

## **Resolution No. 7**

### **Freedom of Expression**

The 9<sup>th</sup> ITUC-AP General Council Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, 25 - 26 November 2013:

- NOTING THAT**
- freedom of expression is essential to the effective functioning of free trade unions and democracy;
  - the right to freedom of expression exists under international human rights law, being recognised in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has been ratified by many countries in the region;
  - the right to freedom of expression is severely curtailed in countries including China, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, to mention a few, in the Asia and Pacific region where national laws ostensibly directed to goals such as protecting cultural norms and social cohesion are in fact deployed to silence regime critics;
  - persons alleged to have offended such national laws are often prosecuted under the criminal code with manifestly excessive jail terms imposed on those found to have breached it; and
  - international organisations including the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the European Union and the Amnesty International, have condemned or expressed deep concern about these cases;
- EXPRESSES** its profound dismay that persons exercising their right to freedom of expression have been treated as dangerous criminals, shackled, and sentenced to manifestly excessive prison terms; and
- DEMANDS** the immediate release of all political prisoners in all countries and the repeal of national laws that are deployed to intimidate critics and stifle free speech.