

International Affairs Policy

ACTU Congress September 1991

1. Preamble

1.1 Congress declares that all the peoples of the world have the right to self determination and the democratic election of their governments, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association in trade unions and the right to live in peace without fear of aggression or subversion by a foreign power, by military force or other means.

1.2 Congress recognises, however, that there are many obstacles to the realisation of these rights - including the arms race, the mass poverty of large sections of the world's population and the fact that many of the world's people are ruled by authoritarian governments, intolerant of their neighbours and their own people.

1.3 Congress affirms that trade unions have an important role to play in arresting and eventually eliminating the nuclear and conventional arms race, the alleviation of world poverty and the development of freer and more tolerant societies. Congress recognises that the achievement of these objectives are necessary foundations for creating a more peaceful world.

1.4 Congress notes that in recent times, despite the outbreak of war in the Gulf region in 1991, significant initiatives have occurred in various parts of the world which give cause for optimism and may result in societies which are more democratic, tolerant and free.

The developments in Eastern and Central Europe together with the legislative progress which is being made in South Africa are examples of such welcome initiatives, but unfortunately many people of the world continue to live under the harsh and authoritarian spectre of totalitarianism.

1.5 The development of independent trade union organisations in these countries must be encouraged and assisted where resources permit.

1.6 The A.C.T.U. will work internationally and within the I.C.F.T.U. to break down the historic barriers which have existed within the international trade union movement.

The existence of more than one international trade union organisation is not only a waste of scarce resources but it also leads to a weakening of the union movement's effective voice on behalf of working people world-wide.

1.7 Congress calls on all governments to respect the legitimate aspirations of people to live with dignity and with full democratic rights and freedoms. In offering support and encouragement to initiatives which may contribute to the process of democratisation, Congress recognises that peace can only be a reality when all people are free.

2. Peace and Disarmament

2.1 Congress is deeply conscious of the massive economic burden which excessive arms expenditure places on the world's people, diverting resources away from the improvement of living standards throughout the world. Accordingly Congress reaffirms that 'peace is union business' and recommends that all affiliates play a positive part in all peace activities aimed at securing the implementation of

ACTU Policy.

2.2 Further, Congress is aware that all the advances sought by Trade Unions in employment, housing and social welfare matters, are in constant jeopardy unless they can be achieved against the background of a stable and lasting peace.

2.3 Recognising that world peace and disarmament are the most pressing problems facing the world today, Congress calls upon ACTU affiliates to pursue with vigour the already considerable policies in that field which the ICFTU has formulated, and to press upon the world community the necessity to utilise the available resources for economic development to alleviate and eradicate poverty everywhere.

2.4 The ACTU in accordance with the ICFTU Statements on "Peace, Security and Disarmament",

- demands that the pursuit of peace should have priority over all political objectives.
- is firmly committed to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts.
- recognises the right of all the peoples of the world who are prepared to defend their freedom.
- condemns the reliance on nuclear weapons which pose a threat to all human life and the earth's environment.
- condemns the enormous growth in the build-up of conventional weapons throughout the world.
- supports national trade union policies for the abandonment of nuclear weapons in accordance with ACTU policies.
- demands effective national and international control of the arms trade.

2.5 Congress notes that in the years following the 1989 Congress further improvements in relations between the USA and USSR have developed. Greater opportunities now exist for meaningful and positive negotiations on multi-national verifiable disarmament.

2.6 Congress welcomes the treaties between the USA and USSR to reduce nuclear weapons and conventional armed forces. We also declare our support for a positive outcome in relation to the proposal for a treaty between the USSR and the USA for a total nuclear test ban and for further reductions in conventional weapons.

2.7 Despite this progress, Congress recognises that even with the implementation of the new treaties, there will still be some 50,000 nuclear warheads on this planet, with a total destructive power of one and a quarter million Hiroshima bombs.

2.8 Congress therefore declares that the initial and limited steps forward already made must be built upon and expanded so that we can move towards the ultimate goal of elimination of all nuclear weapons throughout the world. The first steps towards disarmament must not be allowed to dull demands for more rapid progress. The agreement between the super-powers must not become a pretext for inactivity.

Further, nor must we allow the progress to be used as an excuse by some governments to build up or introduce different categories of weapons or to move towards more offensive military strategies, including extension of the arms race into space and militarisation of the seas

2.9 In pursuit of further progress the ACTU calls on the Federal Government to:

- use all possible influence with nuclear weapons States to bring about an end to the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons;
- encourage meaningful negotiations leading to multilateral and verifiable disarmament under the international control through the U.N. Disarmament Commission, the Disarmament Committee, the MBFR Talks, the CSCE, and the Geneva Disarmament Talks;
- press for the withdrawal and termination of production of SS 20 missiles by the U.S.S.R. and the abandonment of the production and development by the U.S.A. and its allies of Cruise and Pershing II missiles and the production of enhanced radiation (neutron) weapons;
- support the maintenance, strengthening and universal acceptance of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT);
- work in the United Nations and all disarmament negotiating forums for the drawing up of a treaty to ban all nuclear testing by all States in all environments for all time;
- seek universal agreement on an end to the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes;
- work vigorously for the drawing up of a treaty, for universal adherence, which would stop the acceleration of the arms race by stopping the deployment of weapons in outer space.
- work vigorously for the drawing up of a treaty, for universal adherence, which would outlaw the production, storage and use of chemical and bacteriological weapons;
- argue for agreement on the creation and progressive enlargement of nuclear free zones;
- take initiatives in the United Nations and directly with other States designed to reduce sharply the arms trade whether overt, covert, or illegal;
- support moves by the United Nations to bring about an overall reduction in military budgets and to divert such resources from military expenditure to developmental and other economically productive activities.

In this context, Congress notes the words of the then Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, at the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament in June 1988: "arms exports should not be turned to as a way of solving domestic economic problems. Arms transfers must not become a new cash crop."

Congress declares that the reduction and then elimination of arms trade is now one of the major issues to be resolved in the world today. Accordingly, congress notes with concern the proposed "Aidex" arms exhibition planned for Canberra in October 1991. Congress calls on the Federal Government to ban any future arms exhibitions and urges affiliates to join protest action organised against the Aidex exhibition.

