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**STUDENT/FARMWORKER ALLIANCE LAUNCHES NATIONAL “DINE WITH DIGNITY” CAMPAIGN
URGING ARAMARK, COMPASS, AND SODEXO TO ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**

Students to food service provider industry: “If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.”

IMMOKALEE, FL – The Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA) has launched the “Dine with Dignity” campaign to educate and mobilize students across the U.S. about the role of food service provider industry leaders Aramark, Compass (and its subsidiary Chartwells) and Sodexo in perpetuating farmworker poverty and human rights abuses. The SFA is calling on these three corporations to follow the example of food industry leaders Yum Brands, McDonald’s, Burger King, Subway and Whole Foods in partnering with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) – an internationally recognized, award-winning farmworker organization based in southern Florida – to directly improve wages and working conditions for Florida tomato pickers.

The campaign's initial phase, in conjunction with the National Student/Labor Week of Action and Farmworker Awareness Week – in which students on hundreds of campuses are holding actions and educational events – will include dozens of student meetings with campus dining directors to encourage university-level support for farmworker human rights and ethical university food contracting. The on-campus campaign will escalate in the weeks and months ahead with creative actions, awareness-building and mobilizations planned for various campuses currently under contract with Aramark, Compass (Chartwells) and Sodexo.

According to Southern Illinois University student Kandace Vallejo, “After eight years of this campaign, seven high-profile cases of modern-day slavery involving farmworkers, and the implementation of five working agreements, what is the food service provider industry waiting for? Today, our message to Aramark, Compass and Sodexo is clear: If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.”

“Students remain committed to the principle of basic human rights for the workers harvesting the produce served on our campuses, and are demonstrating that commitment by taking a stand alongside farmworkers to demand change. It's time for Aramark, Compass and Sodexo to align themselves with that same principle by coming to the table and working with the CIW. Until that happens, this campaign will continue to escalate,” said Meghan Cohorst of the Student/Farmworker Alliance.

BACKGROUND: Farmworkers who pick tomatoes for the corporate food industry are among the country's most exploited workers. Florida tomato pickers earn about 45 cents for every 32-lb. bucket of tomatoes they harvest – a rate that has not changed significantly in 30 years. Workers labor from dawn to dusk without the right to overtime pay, receive no benefits, and are excluded from the right to organize. In the most extreme cases, workers are held against their will by employers through the threat of or use of physical violence. In the past eleven years, the Department of Justice has prosecuted seven cases of modern-day slavery – involving over 1,000 workers – in the Florida agricultural industry.

The low-cost, high-volume purchasing practices of the food service, supermarket, and fast-food industries help to create conditions in the fields where poverty wages and other human rights abuses flourish. Since 2001, the CIW, working in close alliance with the SFA in a national “Campaign for Fair Food,” has reached agreements with Yum Brands, McDonald’s, Burger King, Subway and Whole Foods that guarantee at least a penny more per pound to workers harvesting tomatoes for these companies, a human rights-based code of conduct, a collaborative effort to develop a third party mechanism for monitoring conditions in the fields, and farmworker participation in the development and implementation of these reforms.

The Student/Farmworker Alliance is a national network comprised of thousands of young people on campuses and in communities across the country organizing in close alliance with the CIW. During the course of the four-year Taco

Bell Boycott, which ended successfully in the CIW-Yum Brands agreement, SFA members organized to remove or prevent Taco Bell restaurants and contracts from 25 separate high schools, colleges and universities. The SFA's work has been commended by the Business Ethics Network, American Rights at Work, and the National Latino/Latina Law Students Association. The SFA is also a founding member of the **Alliance for Fair Food**, a broad network of human rights, religious, student, sustainable food/agriculture, labor, and other organizations working in partnership with the CIW.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers is an internationally recognized, award-winning farmworker organization based in southern Florida. It has assisted the U.S. Department of Justice and FBI in successfully investigating and prosecuting cases of modern-day slavery and it has been recognized with the 2007 Anti-Slavery International Award and the 2003 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

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