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April 14, 2008

**VIA E-MAIL**

Parliamentary Standing Committee on International Trade

Attention: M. Jacques Lahaie, Clerk

Dear Mr. Lahaie:

**RE: Standing Committee on International Trade; Hearings  
into the proposed Canada-Colombia Free Trade  
Agreement.**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers/Association Canadienne Des Avocats Du Mouvement Syndical ("CALL/ACAMS") to ask that our organization be called as a witness to make a presentation before the Standing Committee on International Trade for the following study:

“Study of the status of the Free Trade Agreements and ongoing negotiations between Canada and Colombia; the focus being on how environmental impacts and human rights concerns are being addressed”

CALL/ACAMS is an association of over 350 progressive lawyers who represent workers, trade unions, professionals and other associations in a wide range of legal matters across Canada. Over the last fifteen years, CALL/ACAMS has been actively working to promote labour and human rights in the Americas. We have worked with our colleagues throughout Central and South America to build links and promote legally enforceable rights for workers in the Americas.

Our members have written and spoken extensively on the labour components of the hemispheric trade agreements. CALL/ACAMS has also been an active participant in the litigation and consultation processes set up under the North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (the "NAALC"), the so-called labour side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement ("NAFTA").

Further, as an organization, we have taken a substantial interest in the situation facing workers and trade unionists in Colombia over the last fifteen years. As you may know, the International Labour Organization (“ILO”) has repeatedly criticized Colombia’s failure to adopt laws consistent with ILO core labour standards. The ILO’s Committee on Freedom of Association has criticized the Colombian government for failing to enforce its own laws or international labour standards. Progress on labour law reform has been slow and trade union density is in sharp decline in Colombia.

As a result, given the labour rights situation in Colombia, it is particularly important that the Canadian Government consider the impact of any possible agreement with Colombia on the rights of trade unions, union members and workers in Colombia.

As an organization, we believe that we have information that would be critical for the Committee members to consider. The contact information for the witness we would like to call is as follows:

**Mark Rowlinson**  
**Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers/  
Association Canadienne Des Avocats Du Mouvement Syndical**  
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**Toronto, Ontario**  
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Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Yours truly,

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF LABOUR LAWYERS	ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES AVOCATS DU MOUVEMENT SYNDICAL
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Per: Mark Rowlinson

cc. Sheila Katz, Canadian Labour Congress  
Fiona Meyer Cook- CCIC  
Michael Cohen  
CALL/ACAMS International Affairs Committee