

## **The Facts: The Coca-Cola Company and Colombia**

- The Coca-Cola Company and our bottling partners have conducted business in Colombia for more than 70 years. More than 2,000 Colombians are employed by Coca-Cola bottlers in Colombia. Bottling plants distribute beverages to approximately 500,000 retailers, creating additional jobs in sales, marketing and shipping.
- The Coca-Cola bottling operations in Colombia make beverages by Colombians and for Colombians; beverages are not exported out of the country to any other market, which is our business practice regardless of where we operate in the world.
- Over the past several decades, Colombia has experienced much internal conflict, which affects trade union leaders in many industries and other people from all walks of life. Despite the volatile environment, The Coca-Cola Company and its bottlers have maintained operations and have worked to provide safe, stable economic opportunities for the people of Colombia.
- In a country where violence against union members has deterred all but 4 percent of workers from unionizing, 31 percent of Coca-Cola bottler employees belong to unions. Coca-Cola bottlers enjoy extensive, normal relations with multiple unions in Colombia and currently have collective bargaining agreements in place covering wages, benefits and working conditions. On average, wages for Coca-Cola workers are two to three times higher than the minimum wage.
- Through both collective bargaining agreements and their own initiative, Coca-Cola bottlers work with unions and the government to report any threats of violence. They also provide emergency cell phones, transportation to and from work, secure housing, and a host of other measures to protect employees. Additional security measures are provided to union leaders and special measures are undertaken when a threat against unionized employees is brought to the attention of the bottler's management. We've also established a 24-hour hotline for employees to confidentially report any workplace concerns and/or complaints.
- In the spring of 2005, an independent assessment of bottling plants in Colombia by the internationally respected and certified social compliance auditor Cal Safety Compliance Corporation confirmed that workers in Coca-Cola plants enjoy freedom of association, collective bargaining rights, and a work atmosphere free of anti-union intimidation.
- The ILO has accepted the requests independently made by TCCC and the IUF to conduct an investigation and evaluation of Coca-Cola bottling operations in Colombia. Our company and the Coca-Cola bottlers in Colombia have pledged full cooperation with ILO in completing this investigation and evaluation. With the

ILO's assessment, we are fulfilling our commitment to an independent, impartial third-party investigation and evaluation of our system's labor relations and workers' rights practices in Colombia.

- In 2006, The Coca-Cola Company supported a series of forums that involved government, business and civil society leaders in Colombia, Washington, DC and London to examine how business can contribute to peace building in countries facing conflict, including development of guidelines to protect security and human rights in Colombia. The report from these forums is available at <http://www.iblf.org/docs/ColombiaEng.pdf>
- In the Spring of 2006, an ongoing process of constructive engagement processes with several Universities resulted in: the UK's National Union of Students resulting in a vote to keep Coca-Cola products on more than 250 university campuses; The University of Michigan resulting in a decision to return Coca-Cola products to campus; DePaul University rescinding a resolution for a student boycott of Coca-Cola products
- A public statement made by SINALTRAINBEC, a Colombian union representing bottler employees, said that it has "not a single indication" that The Coca-Cola Company or any of its bottling partners have links to anti-union violence.
- Two different judicial inquiries in Colombia – one in a Colombian Court and one by the Colombian Attorney General – found no evidence to support the allegations that bottler management conspired to intimidate or threaten trade unionists.
- These allegations were the thrust of a lawsuit filed in 2001 against The Coca-Cola Company in a U.S. District Court in Miami; the Company was dismissed as a defendant. On September 29, 2006 the court issued a decision to dismiss the two Coca-Cola bottlers in Colombia from all remaining cases as well.
- In 2005, we signed a joint statement with the IUF, the international organization for unions in the food and beverage sectors. In that document, we acknowledge that "Coca-Cola workers are allowed to exercise rights to union membership and collective bargaining without pressure or interference. Such rights are exercised without fear of retaliation, repression or any other form of discrimination." We are committed to ongoing dialogue with the IUF.
- In July 2003, the IUF posted this statement to its Web site: "Sweeping, unsubstantiated allegations and assertions of the type found in the boycott appeal do nothing to help the cause of the unions that organize and represent Coca-Cola workers around the world, the majority of which are members of the IUF. The call for a boycott of Coca-Cola was unanimously rejected at the recent IUF global meeting that included over 27 IUF-affiliated organizations from 23 countries, representing more than 100 Coca-Cola workers' trade unions around the world."

- For as long as we've been in Colombia, Coca-Cola has supported programs that aid children, promote education, and bring relief to victims of the country's ongoing conflict. In 2005, we provided \$10 million to start the Colombian Foundation for Education and Opportunity, an organization that addresses the needs of victims of violence and is run by a group of well-respected Colombians, including Mr. Carlos Rodriguez (president of the Colombian United Confederation of Workers).

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