DEFENDING THE FEDERACION COLOMBIANA DE EDUCADORES (FECODE) AND TEACHERS PERSECUTED FOR TRADE UNION ACTIVITY

1. Congress applauds FECODE for the contribution that the federation of teachers’ unions is making to the development of Colombian civil society despite attempted repression by the Government and its allies. Congress endorses the FECODE campaign for a public education service for all.

2. Congress is appalled that Colombia continues to be the most dangerous country in the world in which to be an active trade unionist and is outraged by the murder during 2006 of at least 84 trades union officials, including at least 40 teachers.

3. Congress salutes the courage of FECODE activists who are often targeted for persecution including torture, unlawful imprisonment, assassination and “disappearance”.

4. Congress is outraged over the sentencing to six years’ imprisonment (following two years in prison on remand) without fair trial or due process of two FECODE activists (Samuel Morales and Raquel Castro) on specious charges of rebellion.

5. Congress believes that Samuel and Raquel are being held because they witnessed the murder by Colombian Government forces of regional trades union leaders engaged in a human rights campaign.

6. Congress commits Education International to:

   (a) defend FECODE and engage in capacity building for the Colombian teachers’ union federation.

   (b) campaign for the release from prison of teacher trade unionists unfairly imprisoned, such as Samuel Morales and Raquel Castro.