shows that inequality in the world has worsened: the wealthiest 1% of the world's population accounted for 82% of the wealth generated in 2017, while the poorest half did not benefit at all.
6. The strategy of large corporations and of governments that support them nowadays is to relaunch the negotiation of new free trade agreements that serve to pressure and impose worse social and labor conditions for the workers of the countries involved.
7. The economic crisis is used by companies to make governments impose measures to worsen the working conditions of workers around the world. The rights of workers, especially freedom of association and collective bargaining, are fundamental human rights and must be defended against the anti-crisis measures applied at national and international levels, to avoid their regressivity.
8. What we observe is that the measures of austerity and withdrawal of rights, keep the countries of the region from advancing in the fight against poverty, inequality, and decent work in all its axes. In general terms, after more than a decade of reduction in most countries, levels of poverty and extreme poverty increased in Latin America in 2015 and 2016, as mentioned above.
9. Once again the interest of international financial organizations and large corporations is to impose on States, policies of flexibilization through reforms to the labor legislation, to put workers from diverse countries to compete with each other for employment, accepting precarious working conditions. The argument, always recurrent on the part of the capital, is the threat to its relocation and the elimination of jobs if labor reductions are not accepted.
10. In the same sense, we see that the dispute between the process of permanent accumulation of capital and the processes of sustainability of life has intensified, generating an explosion of socio-environmental conflicts in the region, facilitating land grabbing and the displacement of large masses of peasants and indigenous peoples, creating a migratory, environmental, and food crisis.
11. The imposition of a radical agenda of economic adjustment and limitation of social content and rights represents a severe threat to political democracy in the countries of the region. The authoritarianism of the market puts pressure on governments to reduce the already weakened social protection mechanisms. The onslaught against state-owned companies and public services is guiding a new wave of privatizations.
12. In addition to this complicated scenario, we face a challenge that refers to the struggle for democracy. In the context of the principles of inter-American solidarity and cooperation enshrined in the OAS Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the Social Charter of the Americas, we affirm that democracy and the full exercise of social and human rights are being threatened by the current dynamics of capital.
13. In this regard, we strongly denounce the imprisonment of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva who was imprisoned without proof of any crime, violating the legal instruments, the Constitution and his legitimate right to defense, with the explicit intention of denying his political rights and prevent him from participating in the presidential elections of 2018. The persecution of Lula is the most scandalous crime committed against democracy, in the name of a "fight against corruption”, added to the parliamentary, judicial and media coup against President Dilma Rousseff, that has allowed the implementation of an anti-people, anti-national agenda, and at the service of the interests of capital.
14. In this scenario, the hemispheric trade union movement reaffirms its position as an active social and political actor of democracy, as a vehicle to overcome the logic of the market today under the predominance of capital. It is vital to support public policies that go in the direction of reaching full employment and guarantees a favorable environment for the strengthening and development of trade union organizations.
15. In this sense, we defend trade union rights and labor rights, which are human rights, and maintain a relationship of interdependence with other human rights, including civil and political rights (in this line, we highlight the Resolution on trade union rights and its relationship with civil liberties, adopted by the ILO).
16. The free exercise of all democratic freedoms, of all economic, political, social, environmental and cultural rights is fundamental. In that sense, the States have the responsibility to guarantee their effective realization, in a climate of peace, understanding, respect and inclusion. Each person, women, men, youth, ethnic groups and other major social subjects, must be visible and their voices included in all the decisions that concern them.

***The OAS in its 70th year, its present and its future***

1. The current financial situation of the OAS is quite worrisome and we reiterate our support for this regional organization and the work it carries out around its pillars on respect for human rights, democracy, integral development and security in the region. We highlight the work of the OAS in institutional strengthening and support for the design and execution of public policies in different areas.
2. The member states of the OAS must commit to finding effective and immediate solutions for the financing of the OAS and the institutions created during the entire process of shaping the inter-American human rights system (Court and Commission), as well as other mechanisms for the protection of human rights, created under the aegis of the OAS. Otherwise, advances in human rights in our region in recent years will be ignored, and the records of democratic restriction and violation of rights will be reinstated in our continent.
3. We reaffirm the Platform for the Development of the Americas (PLADA) as an instrument for development that is not only economic, but also socially and environmentally sustainable. The PLADA expresses that a sustainable development will only be possible from an effective popular participation of the workers, the young people, the women and the various movements and social organizations. That allows promoting economic growth with effective distribution of wealth, respecting human rights, gender equality, decent work, free movement of people, and protection and social inclusion.
4. We believe that this OAS Assembly in Washington should send an important signal that there is a commitment in our region to formulate policies that effectively advance the achievement of sustainable development and the defense of trade union and labor rights, that are human rights, and maintain a relationship of interdependence with other human rights. For this reason, guaranteeing the full exercise of trade union rights is the main pillar for an alternative model of development in all the countries of our hemisphere.
5. We recognize the importance of the spaces that have been created in the OAS to give us prominence as democratic and development actors. The existence of the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE) as space for dialogue as an interlocutor vis-à-vis the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (CIMT) has been very important. Strengthening the interlocution of COSATE and the work of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), through the Labor and Employment Section to facilitate this task, is of particular interest to the union of the Americas in the future. Likewise, the continuity of the work undertaken by the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).
6. The role of the OAS in development matters is fundamental. In these 70 years, the OAS has demonstrated its great strength to lead processes of dialogue and cooperation between the member states and social actors, which allow strengthening public policies and improving the institutional capacity of our governments. We encourage the OAS to continue strengthening the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI).
7. The TUCA and COSATE reaffirm that the deepening and consolidation of democracy require the participation of society as a whole in decisions, which, among other things, bases its adequate protection and protects it from violence, war, militarism and of criminality. The different national states must act concretely for the promotion of social justice and the promotion of freedom of association, to ensure equality between genders, generational and ethnic groups and to influence the overcoming of inequalities and asymmetries.
8. From the labor movement of the Americas, we know that the battle for this objective is also associated with the intransigent defense of real and effective democracy in our countries, the promotion of the sovereign integration of our nations and peoples, the development and wellbeing of all peoples, and the unrestricted respect of the human rights. In these 70 years of the OAS, we know that we continue counting on it to advance all these objectives.

**Trade Union Technical Advisory Council of the IACML-OAS (COSATE)**

**Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**

Washington D.C., June 3, 2018