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INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU)

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Unions press Chilean President on APEC social agenda

Brussels November 16, 2004 (ICFTU online): Leaders of trade unions from APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation) economies are meeting President Ricardo Lagos of Chile today (Tuesday 16 November) to call for trade union demands to be properly incorporated into the agenda for the summit of APEC leaders to be held in Santiago on 20-21 November 2004.

"If APEC is to achieve its stated aims of stimulating cooperation and integration among its members, it must change direction so as to give highest policy priority to achieving social justice on the basis of decent work and full respect of fundamental workers' rights. This can only be achieved by working in partnership with the APEC labour movement", said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder who is heading the APEC delegation.

The trade union leaders are meeting in the 10th ICFTU Asia Pacific Labour Network (APLN) Conference in Santiago from 15-16 November 2004, to strengthen trade union cooperation in the APEC region and to call on the APEC leaders to take account of trade union recommendations.

"APEC leaders must agree to take necessary, urgent measures to promote workers' participation throughout the APEC process. Trade unions are ready to cooperate and work together with APEC to achieve its objectives and mandates", commented Ryder.

This year's ICFTU/APLN conference is discussing a proposal to launch an APEC labour forum, composed of the representative trade union centres of APEC economies, prior to the 2005 APEC leaders meeting (due to take place in Busan, Korea, in November 2005). The ultimate goal is to ensure that trade unions are more systematically represented in APEC and are able to make a more effective input into the official APEC process.

Link to ICFTU/APLN statement:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220548&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 148 million workers in 234 affiliated organisations in 152 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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