2.10 Congress reaffirms previous decisions in opposition to the use of nuclear weapons, for the outlawing of research into and introduction of new forms of nuclear weapons, including neutron bombs, and for agreed upon dismantling of all existing stockpiled nuclear weapons to be mutually supervised by the major world powers and for the outlawing of production of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

2.11 In pursuit of this objective Congress resolves that all affiliates should continue their public involvement in explaining and winning supporting for the declaration of the ACTU Federal Unions Conference of June 1982, on "Peace and Disarmament".

2.12 Congress also expresses concern at the continued French testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific and reaffirms policy opposed to such tests.

3. Education for Peace and Disarmament

3.1 Congress, notes the decision of the UN Special Sessions on Disarmament 1978 and 1982 relating to the World Disarmament Campaign as follows:

"With a view to contributing to a greater understanding and awareness of the problems created by the armaments race and the need for disarmament, Governments and governmental and non-governmental international organisations are urged to take steps to develop programs of education for disarmament and at all levels".

3.2 Congress re-affirms the decision on peace education adopted by the ACTU Special Unions Conference on Disarmament, held on June 9, 1982.

3.3 Congress draws to the attention of all Governmental and non-Governmental Educational Administrations, employing authorities, and tertiary institutions, the need for priority to be given to planning for the proper allocation of such resources.

3.4 Congress calls for active and public expressions of support from these authorities, to encourage teachers, parents and students' initiatives in promoting Education for Peace and Disarmament, while at the same time giving a prominent place to in-service and pre-service courses for professional development.

3.5 Congress calls as well to the attention of such educational instrumentalities as State and Municipal Libraries, audio-visual centres, book and computer software, publishing bodies and other agencies involved in the production and dissemination of materials, the urgent need for such resources as will meet the growing demand for Peace and Disarmament Studies. In this area too, Congress sees that the U.N. Information Office has a special role to play.

3.6 Congress believes:

i). that Peace and Disarmament Education should:

- help students understand some of the complex processes leading to tension and conflict at individual, group, national and global levels, and be aware of some of the ways in which these conflicts may be resolved. Such approaches should foster a critical attitude to the issues of peace and war;
- encourage attitudes that lead to a preference for constructive and non-violent resolution of conflict; and,
- help students develop the personal and social attitudes and skills necessary to live in harmony with others and to behave in positive and caring ways;

ii) . that disarmament and the use of the world's resources for peaceful purposes cannot be omitted from Peace Education;

iii). that the issues of human rights, social justice, equitable access to resources, and discrimination on grounds of race, age, gender, ability or belief cannot be separated from Peace and Disarmament Education;

iv). that methods of teaching and learning about Peace and Disarmament issues and the environment in which they take place are as important as the content itself;

v). that the release of student initiative and creativeness is essential to combat the feeling of powerlessness.

4. Support for the United Nations and Commonwealth of Nations

4.1 Congress reaffirms its support to the United Nations and its agencies and to the ideals embodied in the United Nations Charter, and stresses the need to ensure the effectiveness of the United Nations as an organisation capable of assisting in the process of the attainment of world peace and justice, thus facilitating and fostering advancement to all member nations.

The failure of the United Nations processes to secure peace in the Gulf region resulting in the outbreak of war in 1991 intensifies the need to give support to the United Nations ideals and processes.

4.2 Congress acknowledges the role of the Commonwealth of Nations in furthering understanding between the peoples of those nations within its membership, and expresses the hope that the Commonwealth in so doing will positively advance the cause of world peace. Congress welcomes ACTU participation in the Commonwealth Trade Union Council.

5. Human and Trade Union Rights

5.1 Congress recognises that the question of human rights is a legitimate international concern, transcending national boundaries, and rejects attempts to describe a concern for abuses of human rights as interference in the internal affairs of other States.

5.2 Congress pledges its support for the achievement of basic human rights, including:

- Freedom from want
- The release of all non-violent political prisoners
- The right of all workers to organise free trade unions
- The right to free and democratic election by ballot
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of assembly
- Freedom of religious worship
- A free Press, and
- Freedom to demonstrate and protest in a democratic fashion.

5.3 Implicit in the support for basic human rights is the outright rejection and abhorrence by Congress of any form of discrimination on the grounds of:

- race
- colour
- sex
- marital status
- sexual orientation

- age
- religion
- political opinion
- national extraction
- or social origin

5.4 Accordingly, the ACTU declares that the right to food, shelter, health care, economic security and education are fundamental pre-conditions to human survival and dignity, and that the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone can enjoy economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights.

5.5 The establishment and defence of these rights are essential to free societies and the achievement of peace.

5.6 Congress recognises, however, that the 'peace' of the vanquished or hopelessly oppressed is not true peace.

5.7 As a positive expression of the importance placed on Human Rights by the Trade Union Movement, Congress actively supports the work of Amnesty International in its efforts to identify political, including trade union prisoners and to campaign for their release.

5.8 Congress deplores violations of human rights whenever and wherever they occur, irrespective of the ideology of the government or society which perpetrates them, and shall not be selective in opposing such violations.

5.9 Congress also declares full support for campaigns designed to focus world attention on nations which persist with forms of repression against the development of free trade unionism and expresses its concern with the brutal terrorist attacks which have been made on free trade unionism from time to time.

5.10 Congress records its condemnation of those regimes responsible for the unwarranted imprisonment of tens of thousands of active trade unionists, and those others subjected to torture and to exile.

5.11 The ACTU acknowledges with deep sorrow news of the continuing death and disappearance of many of our colleagues of trade unionism within their own countries.

5.12 Congress expresses deep concern that elementary trade unionism is being denied and suppressed in many parts of the world, and that existence of indescribable poverty, most evident in the Third World, represents an enormous barrier to the development of any form of trade unionism.

5.13 Congress determines that in support of the movement for free trade unionism, solidarity actions may be taken from time to time in support of workers in other countries.

5.14 In considering such action, Congress resolves that all trade union organisations and non-government solidarity organisations, and donor agencies should be careful not to support any trade union organisation that does not demonstrate by its conduct, that it accepts democratic values in its political and organisational relations.

