

## II. OBJECTIVES

### VENEZUELA:

- **Objective 1:** To strengthen the capacity of Venezuelan union partners and new coordinating bodies to defend their right to organize and represent workers, and bargain collectively over working conditions.
- **Objective 2:** To strengthen the capacity of Venezuelan trade union partners to develop and advocate for policies for increased protection of fundamental rights at the workplace, industry and national levels.

### COLOMBIA:

- **Objective 3:** To build the capacity of Colombian unions to understand and utilize new legal prescriptions, normative instruments and labor rights protection processes.

## III. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

### VENEZUELA

To address Objective 1: To strengthen the capacity of Venezuelan union partners and new coordinating bodies to defend basic worker rights and the role of trade unions to organize and represent workers, and bargain collectively over working conditions, ACILS proposes the following activity:

Activity 1: ACILS will conduct training workshops with local and regional leaders on defense of worker rights and the role of trade unions. The workshops will focus on organized responding to specific pressures facing specific unions or economic sectors and the erosion of basic rights and working conditions. Specific areas of focus will be:

1) Addressing present and future threats to specific trade union organizations and to the trade union movement more broadly. The primary threats to unions include the outright persecution of union leaders for protest or strike activities; the erosion of collective bargaining agreements through non-compliance with existing contracts, or refusal to negotiate new contracts; the imposition of "worker councils" charged with usurping representation functions and subjugating workers to politicized, undemocratic organizational structures; the imposition of political obedience in the workplace (requiring workers to participate in political activities both inside and outside of the workplace); and replacing labor contracts with subcontracting systems such as cooperatives or with social production companies. A combination of responses will be developed to confront these threats, starting with building basic awareness of the issues among rank and file membership, mounting legal defense strategies, coordinating concerted resistance actions, building coalitions among unions and broader civil society allies where possible, advocating policies political leaders in government and the National Assembly, and developing broader community support.

2) Strategic planning for defense of labor rights, collective bargaining, conflict management and negotiation. This area of training involves developing a structured planning process to identify the strengths and assets a union has to bring to bear against specific challenges, and then setting out a work plan to utilize those assets. Years of unresponsive leadership and cronyism in the Venezuelan union movement have weakened membership involvement. The strategic planning process will focus on revitalizing rank-and-file involvement in fundamental union functions, such as development of bargaining proposals, the bargaining process, conflict management, and negotiation.