

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Colombia: Fatally Flawed Industrial Safety at U.S. Multinational Drummond

Brussels, 6 April 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has strongly condemned the situation at the opencast mine in La Loma, operated by Drummond Company, Inc. for the last 13 years. The lack of respect for workers' lives and safety cost Dagoberto Clavijo Barranco his life, in a fatal incident described by the human resources manager of the U.S. multinational as a "traffic accident".

The energy and mining industry union SINTRAMIENERGÉTICA (Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Industria Minera y Energética) did not hesitate in highlighting the company's responsibility for the accident, a clear result of inadequate industrial safety, as Clavijo Barranco had only been working at the site for 32 days, was hired through an employment agency, and had not received sufficient training in the handling of a tanker, one of the most hazardous operations at the mine.

On 2 April, the 9000 employees at the U.S. multinational's Atlantic Coast operating site completed the third day of an all-out strike in protest at the poor occupational health and safety conditions. SINTRAMIENERGÉTICA is demanding that the management set up a joint commission to assess the risk of accidents and take preventative measures, as stipulated by national law and international regulations. The union is also demanding that Drummond pay for the deceased worker's funeral expenses. .

The Colombian trade union centre CUT (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia) expressed its concern to the national government over the high rate of workplace accidents taking place in multinational companies. The ITUC united with its regional organisation TUCA and its affiliate CUT in condemning this lack of respect for workers' lives and safety. "Safety at work is essential to the smooth running of any company," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "The attitude of these multinational companies and their lack of responsibility is unacceptable."

In a letter to the Colombian authorities, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/muerte_en_Drummond_abril.pdf, the ITUC urged President Álvaro Uribe to take every step necessary to guarantee the protection of workers and the inspection of companies, to ensure their full compliance with national and international regulations on health and safety at work.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries.
<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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