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International trade union movement makes case at G8 meeting

Brussels, 10th March 2005 (ICFTU Online): As G8 Labour Ministers prepare to meet in London (10-11 March 2005), the international trade union movement today unveiled its vision for global growth incorporating workers' rights and which properly answers the issue of poverty.

A statement released today, produced by TUAC (Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD) (*) with the full support of the ICFTU, outlined that G8 Labour Ministers must quickly react to counter the growing pressure on employment standards in developing and industrialised countries. The causes of this pressure include China's rising share of the manufacturing export market, the end of the textile quota system (December 2004) and the outsourcing of service sector and white collar jobs, said the statement.

"Proper coordinated and effective international action is the only way to prevent abuses of fundamental workers' rights. Gone are the days when countries can fully respond to the challenges of today's global economy in domestic isolation," said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder who will be meeting G8 Labour Ministers on 10th March at an event hosted by the ICFTU's British affiliate the TUC (Trade Union Congress). "We will be urging Labour Ministers to support us in our calls on international institutions to step up action to enforce workers' rights and for greater international policy coherence. If these concerns are not adequately addressed by organisations including the World Trade Organisation and World Bank, workers in G8 countries and beyond could end up bearing the most severe brunt of a changed economic landscape".

The international trade union movement will also be making strong calls for more effective policy to strengthen economic and employment growth. One way to achieve this, says the statement, is for G8 Labour and Employment Ministers to push OECD Finance Ministers and Central Bankers to take coordinated monetary and fiscal policy action. Underling that an added benefit of this will be improved employment prospects for older workers, the international trade union movement warns of the dangers of a fluctuating employment market which in a downturn often leads to involuntary retirement and pressure: on public pension systems.

At the event in the UK capital, the international trade union movement will also pursue its agenda of eradicating poverty. Prioritising the need to increase aid, reduce and cancel debt and gain market access for products of least developed countries, the international labour movement will be urging governments to honour their promises to combat poverty, in line with the Global Call to Action against Poverty - a new campaign in which it is participating together with several other non-governmental organisations.

(*) <http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221385>

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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