6. Suppression of Unionists

6.1 Congress noting the suppression of the trade union movement in different parts of the world, particularly in emerging nations, and recognising that Australia currently supplies economic and cultural aid to these sovereign nations, calls upon the Australian Government to consider the cancellation of economic assistance to those Governments who do not observe ILO Conventions and who are taking illegitimate action against a properly constituted trade union movement. Further, Congress calls upon the Australian Government to initiate a financial scheme of assistance to those nations so that a properly constituted and balanced union movement can develop; the ACTU to be involved in that scheme by providing personnel with the necessary trade union experience, to give adequate assistance.

6.2 Congress calls on the Federal Government, through the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to report to Parliament on an annual basis on abuses of, and advances in human and trade union rights in nations in which Australia has development and aid interests and in which Australian companies have investments.

7. International Trade Union Relations

7.1 Congress reaffirms the need to continue its affiliation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions as a demonstration of the Australian Trade Union Movement's strong desire to promote, cultivate and strengthen the cause of international trade union solidarity, and as a means whereby our Movement can legitimately participate and contribute in the international trade union areas.

7.2 The A.C.T.U. will work internationally and within the I.C.F.T.U. to end the historical divisions within the international trade union movement.

If it is possible for the nations of the world to come together in the United Nations, including the International Labour Organisation, then there should be no reason why the workers of the world should not have their own single world-wide organisation.

7.3 The existence of more than one international trade union organisation is not only a waste of scarce resources but it also diminishes the effective voice of working people world-wide.

Just as the existence of a multiplicity of unions within Australia inevitably leads to a duplication of effort and needless competition, so does it internationally.

7.4 Congress believes that workers world-wide would be best served by their being a single world-wide body to represent their interests globally and the lessening of international tension and the dramatic developments in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern and Central Europe may provide a basis on which such a unification can be brought about.

7.5 Congress also reaffirms the need to maintain affiliation to the Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation of the ICFTU and supports the work of the South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU), a representative trade union organisation in our region.

7.6 Congress supports continuing affiliation to the Trade Union Advisory Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in recognition of the importance of the role of this Body, representing as it does the major industrialised countries of the world with which Australia

has a close economic relationship.

7.7 Further, believing that contacts between trade union organisations is desirable and necessary for better understanding between people of all countries, Congress endorses the principle of exchange visits between genuine representative Trade Union movements.

7.8 Congress being cognisant of the unique geographical and historical position of Australia and changing world circumstances believes it appropriate in some instances to undertake visits in connection with some trade union centres conceived as having some special significance in terms of the interests of this country.

8. Foreign Aid

8.1 The ACTU believes that the elimination of poverty and its causes in the Third World is a humanitarian responsibility.

8.2 Congress is concerned at the fall in the percentage of GNP devoted by the Australian Government as aid to developing and under-developed countries. We call for the Federal Government to raise substantially the amount devoted to foreign aid within the life of the next Parliament, as Australia has a responsibility to provide an example to other developed countries by committing a greater proportion of our budget to aiding disadvantaged people.

8.3 Congress also notes that Australia is also unique in that the bulk of foreign aid is in the form of cash grants which are classified as untied.

8.4 Whilst untied cash grants are an admirable facet of Australia's aid program it is also a fact that much of this aid has been used to finance imports from sources other than Australia.

8.5 In addition to untied cash grants to developing countries, the Federal Government should give every consideration to providing aid in goods and services from Australia, provided that those goods and services are consistent with satisfying the expressed needs of recipient nations.

8.6 In supporting the concept of overseas humanitarian aid programs, Congress affirms its strong belief that such programs should be based upon long term solutions rather than short term aid, and should include the principle of:

- solidarity amongst workers
- self help through training programs
- self reliance and independence
- direct involvement of Australian workers' skills

8.7 Further, Congress believes that Australia's developing and emergency assistance program should have a clearly identifiable component to assist workers in the Third World to acquire relevant trade, technical, managerial and professional skills.

8.8 ACTU Action

The ACTU will seek the Federal Government's support for:

- the provision of development assistance on flexible terms according to the level of need and the likelihood of aid reaching the poorest in recipient countries.
- a commitment to achieving the UN target of 0.7% of gross national product for official development assistance, with an eventual target of 1%.
- consulting the ACTU and community aid groups concerning "The Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program" (The Jackson Report).
- the review of assistance to non-government organisations through ADAB to ensure that it is brought back to the 1985/86 financial year level of 1% of the overall aid vote.
- a continued financial commitment to the overseas aid program.

9. APHEDA

9.1 Recognising the responsibilities of the Australian trade union movement and its members towards those countries and regions of the world where men and women workers are disadvantaged through such causes as poverty, under-development and civil disruption, Congress reaffirms its support for Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (A.P.H.E.D.A.) as the official overseas humanitarian aid arm of the A.C.T.U.

9.2 Congress commends the continuing valuable contribution that its official overseas humanitarian aid arm APHEDA, makes to Australia's overseas development program, particularly its special focus on education and training for workers (now numbering several thousands) and their families.

9.3 Congress rejects and condemns the unjust and unprincipled attacks on the overseas humanitarian aid programs and work of APHEDA, from quarters that are hostile and inimical to the interests of the working class movement nationally and internationally.

9.4 Congress reaffirms further, the need for this type of development work to continue, and calls upon affiliates to offer full support at all levels of their membership. In particular we draw to the attention of affiliates the opportunities for their increased membership participation through the next stages of development in APHEDA's programs, through its expanding Trade Union Projects Sponsorship Scheme.

9.5 Congress calls upon all ACTU branches and affiliates to co-operate fully in promoting the work of APHEDA, by membership at affiliate and individual levels, wide publicity, donations and direct involvement in specific overseas aid programs.

9.6 Congress recognises that assistance to the economies of Third World societies is a vital requirement for the creation of democratic societies. Democracies are more stable on a full stomach than on an empty one. In relation to this issue the Federal Government should be careful to ensure that aid for butter is not converted into money for the purchase of guns, and that projects financed are closely monitored and supported to minimise the chances of corruption and to maximise the chances of success. Further, Congress believes that development assistance should be provided on flexible terms according to the level of need and the likelihood of aid reaching the poorest in recipient countries.

10. Development Education

10.1 Congress recognises the importance of increased community understanding about Australia's international role, especially in the areas of aid and development programs with nations of the Third

World.

