

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS  
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## ILO commitment on youth employment and rights

Brussels, Friday 17 June (ICFTU online): The ICFTU warmly welcomed the adoption on Tuesday in Geneva of the conclusions and report on the discussion on youth employment held by the International Labour Conference (ILC).

Of the world's more than 1 billion young people, 85 per cent live in developing countries with a high incidence of poverty and inadequate employment opportunities. Young women generally, and in particular those with children, are more prone to unemployment, discrimination, sexual harassment, underemployment and poor working conditions.

Following the discussion on youth employment that was on the ILC agenda in recent days, the governments and social partners committed themselves to meeting the challenge of youth employment by fully involving young women and men in this struggle. The ICFTU strongly supports this call for urgent action to enhance the involvement of young workers, workers' organisations and their specific organisations in the development, implementation, and monitoring of youth labour market policies and programmes.

As the ILO report states, achieving decent work for young people is a critical element in poverty eradication and sustainable development, growth and welfare for all. The ICFTU regards the forthcoming review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2005 as providing an excellent opportunity to assess the extent to which national, regional, and international policies and strategies address the promotion of decent work for all with a focus on young people.

"It is extremely important that the Report recognizes specific problems of youth in the informal economy, where young workers are facing super-flexible arrangements, inadequate income, little or no social protection, no possibility of personal and professional development, no representation and poverty. Millions of young workers are trapped into the informal economy", added Evelyn Toth, of the Croatian union centre UATUC.

Toni Moore, of BWU-Barbados, welcomed the fact that "these conclusions clearly emphasise the quality of jobs and the rights of workers", in line with the approach demanded by the international union movement. And Alex Dias, 34, the youth coordinator of UGT-Portugal, added: "The challenge we face is to create conditions to enable young people to lead decent lives through decent work". This was the first time that young trade unionists were able to address the plenary of the International Labour Conference directly and this enabled them to present their own conclusions on the debate on youth employment.

Together with the fact that better account was taken of young people's rights in the debate on creating youth employment, the ICFTU welcomes

the agreement reached to launch a campaign aimed at young people, under the auspices of the ILO, with a view to promoting decent jobs for young people and, in particular, creating jobs whilst promoting labour rights and employability. The trade union movement also fully supports the ILO action plan to promote pathways to decent work for youth. This plan is specifically aimed at developing countries and will focus on three priorities: building knowledge, advocacy/promotion, and technical assistance.

- please also see: 'link to briefing Youth  
<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221662&Language=EN> >

-and: < 'link to interview Youth Mauritanie  
<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221700&Language=EN> >

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

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