

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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G8: International Trade Unions Welcome Aid Commitment, Regret Inaction on Climate Change

Brussels 8 July 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): The ICFTU and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) today welcomed the announcement by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair of a commitment made by the G8 leaders to increase development aid by up to US\$ 50bn, but expressed regret at the lack of progress on climate change.

Coupled with pledges by industrialised countries to write off the debts of the 18 poorest countries, the union bodies describe the aid commitment as a step forward in tackling poverty, while recognising that the new pledge still falls short of what is needed. Welcoming commitments by African leaders to democracy made this week, the trade union bodies nevertheless voiced their concern that only countries which accept stringent IMF/World Bank conditionality will be eligible for debt relief. Debt relief and additional aid must not be used simply to push developing countries to boost private sector development and attract foreign investment, but also to meet urgent social and infrastructure needs.

The ICFTU and its Global Unions partners are part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), which is seeking concrete and decisive progress on aid, debt relief and justice in the world trade system.

While the outcome concerning climate change is disappointing, the fact that there is now a public recognition that it is a serious problem at least provides some hope that progress may be made in the future.

The global trade union movement and its allies in the GCAP will continue pushing the anti-poverty agenda, including at two further major international events in 2005 - the UN review of the Millennium Development Goals, and the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong in December. Creating decent jobs for all, as the best way to end poverty, will be at the centre of the trade union campaign.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 234 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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