10.2 Development Education in formal and non-formal education systems, is a key instrument in this process. It provides informed analysis and understanding of the underlying causes of underdevelopment and poverty amongst nations and peoples of the world. It shows the links that exist between such questions as economic growth, human and worker rights, development, affluence, the arms race and global interdependence.

10.3 Congress endorses the call from the Jackson Committee of Review of Australia's Aid Programs, to upgrade significantly the teaching of Development Education at all levels. Congress specifically requests of Federal and State Education Ministers, Education and Training Authorities and Systems, that they give priority in allocating resources, in response to this call.

10.4 Congress believes that development education in the formal education system should seek to educate students/community about the people of developing countries, issues affecting them and the inter-relationships between the developing and developed worlds. It should be aimed at changing attitudes which perpetuate the imbalance of power and wealth that exists between and within countries by:

i). basing the course of study on the belief that the current distribution of wealth and power is unjust and needs to be changed;

ii). equipping people to understand the causes and consequences, social, political, economic and environmental of this imbalance;

iii). critically evaluating the role of aid in the developing world by examining case studies of:

- those projects which empower local communities, using local expertise and reinforcing local values;
- those projects which impose western expertise and values;
- provision of food aid;
- child sponsorship programs;
- developing values in the students which lead them to

iv). work for a just and sustainable global economy;

v). recognising that effective change needs to occur through aid within social, political, cultural and economic areas of life in both our own and other societies;

vi). emphasising the rich cultural heritage and the dignity of the people of the developing world and investigating highlighting the struggles for justice occurring in these countries;

vii) using appropriate teaching strategies which emphasise co-operation rather than competition, groups not individuals and which result in student initiated and developed action.

10.5 Congress calls on the Federal Government through its relevant institutions to review existing processes by which skills training for workers in the Third World can play a more significant role in the philosophy and implementation of its aid program.

11. Refugees

11.1 Congress expresses deep concern at the global growth of the international refugee problem apparent in Africa, Latin America, South-East Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Pacific, and notes that official estimates place the current number of refugees and other displaced persons as high as 12 million people.

11.2 Congress believes that Australia, as a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees, and as a member of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees Executive Committee, has a special responsibility towards refugees and believes Australia's record in this regard - the acceptance and resettlement of more than 400,000 over the past thirty years - has earned this nation the respect of the international community.

11.3 Congress accepts the general definition of refugees contained in the 1951 Convention (and later amended in the

Protocol in 1967) as applying to any person who:

"owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group of political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

11.4 Congress supports the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and commends the work of this U.N. agency in its provision of legal protection and assistance to refugees and for the assistance rendered in their repatriation or resettlement.

12. Union Action

12.1 Congress believes that the trade unions of all countries can play a positive role in the prevention of war as a solution to international conflict. This can be facilitated by the ACTU participating in international conferences of trade unions to plan ways to develop international solidarity for peace among workers, thus indicating to all respective governments, workers' abhorrence of war and of the expenditure on the arms economy at the cost of their living standards.

12.2 The ACTU will:

- support the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to which the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is affiliated in its endeavours to foster the formation and development of free trade unions. Such support could involve the training of third world trade union leaders in Australia and an increase in financial support by the ACTU to the ICFTU, particularly in the Pacific and South East Asian countries.
- assist affiliates in their international activities by disseminating information on international developments and through seeking to co-ordinate activities of affiliates conducting international programs so as to avoid waste and unnecessary duplication. Urge affiliated unions to provide advisory assistance and training in such areas as the development of co-operatives and other related socio-economic services for the trade unions in our region.
- encourage through ACTU representatives on the National Council of TUTA the allocation of more resources to sponsoring unionists from South East Asia and the Pacific to attend specialist courses at the Clyde Cameron College.

In addition the ACTU in conjunction with TUTA should arrange visits to appropriate fraternal unions and/or peak Councils by union officials from our Region attending TUTA courses.

- continue discussions with the Federal Government concerning the provision of funding for the development by the ACTU of projects of assistance to unions in South East Asia and the Pacific.
- continue initiatives in respect to trade union organisation in the Pacific region.
- support Amnesty International's request to world governments to release political prisoners, who are frequently imprisoned for trade union activity.
- call on Australian trade union officials to raise in overseas visits, the plight of gaoled or missing unionists to the governments or trade union organisations which they meet.
- Consider allocating, as required, a portion of the International Fund to provide educational organisational aids to trade unions in developing countries in our region and to implementing policy and to developing appropriate campaigns and strategies against suppression of unionists in countries in the Asian region.
- demand that the Australian Government condemn human rights violations wherever they occur.
- Campaign to inform workers and the public at large of the policies of the ACTU and the trade union movement generally concerning the achievement of peace and disarmament.

Resolutions – Region, Country and Issue Specific

13. Australia/New Zealand/Oceania Trade Union Co-Operation

13.1 Congress endorses the initiatives taken in conferences with representatives from a number of Pacific Countries calling for a Nuclear Free Pacific and organisation to achieve that result and the proposals of those Conferences relating to this question.

13.2 Congress endorses the initiatives of the Unions in the region, together with the ICFTU, in establishing a regional trade union organisational structure, the South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU). Congress notes that the SPOCTU will function to facilitate and co-ordinate programs of practical assistance to developing trade union organisations within the region and it will also have the capacity to articulate a trade union perspective on regional issues of concern.

13.3 Congress notes the initiatives taken to develop a similar regional trade union organisational structure in the Indian Ocean. Future support for this initiative will be directly related to its ability to facilitate and co-ordinate programs of practical assistance to developing trade union organisations in the Indian Ocean Region, the bounds of the region to be determined in association with the A.C.T.U.

14. Co-Operation With New Zealand

14.1 Congress gives full and continuing support to the Australian New Zealand Trade Union Consultative Council (ANZTUCC) as a constructive vehicle for the long-standing close and cordial relationship maintained between the Australian and New Zealand Trade Union Movements. Congress believes the mutuality of interests between our two countries, and to the interests of this region, is best served by the closest possible interchange of ideas and viewpoints, and places on record its satisfaction as to the existing relationship between the ACTU and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

15. Co-Operation With Papua New Guinea

15.1 Congress believes that Australia should maintain the closest possible friendly relations with the people of Papua New Guinea to assist them to sustain a truly independent and democratic nation, a peaceful foreign policy, and a soundly based economy.

