

## Resolution 38

# RESOLUTION THAT REYNOLDS AMERICAN INC. ESTABLISH A PROCESS WITH FLOC THAT GUARANTEES FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND WORKER REPRESENTATION FOR TOBACCO FARM WORKERS IN THE TOBACCO SUPPLY CHAIN

WHEREAS, Reynolds American Inc. (RAI), based in Winston Salem, NC, is the largest tobacco company in North Carolina;

WHEREAS, British American Tobacco (BAT), based in London, UK, owns more than 42 percent of RAI;

WHEREAS, tobacco farm workers suffer hardships such as long hours of stoop labor in the fields, abject poverty, miserable and squalid housing in their labor camps and are denied basic labor and human rights protections;

WHEREAS, many tobacco farm workers are recruited by criminal syndicates in Mexico, forced to pay thousands in extortionist fees and work without legal documentation, making them particularly vulnerable to exploitation;

WHEREAS, RAI does not directly employ the tobacco farm workers, but RAI effectively controls pricing and procurement processes with its contract growers, and in that capacity, RAI has the power to facilitate needed changes in the fields;

Whereas, while RAI asserts that exploitative conditions do not exist on farms supplying tobacco for its products, only guarantees of freedom of association and worker representation can ensure that workers have a safe and healthy workplace and receive fair compensation;

WHEREAS, a 2011 report by Oxfam America and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, "A state of fear: Human rights abuses in North Carolina's tobacco industry," assessed the tobacco industry's impact on the human rights of farm workers in the tobacco fields of North Carolina, and found conditions in the tobacco supply chain that can best be corrected through the establishment of a process that guarantees freedom of association and worker representation;

WHEREAS, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (FLOC) represents thousands of migrant workers from Mexico employed under the H-2A guest worker program by members of the North Carolina Growers Association (NCGA), and FLOC has been engaged in a campaign since 2007 to gain dignity, respect and safe working conditions for tens of thousands of tobacco farm workers in North Carolina and the Southern Region;

WHEREAS, in 2012, RAI and FLOC began direct discussions about establishing a process that guarantees worker representation and freedom of association in the tobacco supply chain, meetings that were first requested in October 2007, and only came about as the result of organizations like the AFL-CIO, whose continuing support has been instrumental in achieving this breakthrough;

WHEREAS, RAI has yet to establish a process with FLOC that guarantees freedom of association and worker representation in the tobacco supply chain;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO renews and pledges its wholehearted and enthusiastic support for justice for tobacco farm workers and FLOC, and calls on Reynolds American to establish a written process that guarantees freedom of association and worker representation for tobacco farm workers in the tobacco supply chain;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the President of the AFL-CIO will communicate directly with British American Tobacco urging that BAT use its influence as a major owner of RAI to request that RAI establish a process that guarantees freedom of association and worker representation for tobacco farm workers in the tobacco supply chain, and that the AFL-CIO International Department continue its efforts to enlist the support of global labor networks in countries where BAT markets its products to communicate their support for FLOC to BAT;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO with a membership of 12 million members will bring consumer pressure on convenience stores such as 7-Eleven, WaWa and Kangaroo Express and other retailers that sell RAI products demanding that they directly communicate with RAI that their consumers want RAI to establish a process with FLOC that guarantees freedom of association and worker representation for tobacco farm workers in the tobacco supply chain;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO through its affiliates, state federations, central labor councils and area labor federations, constituency groups and allies will mobilize to exert consumer pressure at the local store level by participating in group visits to store managers, information activities outside of stores and other lawful actions which will demonstrate to convenience store and retail store management that consumers demand that they communicate with RAI until FLOC obtains a signed agreement;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO lend its support to FLOC's campaign to collect 5,000 union authorization cards from tobacco farm workers in the fields of North Carolina in June, July and August during the summer of 2014;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO assist FLOC with planning for the recruitment, deployment, logistics and training of fifty organizers that would be available to collect union authorization cards from tobacco farm workers during the summer of 2014;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO engage in these activities to support FLOC's campaign to bring justice to the tobacco farm workers of North Carolina and the South until FLOC informs the AFL-CIO that its goals have been achieved.