

SUPPORT OF UNITED NATIONS EMPLOYEES' BARGAINING RIGHTS

WHEREAS, more than 60,000 employees of the United Nations are represented by 15 different unions representing employees in all of the various locations and offices of the U.N. around the world. These unions serve to represent the interests of U.N. employees while advancing the goals of the U.N.; and

WHEREAS, U.N. employees are engaged in incredibly important work around the globe and often find themselves in some of the most hazardous and dangerous situations imaginable; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the U.N. staff unions have been meeting with the administration of the U.N. secretary-general as part of the Coordinating Council of United Nations Unions for the past two years to work out agreements over the terms and conditions of employment for U.N. employees; and

WHEREAS, these negotiations have proven successful in addressing many issues related to salary, benefits, health, safety, security and professional issues for U.N. employees while helping to advance the broader mission of the U.N.; and

WHEREAS, past negotiations have included a consensus dispute resolution procedure that takes the position of both sides into consideration before any resolution or settlement; and

WHEREAS, the U.N. administration has recently ended these negotiations unilaterally and now refuses to recognize the consensus dispute resolution procedure in the settlement of differences between the parties; and

WHEREAS, the U.N. and its agency for labor issues, the International Labor Organization, play a major role in promoting the rights of workers around the world and have in fact adopted conventions in support of the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively; and

WHEREAS, the United States supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a landmark expression of the principles of the U.N. and a document that explicitly upholds the right of workers to form and join trade unions, and yet the United States has not taken the opportunity to support collective bargaining rights of workers within the U.N.; and

WHEREAS, the denial of bargaining rights to U.N. employees represents a drastic change in direction for the U.N. administration with significant negative consequences to U.N. employees and to the advancement of bargaining rights for workers around the world:

RESOLVED, that the national AFT executive council expresses its strong support and solidarity with the unions representing United Nations employees in their efforts to maintain meaningful bargaining rights on behalf of the exemplary employees who make their careers working on behalf of the U.N. and its various locations and offices around the world; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT will bring attention to the struggles of the U.N. employees and their unions through labor and community alliances in the United States, in our global union federations and through our international alliances around the world. The AFT will urge the Obama administration to support maintaining bargaining rights for U.N. employees; and

RESOLVED, that the AFT will consult with the leadership of the unions representing U.N. employees to provide expertise and assistance in advocating for meaningful collective bargaining rights for U.N. employees. Only through the bargaining process can employees be provided an effective voice at work to deal with the serious and diverse issues facing U.N. employees. Together, we can work to advance the rights of employees while supporting the important and essential mission of the U.N.