15.2 Congress acknowledges the close fraternal links already existing between the ACTU and the Papua New Guinea Trade Union Congress and considers the further development of these links by the ACTU and Australian unionists should rank as a high priority, believing that a soundly based effective and militant trade union organisation is essential for the workers in light of the increasing interest being manifested by overseas investment interest.

15.3 The PNGTUC has identified the need for substantial and specific assistance in the areas of trade union organisation and education in order to build an effective trade union organisation and Congress believes this assistance must be forthcoming from the Australian Trade Union Movement.

15.4 Congress therefore authorises the ACTU Executive to provide whatever assistance it deems appropriate which is consistent with this policy.

16. East Timor

16.1 Congress recognises the inalienable right of the East Timorese people to self determination and independence and condemns the Indonesian annexation of East Timor.

16.2 Congress calls on the Australian Labor government to actively support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to promote negotiations for a peaceful settlement in East Timor. It notes that such negotiations should include not only the governments of Indonesia and Portugal but also representatives of the East Timorese people.

16.3 Congress expresses its continuing concern at reports of human rights violations in East Timor and urges the Australian Government to continue by all available means to seek the alleviation of these concerns.

16.4 Congress notes the refusal of Indonesian authorities to allow journalists, Amnesty International, aid organisations and other independent observers free access to East Timor and calls on the Indonesia authorities to allow such access.

17. Fiji

17.1 Congress reaffirms its unreserved condemnation of the military coups of 1987 and the subsequent installation of a military-backed regime.

17.2 Congress deplores the continuing denial of basic human rights, including trade union rights, in Fiji. Particularly reprehensible is the ongoing endeavours of the Fijian authorities to amend trade union legislation in order to remove the existing rights of several categories of workers from joining and belonging to trade unions and their right to take collective action, including the right to strike.

17.3 Congress also deplores the fact that the coups have served to decimate the Fijian economy with disastrous effects on the lives and living standards of Fijian workers and their families.

17.4 Congress supports the findings and recommendations of the January 1988 ICFTU Mission and the principles of the 1970 Constitution which provides for a recognition of basic rights, and specifically trade union rights in line with ILO Conventions and standards.

17.5 Congress calls on the Fijian authorities to honour the undertakings given to the ACTU and NZFOL in July 1987 by the then Governor General, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau; and to honour also the undertakings in relation to trade union rights given freely on behalf of the authorities to the ICFTU Mission by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Mr Taniela Veitata.

17.6 Congress expresses its concern at the 1990 Constitution, promulgated by Decree, as it is racially based, of an undemocratic nature and in breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

17.7 Congress supports the Australian Governments initiatives designed to encourage the restoration of full democratic rights in Fiji, including the withdrawal of defence co-operation but supports the provision of other aid to Fiji in a way that benefits all Fijians regardless of their ethnic origin.

17.8 Congress pledges its solidarity with the FTUC and the workers of Fiji and conveys the commitment of the ACTU to continue to work with the ICFTU and regional trade union organisations in order to secure justice.

18. Independence for Pacific Islands Peoples

18.1 Congress supports the right to self determination and independence for all colonised and exploited Pacific Islands' peoples.

18.2 In particular, Congress supports the growing demand for independence from France for the people of New Caledonia, recognising the prior and rightful claims and interests of the Kanak people.

18.3 Without independence, the people of New Caledonia will continue to suffer at the hands of the multi-national and colonial forces who now control and exploit their natural resources, economic and cultural lives.

18.4 Congress strongly opposes the plans of the French Government to establish a major naval base near Noumea, New Caledonia, which would service nuclear-armed warships, submarines and plans.

19. Nuclear Free Pacific

19.1 This Congress once again unreservedly condemns the nuclear testing and the dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific, and supports the New Zealand labour movement in its major contribution to the establishment of a Nuclear Free Pacific and the promotion of nuclear disarmament and world peace. It moreover proclaims the rights of people and their trade unions through the democratic process to set such anti-nuclear policies as are in accord with the wishes of their peoples.

20. Indian Ocean Zone of Peace

20.1 Congress endorses the concept of the Indian Ocean being declared a Zone of Peace and supports trade union activity devoted towards achieving that objective.

21. Latin and Central America

21.1 Congress notes with extreme regret that conflict continues to take place in some Central and South American countries and it reaffirms its full support for the people living under the totalitarian regimes in their struggle for self-determination.

21.2 Congress supports the right of all such countries to establish truly democratic and pluralistic societies which respect fundamental human and trade union rights free of foreign intervention of a political or military nature.

21.3 The turmoil in some countries is clearly the product of political authoritarianism, injustice, poverty and corruption which can only be addressed by fundamental political change in a climate of peace.

21.4 Congress calls on the Federal Government to continue to demand adherence by all governments, military/security forces and guerilla movements in the region to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in particular to the rights of indigenous peoples in the region. Congress also supports the struggles by Central American workers and their trade unions to achieve those rights laid down by ILO conventions together with any popular aspiration for land reform and control of economic resources in the interests of national economic development.

21.5 Congress congratulates the Nicaraguan people on the conduct of elections held in February 1990 and in doing so notes the pivotal role played by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the overthrow of the former Somoza dictatorship and in the subsequent democratisation of Nicaragua.

21.6 Congress regrets the fact that although the 1990 elections were held in a free and open manner, they were not held in an environment that was free from the threat of continued civil war.

21.7 Congress congratulates the Chamorro Government on its victory in the elections and calls upon the new government to respect the provisions of the Nicaraguan constitution in implementing its program.

21.8 In particular, Congress calls upon the Government to respect the right to organise of union and peasant organisations and to reject calls from the extreme right for the formation of vigilante groups (death squads) to attack striking workers.

21.9 Congress welcomes the advance made in the peace process in El Salvador, in particular the UN mediated accords reached between the Salvadoran Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in Mexico in April 1991.

21.10 The accords promote constitutional amendments which aim to subordinate the armed forces to civilian control, to improve aspects of the judicial and electoral systems and to establish mechanisms to guarantee respect for human rights.

