

## **CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT – 68<sup>TH</sup> CSN CONVENTION**

**ALFONSO IBARRA RAMIREZ**  
**PRESIDENT, CONSEIL CENTRAL DES**  
**SYNDICATS NATIONAUX DE L'OUTAOUAIS**



## **CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT ON THE CSN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **UNION CV**

#### **1997–1999**

- Student representative for the América organization at the Universidad del Atlantico in Colombia

#### **2003–2007**

- Coordinator, Jeunesse ouvrière de l'Outaouais

#### **2006–2007**

- Head of social ministry for the Diocese of Gatineau
- Diocese of Gatineau union

#### **2007–2010**

- Coordinator and instructor for the Association de l'ouïe de l'Outaouais (hearing-impaired association)

#### **2010–2015**

- Representative and activist in various social and community organizations in Outaouais
- Member of the Executive Committee, Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec (association of community literacy groups)

#### **2002–2015**

- Active member of Development and Peace since 2002:
  - Elected to the National Council (2009 to 2015); member of the International Programs Committee (2010 to 2012, 2014 to 2015); chair of the Canadian Programs Committee (2013 to 2015).

#### **2015 to 2019**

- Member of the Syndicat des employés et employés de Développement et Paix–CSN and active on various union committees:
  - Mobilization committee, executive committee, analysis and political action committee of the Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de l'Outaouais (CCSNO–CSN), delegate to CCSNO–CSN bodies and to some education programs of the Fédération des employés et employés de services publics (FEESP–CSN).

#### **Since 2019**

- President of the Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de l'Outaouais–CSN
- Member of various confederal committees:
  - Intercultural Relations Committee, environment coordinator, organizing coordinator, officer responsible for immigration, Steering Committee, Workplace Violence and Harassment Committee (activist component), Board of Directors of the Alliance syndicale Tiers-Monde (AST)
- Representative of the CSN and member of the executive committee of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)

Brothers and sisters,

When I arrived in Canada in October 2001, I was in my fifth year of law school in Colombia. Speaking out in support of public education and university autonomy had earned me threats from the far right and paramilitary groups. I had to flee Barranquilla with several fellow activists and move to Bogota. There, the labour movement, particularly the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), supported us, as it did hundreds of students in public universities who were being persecuted across the country. Labour solidarity literally saved our lives.

This experience explains why I immediately became involved in Development and Peace after arriving in Canada. There, I found the same activist reference points that are dear to me: mobilization, popular education, critical understanding of power relations and a desire to act collectively. It was also there that I put down lasting roots in Québec, firmly believing that social change requires the active participation of as many people as possible and the ability to make room for all voices.

Like many immigrants and workers, I have experienced precariousness firsthand: jobs paying below the legal minimum wage, unpaid hours, unacceptable conditions, etc. I worked as a custodian at the Bell Centre and in big-box stores, as a hotel room attendant, and other jobs. These experiences shaped my vision of unionism: a combative unionism, rooted in the rank and file, close to the grassroots, serving the most vulnerable and capable of bringing about concrete change. It is this style of unionism that I propose to embody as 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President of the CSN, a position where active militancy plays a crucial role.

I believe union action must remain deeply democratic. Bringing our democracy to life means encouraging the creation of spaces where members debate, decide, learn and act together. It also means recognizing the importance of the regions outside the major urban centres—not just in words, but also as a real force in our movement. Having settled in the regions since my arrival in 2001, I have seen how they are an essential driving force for activism. I want to strengthen their role by improving knowledge sharing between the central councils, highlighting regional issues in our communications and giving the regions more space on CSN bodies and in public opinion. The regions play an essential role in balancing the weight of Québec City and Montréal when it comes to ensuring fair representation of all members. Obviously, this work must be done while also promoting better coordination on the ground with our eight federations.

Diversity and inclusion must also be at the heart of our practices. As a political refugee and a racialized person, I know that our movement can go further to eliminate barriers, develop concrete tools and improve representation and diversity in our decision-making bodies.

Finally, I believe deeply in the next generation. To get members engaged, we must give them confidence, give them tools and give them the space to learn, make mistakes and move forward. Here again, it's about making room for all voices.

**Alfonso Ibarra Ramirez**