

Keynote Speaker

Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-OH 9th District) is the senior-most woman in the House and the longest-serving woman from Ohio in history. Rep. Kaptur has served on the House Appropriations Committee since 1983.

Challenges to Securing Worker Rights in Agriculture

Adela Torres is the Coordinator of Women and Labour at COLSIBA (Coordination of Latin American Banana & Agro-Industrial Workers' Unions), which works to improve the conditions for banana workers in Latin America.

Bruce Goldstein is the president of Farmworker Justice and has made key successes in litigation and advocacy on immigration issues and labor law, particularly the H-2A program.

Neha Misra is the Global Coordinator for Human Trafficking & Migrant Worker Programs at the Solidarity Center, AFL-CIO, an international worker rights NGO based in Washington, DC.

Tobacco: A Toxic and Exploitative Crop

Baldemar Velasquez is the President and Founder of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and an internationally recognized leader in the farmworker and immigrants rights movements.

Raphael Sandramu is the Secretary General of the Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM) to combat the tobacco tenancy system prevalent in Malawi and continues to push key reforms that help tobacco farmers improve their working conditions.

Marty Otañez is a cultural anthropologist, tobacco control advocate and documentary filmmaker. Since 2008, he has been an assistant professor in the Anthropology Department, University of Colorado.

Abby McGill is the Director of Campaigns at ILRF, where she is responsible for coordinating campaigns, particularly in agricultural commodities. She has a Masters in Public Policy in international policy and development from Georgetown University.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Judy Gearhart is the Executive Director of ILRF and an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School for International and Public Affairs. Previously, Judy worked on democratization, women's rights and labor rights programs for nonprofits in Latin America.



Hasta La Victoria!

FARM WORKER JUSTICE IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

2015 Conference

June 3, 2015 | 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

National Education Association

1201 16th St. NW

Washington, DC 20036

Presented by:
International Labor Rights Forum



Hasta La Victoria! Farm Worker Justice in Global Supply Chains

The world is fed through the hard work of farm workers and their families. Yet in many countries around the world, including the United States, farm workers are excluded from fundamental labor protections and denied their rights at work. The global agricultural sector is plagued by a litany of problems, including denial of the right to collectively bargain, low wages, reliance on an exploited migrant workforce, threats to worker health and safety, child labor and debt bondage. These problems are common to farm workers across the globe and ILRF has worked with grassroots partners on the front lines of trying to address these problems in myriad sectors, including: palm oil, cotton, cocoa, bananas, and tobacco.

This conference will bring together farmworker organizers from the United States and abroad to discuss the challenges faced by agricultural workers. They will explore policy options and grassroots strategies to improve working conditions in the agricultural sector and extend workers' access to remediation.

We will hear examples of solutions being tried in multiple crops and countries and then take a deep dive look at the tobacco industry. Tobacco is a toxic crop and globally traded commodity that fuels a half trillion dollars in global profits, while harvesters, not given adequate protection usually develop Green Tobacco Sickness, a type of nicotine poisoning that causes dizziness, nausea and headaches. In addition to the health risks, gross exploitation of farmers and efforts to artificially decrease prices are well-documented in every country in which tobacco is grown.

- In the United States, tens of thousands of workers migrate to North Carolina to harvest tobacco. They live in unsanitary, cramped labor camps and work long hours in grueling conditions for poverty wages. They are harassed, discriminated against, exposed to lethal levels of nicotine and pesticides, and denied basic protections of human rights. Children as young as 7 are working on tobacco farms in North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, often alongside their parents.
- In Malawi, 300,000 tenant farmers and their families grow tobacco for the international market in conditions both the United Nations and U.S. State Department have said is human trafficking. Many of these families live in debt bondage, with no way out or options for alternative livelihoods, forced to bring their children into the fields to survive. Tobacco is a causal factor behind the staggering 1.5 million child laborers in Malawi, one of the highest numbers in Africa.

For more information, please visit: www.laborrights.org/2015conference

Agenda

- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. **Coffee and Registration**
- 9:00 - 9:15 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Judy Gearhart, Executive Director of ILRF
- 9:15 - 10:45 a.m. **Challenges to Securing Worker Rights in Agriculture**
Moderator: TBD

Adela Torres
Coordinator of Women and Labour, COLSIBA

Bruce Goldstein
President, Farmworker Justice

Neha Misra
Global Coordinator for Human Trafficking & Migrant Worker Programs, Solidarity Center

- 10:45 - 11:15 a.m. **Film screening**

- 11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. **Tobacco: A Toxic and Exploitative Crop**
Moderator: Abby McGill, Director of Campaigns of ILRF

Baldemar Velasquez
President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

Raphael Sandramu
Secretary General, Tobacco and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOAWUM)

Marty Otañez
Professor, University of Denver

- 12:45 - 1:00 p.m. Lunch is served

- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. **Keynote Speech**
Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur

Want to continue the conversation? Join us at the 2015 Labor Rights Defenders Awards, where FLOC and TOAWUM will be honored for their innovation in grassroots organizing of farm workers! Tickets available online: www.laborrights.org/2015tickets