21.11 Accordingly, Congress calls upon the Australian Government to express to the US and Salvadoran Governments its view that the continuing process of negotiations in El Salvador must further address the issue of change to the personnel and structure of the Salvadoran armed forces, if peace and respect for human rights is to be achieved.

21.12 Congress also calls upon the Australian Government to support the stopping of the supply of arms and military aid which is inimical to the process of democratisation.

21.13 Congress welcomes the UN Security Council Resolution 693 (1991) which will establish a UN mission with a mandate to verify the San Jose human rights accord of 26 July 1990 and an eventual ceasefire agreement.

21.14 Congress condemns the threats to the UN mission from the Salvadoran ultra-right death squads.

21.15 Congress calls upon the Australian Government to again request the U.S. Government to restore recognition of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice over disputes in Central America and the Caribbean.

22. Chile

22.1 Congress warmly welcomes the ending of the 17 years of military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile and congratulates the new democratic and universally elected government of Mr. Patricio Aylwin, representing a coalition of political parties and having the goal of "transition to democracy".

22.2 Congress is concerned that it is not going to be easy to untie all the knots left in place by the dictatorship in every aspect of society's life, in the short term.

22.3 Therefore Congress calls for:-

- The Federal Government to co-operate in every possible way to ensure that total democracy is restored in Chile.
- Developed countries to restore and expand economic aid which will assist in ensuring this process will not again be
- threatened by the use of force.
- The I.C.F.T.U. to assist the Chilean Trade Union Movement and in particular the C.U.T. (Unitarian Central of
- Workers of Chile) in playing its role in the restoration of democracy.

22.4 Congress congratulates President Aylwin for the measures taken to free all political prisoners and to re-establish human rights. Congress encourages the Chilean Government to continue the process as the way to achieve total reconciliation amongst Chilean people.

22.5 Congress notes that a number of Australian companies have subsidiaries in Chile and calls on them to negotiate in a proper manner with their employees and refrain from sheltering behind the oppressive legislation left in place by the past Government.

22.6 Congress agrees to lift all sanctions taken by the ACTU against the military dictatorship of Pinochet and will develop close contact with the trade union movement of Chile.

23. Middle East

23.1 In supporting the need for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, Congress recognises that the international community needs to intensify efforts to establish peace and stability in the Middle East.

23.2 The achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace should be consistent with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 including a just resolution of the Palestinian issue, the continuing security of Israel, the genuine independence of The Lebanon and the extension of democracy in the region.

23.3 Congress reaffirms its support for the convening of an international conference which includes all relevant parties, including the Palestinian people, aimed at achieving results on all outstanding problems; security, political and economic.

This conference would preferably be under United Nations Supervision with the right of each party to determine their own representatives to participate in the peace process.

24. Northern Ireland

24.1 This Congress expresses concern at the continuing violence in Northern Ireland and calls upon the parties to enter into meaningful negotiations in a genuine endeavour to achieve lasting peace in that country.

25. Gulf War

25.1 Congress is relieved that hostilities in the Gulf War have now ceased. The Australian trade union movement mourns and regrets the loss of life, the injuries, the destruction of property and the social, political, economic and environmental trauma of this terrible war. We rejoice in the liberation of Kuwait, but will never forget the tragedy of war. Hopefully such a conflict will never happen again.

25.2 Now is the time for urgent efforts to heal the wounds of war.

25.3 The Arab people, and in particular the citizens of Iraq and Kuwait, must find a way forward to lasting peace, security and disarmament. But this is not purely a military or diplomatic matter. The only sure foundation for real peace, the only secure defence against the belligerence of dictators, is democracy and universal respect for international standards concerning human rights, including trade union rights.

25.4 The United Nations Security Council, building on Iraq's acceptance of all the relevant Council resolutions, must now take responsibility for the elaboration of a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

25.5 Israel and its Arab neighbours, including the Palestinian people, must also find a way forward to a negotiated settlement of their conflict in line with UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The ACTU believes that the UN, and in particular the Security Council, can assist the parties to this conflict to agree on the necessary steps forward up to and including the convening of an International Conference.

25.6 The continuing plight of the Lebanon must also be addressed by the international community to secure the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and full respect for the integrity and authority of the Lebanese state.

As part of the peace-making process the international community, through the UN agencies and the International Red Cross, must offer all possible assistance to the Kuwaiti and Iraqi people in the rebuilding of their shattered nations. Up to two million migrant workers and their families also have justified claims for compensation and assistance in rebuilding their lives.

25.7 An important part of the peace and reconstruction process must therefore be the establishment of constitutional and legal guarantees for the respect of international standards of human and trade union rights throughout the region. A just pattern of economic and social development is only possible when it is based on the free participation of working people, including migrant workers, through freely organised trade unions.

25.8 Congress believes that urgent action is required on a number of issues:

1. People are in critical need of assistance:

Palestinian workers

The ACTU is concerned about news of the harassment of Palestinian workers and the indiscriminate action on human and trade union rights against the whole community of Kuwait. The ACTU urgently requests the Australian Government to use their good offices in the United Nations, including the I.L.O, to ensure that events in the Gulf do not lead to a surge of xenophobia against immigrant populations.

2. Arms Disarmament

That in view of the experiences of the Gulf War and the provision of arms to Saddam Hussein, the ACTU believes that the Government should take decisive action to ensure that such an indiscriminate build up does not occur again.

25.9 Further the Government should ensure that every effort is made generally to reduce the arms export trade world wide and support international efforts aimed at disarmament.

25.10 International Conference

The ACTU believes that the UN and in particular the Security Council can assist in the search for ongoing and permanent situations to conflict in the Middle East. To that end Congress calls upon the Australian Government to intensify its efforts in ensuring the convening of an International Conference related Middle East issues.

26. Indo-China

26.1 Congress acknowledges the continued problem of refugees leaving the countries of Indo-China - in particular Vietnam - and its attendant effect of the creation of severe political socio-economic and security problems for other countries and territories in South-East Asia, with the potential for a possible destabilising effect on the region.

26.2 Congress maintains that the Australian people have no humanitarian or practical alternative but to continue to play a part in the resettlement of refugees from Indo-China and in continuing to seek the co-operation of the international community in making life in the camps as secure and dignified as possible. However, Congress again stresses that resettlement programs must take full account of

current levels of unemployment in Australia, and intakes should be consistent with the capacity of the economy to provide the necessary educational, social welfare and health supports required.

