



Name: **Alejandra Ancheita**

Name of Union: **Proyecto derechos economicos, sociales y culturales en Mexico (PRODESC) [Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Project in Mexico]**

Providence/Country: **Mexico**

Job/Title: **Founder and Director**

### Can you tell us something interesting about your city of origin?

I grew up in Chiapas, in Southern Mexico. When I was eight years old, my family decided to live in the capital city, Mexico City. It's an interesting city, where the country's political power and a large part of its economic power are centralized. There are several universities in Mexico City, which is also known for its strong cultural concentration. All of the country's deputies and senators have seats in Mexico City. When major social demands arise, Mexico City is where groups converge to protest and express their views. Twenty million people live in Mexico City.

### What type of work do your members do?

We work with indigenous populations who make a living from working the land, with peasants who also depend on agriculture for their livelihood, with miners who drive trucks, who work in concentrators, underground miners, etc. The miners mainly extract silver, lead and zinc for companies like Goldcorp and Excellon.

### What are the key challenges facing workers in your country today?

There are many obstacles to unionization. When workers try to organize within a union that is not connected with the Mexican State or that has no political affiliations, they are faced with a series of legal obstacles that slow down or even block their access to unionization. Corruption, not only

of political authorities but also of union representatives, is not the only problem. We also have what we call "white unions." [Editor's note: the Quebec equivalent would be "yellow" unions].

I also believe strongly in the importance of finding a different way to organize workers, of thinking outside the box. We need to reach out to temporary workers, to extend our organizing activities beyond the usual or traditional sectors. We need to change the way we organize so that we can reach young people. For them to become part of the union movement, the movement needs to change, to renew itself. In Mexico just like elsewhere in the world, union representation needs to grow, to include more women, more individuals from cultural communities, and sexual diversity.

### What do you hope to accomplish during the Steelworkers' Constitutional Convention?

I would like to develop a better understanding of the areas of convergence in terms of the experiences encountered by workers from different countries. We all have to deal with the same transnational corporations. It is very important that we learn new forms of action to help us stand up to these companies, which are present not only in Mexico but also in Canada and the United States.

### What do you think of Las Vegas?

I'm only here for one day. It's interesting to see such large infrastructures. But it's also quite overwhelming.

