

SITRABI Guatemala report to 6th May 2013 to TUC, UNITE, Banana Link



Inter-union meeting, 6th May, Morales



With Labour Minister, 2nd May, Guatemala City

1) Training programme for Izabal unions

With methodological support from the Education department of COSIBAH, the Honduran Banana & Agroindustrial Workers' Union Coordinating Body, SITRABI has developed two training modules and a participant profile :

- ⤴ The module designed to train new leaders will « *develop people's capacity to be creative and identify needs in the organisation and the wider community, improve communications skills and increase commitment to union activities and transmitting new attitudes to the grassroots membership* ».
- ⤴ The module for shop steward training will « *orientate people to understand the needs of trade unions in the current political and economic context, develop the skills to better defend members' rights and engage in national and international advocacy and alliance-building work, with a focus on the cross-cutting themes of youth, gender equity, occupational health & safety, ethics, transparency and democracy.* »

The first two-day training session will take place on 10-11th June with 35 participants from Izabal.

2) Inter-union meeting

The first-ever meeting of representatives of all 12 banana workers' unions in Izabal took place on 6th May at SITRABI's headquarters. Seven unions in Chiquita subsidiary Cobigua have a coordinating body COSISBA, affiliated to UNSITRAGUA. SITRABI in Del Monte and three of the four unions in independent producers selling to Del Monte are affiliated to CUSG, one to UNSITRAGUA. Unions were able to evaluate the conflicts in the Bobos district where producers are threatening to abandon banana production and discuss solutions. SITRABI informed other unions of the training programme funded with support from British trade unions through Banana Link. The industry dialogue strategy was also presented and discussed.

3) Preparing wider social dialogue

After a series of meetings in 2012 and early 2013 with the Deputy Minister, SITRABI, together with colleagues from Colsiba based in Honduras were able to meet with the Labour Minister for the first time and present their proposal for a tripartite dialogue process in Izabal and the Pacific South. The Minister stressed that the hesitation of producers in the South to engage in dialogue was because of the conflicts they are experiencing in the Bobos district in Izabal. Any process towards dialogue would have to be very well prepared, he said, and necessarily meant advancing in conflict resolution in Izabal. He offered weekly meetings with the unions to prepare the ground.

The training programme, inter-union process and preparations for industry dialogue must therefore be seen as inextricably inter-linked and proceed in parallel. The meetings of the last few weeks have been crucial in building this understanding amongst all the unions involved.