26.3 Congress notes that Australian development aid to Vietnam was abruptly ended by the Fraser government in early 1979, after Vietnamese troops overthrew the murderous Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. The aid program has not been re-established.

26.4 Congress strongly urges the Australian Government to restore normal government-to-government relations and to provide development aid to both Vietnam and Cambodia, without delay especially in the light of the participation of the Vietnamese Government in the peaceful resolution of the Cambodian Conflict.

26.5 Both countries have long suffered from war, international isolation, and in Cambodia's case, genocide. They are among the poorest nations in the world. We believe the Australian government cannot reasonably argue for the forced repatriation of 'economic' refugees back to Indo-China without first providing the development and humanitarian assistance so urgently needed to improve the economic situation and living conditions in these countries.

26.6 Congress expresses its support for the endeavours by the Australian Foreign Minister to assist in securing a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian issue. The Khmer Rouge murdered between one and two million Cambodians from 1975 to 1979 and every possible step must be taken to prevent them from returning to power in Cambodia. Hopefully one of the major consequences of Australian policy in Indo-China will be to minimise the likely return to power of the murderous Khmer Rouge Regime in fair and free elections supervised by the International community.

26.7 Further to this, we urge the Australian Government to take all possible steps to bring Pol Pot and his cohorts to justice for their crimes, in an appropriate international legal forum.

27. Philippines

27.1 This Congress re-affirms support for the right of workers in all countries to organise and bargain as members of free trade unions and resolves that the ACTU will take all necessary steps through the ICFTU and the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs to support fundamental trade union rights in the Philippines.

27.2 Congress notes that since the overthrow and exile of the corrupt dictator Marcos the Government of President Aquino has had to face a corrupt infrastructure, a military which has mounted several failed coup attempts and a continuing NPA insurgency. Violence continues to threaten trade union leaders of both the TUCP and the KMU. Congress calls for an end to all political violence in the Philippines and implores the Aquino Government to undertake further political, economic and social changes which are necessary to bring justice and an end to the political strife and guerilla warfare which continues to plague the country. We pledge our continuing support of the democratic trade union movement of the Philippines in its struggle for trade union rights and social and economic justice.

27.3 Congress notes that a number of Australian companies have subsidiaries in the Philippines and their actions in regard to their employees have at times been questionable.

27.4 We call on Australian companies involved in the Philippines to negotiate in a proper manner with their employees and refrain from sheltering behind the oppressive legislation of the Philippines Government.

28. South-East Asian Area

28.1 Congress expresses concern at the continuation of conflicts in the South-East Asian Region and condemns all acts of armed intervention in the region which violate the universally accepted principle of respect for a country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

28.2 We condemn the genocidal and barbaric acts that have been carried out by the ousted Pol Pot regime.

28.3 Congress is deeply concerned at the serious restrictions places on trade union activity in a number of South-East Asian countries and believes it is the right of workers themselves to develop their own independent and free trade unions free of government interference.

This takes the form of legalising only those unions which conform to the party or state mechanisms and policies, suppressing any independent worker activity.

The I.C.F.T.U. is called upon to continue to work to develop democratic and independent trade union organisations in the countries of this region. The A.C.T.U. will assist in such work.

28.4 Congress further encourages all manner of interchanges between national trade union centres in the region and recognises the need to provide assistance in the areas of trade union training, the acquisition of trade union management and organising skills, and specific projects designed to strengthen the integrity of trade union movements in the region.

29. Peoples Republic Of China

29.1 Congress expresses abhorrence at the massacre of thousands of peaceful demonstrators at Tiananmen Square, Beijing in June 1989 and the subsequent executions, detentions and other violations of human rights.

29.2 Congress conveys its support for the legitimate aspirations of those workers and students and others campaigning for greater freedom and democracy and an end to corruption.

29.3 Congress calls on the Chinese Government to:

- release all political detainees
- lift the state of emergency
- immediately cease the persecution of those associated
- with the movement for democracy
- fully respect all internationally recognised human and
- trade union rights and take immediate steps to guarantee
- these rights and freedom.

Congress supports the diplomatic and trade actions taken by the Australian Government in the

aftermath of the Tienanmen Square massacres and welcomes the initiative of the Australian Foreign Minister in arranging the study mission to China on human rights and freedom.

It is to be hoped that the work of this mission adds to the breaking down of barriers which will assist in the work to achieve freedom and democracy in China.

29.5 Congress supports all initiatives, including dialogue with the All China Federation of Trade Unions, which are aimed at the development of a free and independent trade union movement in China.

30. Tibet

30.1 Congress is disturbed about reports of human rights abuses against Tibetans, in particular the reports of the bloody crushing of Tibetan independence movement activists by Chinese authorities and the massacre of hundreds of nuns, monks and civilians in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in early 1989 in order to quell independence supporters.

30.2 The ACTU is also concerned about reports of discrimination against Tibetans by Chinese authorities, particularly in the areas of employment, health and education, and the use of forced and child labour in Tibet.

30.3 Congress therefore:

- calls upon the Peoples Republic of China to respect the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Political and Social Rights and to ratify ILO Convention 97 regarding Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise; and
- calls for the commencement of earnest negotiations between the Chinese and Tibetan peoples on the future status of Tibet and on future relations between those peoples.

31. Frontline States

31.1 Congress welcomes the achievement of independence by Namibia on 21 March 1990, congratulates SWAPO on its victory and welcomes the cease-fire in Angola announced in 1991.

31.2 However, whilst these positive developments are significant, the Frontline States of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe remain economically subordinated to South Africa.

Further serious and widespread violence perpetrated by the M.N.R. continues in Mozambique, despite the fact that Mozambique has adopted a multi-party system.

31.3 Congress believes these problems can only be brought to resolution through a forging of a consensus of the people concerned, and strongly asserts that while lasting solutions may require collective action by the international community as a whole, ultimately the success or failure of any moves towards stable democratic Government will stand or fall on the level of support given by those most intimately concerned.

31.4 Congress calls upon the Australian Government to continue to provide economic and moral

support to the Frontline States, directly and through the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, in order to help reduce their economic dependence on South Africa.

