



Guatemalan Activist to Critique Abuses of Canadian Temporary Worker Program

Vancouver, BC, 19 November 2010 – A prominent Guatemalan activist will speak in Vancouver about the reasons why hundreds of workers recently demonstrated against the Canadian Temporary Worker program in Guatemala City.

On November 30th, Maria de los Angeles Ruano Almeda, trade unionist and women's rights activist, will address the BC Federation of Labour's annual convention on the impact of the Canadian Temporary Workers program, the conditions that lead Central American workers to sign on to it, and what led to recent demonstrations at the Canadian embassy to protest the abuses of the program.

She will also speak about the struggle of working women in Guatemala at a public event on December 1st at the Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway, in Vancouver. At the event Ms. Ruano will present a film that explores the ongoing violence faced by Guatemalan activists.

Carol Wood, CoDev Program Director, notes that "In recent months, public awareness of migrant labour issues has grown – new government programs bringing temporary migrant labourers from Latin America have sparked controversy over the vulnerability of these workers to poor conditions, poverty wages and other abuses as they strive to send money to families back home."

However, there has been little coverage of the other side of migrant labour – why do workers leave their families to come to Canada? Is there more to it than just the search for a better life? What are the key factors leading to a worker's decision to leave everything they have known and launch into an unknown journey? Ms. Ruano aims to answer these and other questions related to migrant labour to Canada.

Her visit is hosted by CoDevelopment Canada, a BC-based NGO that works for social change and global education in the Americas. Ms. Ruano is available for interviews from Nov. 26th to Dec. 3rd.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK AN INTERVIEW

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MARIA DE LOS ANGELES RUANO ALMEDA

Maria de los Angeles Ruano Almeda has been an activist in the Guatemalan labour movement from a very early age. She has worked as the Coordinator of Organizing and Information for the Guatemalan labour federation UNSITRAGUA since 2007, and is UNSITRAGUA's representative on the Women's Committee of MSICG, a broad coalition of Guatemalan labour, native and farmers organizations. Ms. Ruano has also co-facilitated political training for Guatemalan women in the banana sector since 2008. She has been an elementary and continuing education teacher since 2005.

MSICG – Movimiento Sindical, Indígena y Campesino Guatemalteco

The Labour, Indigenous, and Farmers' Movement of Guatemala (MSICG) is a socio-political movement that unites the country's main social organizations with the common goals to overcome structural problems in the country, build democracy, combat exclusion in all its forms, and achieve social justice. <http://www.movimientosicg.org/index.php>