32. South Africa

32.1 The ACTU welcomes the release of Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of the African National Congress and other political organisations in South Africa during 1990, and the repeal of many discriminatory laws.

Congress recognises that these motions of President de Klerk have altered the nature of the struggle against apartheid and it is now realistic to hope that South Africa will in the near future become a unitary, non-racial, democratic state in which people of all races will have an equal right to elect a government on the basis of a universal franchise.

32.2 However, a number of further steps remains to be taken by the de Klerk Government before the post-apartheid South Africa can emerge and again be welcomed as an active participant in the community of nations, as stated by the 45th UN General Assembly in December 1990. For this to happen South Africa will need to be a democratic country with a constitutional order in accordance with the UN Charter and the UN Declaration on Human Rights.

32.3 The ACTU thus calls on President de Klerk and the National Party to resolve all remaining obstacles to negotiations by -

- releasing all remaining political prisoners;
- granting indemnity to all South African political exiles so as to enable their safe return home;
- repealing remaining repressive security laws; and
- making a determined, sustained and effective effort to halt the alarming escalation of violence;
- the establishing of an independent judicial inquiry into the alleged military and police support of a strategy of covert violence aimed at destabilising the democratisation process.

and thereafter to -

- enter into serious and sustained constitutional negotiations;
- support the democratic election of a Constituent Assembly to put a new constitution into place; and
- establish more representative interim government arrangements to manage the transition to democratic government.

32.4 Recognising that the apartheid system has created a society besieged by massive problems of poverty and socio-economic injustice which need to be urgently addressed, the ACTU calls on the Australian Government to -

- Work within the framework of the Commonwealth and the UN Declaration on South Africa of 1989 to ensure that sanctions are not lifted before the "profound and irreversible" changes, ...for by the UN General Assembly Special Session on Apartheid 1989, have clearly taken place.
- noting the effectiveness particularly of financial sanctions in the fight against apartheid and the distance still to travel before a non-apartheid constitution is achieved, consult with the African National Congress and other democratic anti-apartheid forces in South Africa on a

suitable timetable for lifting of trade, investment and financial sanctions; and

- continue to contribute to development and educational projects within South Africa and also in the Frontline States (Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana) which will assist the victims of apartheid to overcome its legacy of inequality and poverty.

32.5 In addition the ACTU commits itself to -

- actively support the South Africa non-racial trade union movement in its efforts to establish unity of the trade union movement.
- actively support trade union education and training through bilateral co-operation and APHEDA.
- encourage mutual co-operation and assistance through ACTU affiliates with affiliates of the non-racial trade union movement in South Africa.
- support the campaign in Australia for the maintenance of economic sanctions.
- campaign to ensure that any lifting of sporting, cultural or other sanctions will only occur after consultation with the ANC, COSATU and other democratic forces.
- calls on affiliates to support the national campaign to raise funds for the information office of the ANC.

33. Democratisation In Central And Eastern Europe

33.1 Congress warmly welcomes the downfall of totalitarian regimes in Eastern and Central Europe and especially welcomes the defeat of the Junta that sought to seize power by force and by doing so destroy the process of perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union.

Congress congratulates the people of the Soviet Union for overthrowing the Junta, in particular a principled leadership role played by Boris Yeltsin and the restoration of Mikhail Gorbachev as President of the Soviet Union.

33.2 The development of freedom and democracy in these countries is vital if the full potential of the people of these countries is to be realised.

Congress reaffirms its support for these democratic and economic reforms and calls on the West to restore and expand economic aid which will assist in ensuring these processes will not again be threatened by the use of force.

33.3 Congress welcomes the statements from the Soviet Union that it will allow the people of each country to determine their own future.

33.4 Congress recognises that the first hurdle in these countries was to allow free and democratic elections to take place. The next major hurdle is to transform the economies of these countries from backward, centralised economies riddled with shortages in basic consumer items to free market economies.

33.5 However, because of justifiable hatred of the command-administer systems of the past, and without experience of "free-market" economies, there is in these countries a temptation to uncritically embrace such free-market solutions. Considerable damage can be caused by agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank as well as political figures who advance such policies. Accordingly, the ACTU believes that the ICFTU has an important role in assisting the trade unions of

these countries to have access to information about negative aspects of "free-market" approaches and the dangers of totally accepting methods and policies acquired from the West.

33.6 This transformation will not be without certain social costs. Accordingly, Congress welcomes the economic assistance which the Australian Government has already pledged to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and calls upon the Government to provide further economic aid and technical assistance wherever practicable in order to cushion the hard road from dictatorship to freedom.

33.7 If workers are to properly share in the benefits of the development of prosperous free economies, the development of independent trade union organisations in these countries must be actively encouraged.

33.8 The A.C.T.U. will seek to develop contact with and support such trade union organisations to the extent that resources permit.

34. "Code Of Conduct" On Australian Investment Overseas And A "Social Clause" Concerning Countries Who Import Into Australia

34.1 Congress supports both Australian investment overseas and the preferential trade arrangements which apply to countries importing into Australia through schemes such as SPARTECA (South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement) and ANZCERTA (Australia – New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement).

34.2 Nonetheless, Congress believes Australia's involvement in international investment and trade brings both rights and responsibilities.

34.3 Those responsibilities including ensuring that workers in companies in which Australian's invest overseas and workers in companies which import into Australia, have certain fundamental basic rights, including the right of association; the right to organise and bargain collectively; a prohibition on the use of any form of forced or compulsory labour; the right to strike, a minimum age for employment; and acceptable minimum wages, hours of work, occupational safety and health, and conditions of employment.

34.4 Congress believes the Australian Government should enforce these fundamental rights on Australian companies which invest overseas and on companies which import into Australia.

34.5 As a minimum, Congress considers the Australian Government should not render any assistance through areas such as Austrade or our embassies to companies which invest in overseas companies which do not meet these minimum standards. Further, Congress believes no trade concessions should be available to any company seeking to import goods and services into Australia which does not provide the minimum standard to its workers.

34.6 Congress calls upon the Australian Government to implement such a "Code of Conduct" with respect to Australian investment overseas and a "Social Clause" with respect to imports into Australia" and to investigate together with the A.C.T.U. and industry, methods for protecting Australian industry from the effects of unfair competition from abroad.