

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Decent work and respect for workers' rights key ingredients in the poverty-reduction recipe, CHOGM told

Brussels, 22 November 2005 (ICFTU OnLine):

A Commonwealth People's Forum Symposium on the Global Call to Action against Poverty today called on Commonwealth governments to take decisive action to place job creation and decent work at the heart of their poverty-reduction agenda.

Meeting just days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, scheduled to take place between November 25 and 27, the symposium focused on the importance of ensuring transparent governance and respect for human rights in achieving the UN's Millennium Development goals.

"Achieving economic prosperity means investing in people. And this, first and foremost, means respecting fundamental human rights, amongst them, workers' rights," Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ICFTU said today.

"With major trade union rights violations occurring in countries such as Nigeria, Swaziland, Nepal and Uganda, it is more urgent now than ever for CHOGM to take the lead and establish a timeline for ensuring that its members have ratified all core ILO conventions by 2010. The citizens of Commonwealth countries deserve nothing less than freedom from slavery and child labour and freedom of association, as a minimum," he continued.

"Without these basic rights, the shackles of poverty will keep millions of Commonwealth citizens without a hope of a decent education, job or health system."

The symposium called on CHOGM to establish a tri-partite annual forum of Commonwealth Labour Ministers which would engage citizens through their democratically elected trade unions, along with employers, in dialogue surrounding the challenges posed by globalization and the changes it brings.

"The many challenges that commonwealth countries face, from HIV/AIDS through to corruption and conflict must be met by a determination on behalf of these governments to act. It is only by linking aid, investment, good governance, the creation of decent jobs, reduced arms spending and the fight against corruption that these challenges can be meaningfully met," Ryder concluded.

Sponsored by the ICFTU's Commonwealth Trade Union Group (CTUG) the forum heard from representatives of Maltese trade unions and civil society organisations.

The CTUG represents over 30 million workers throughout the Commonwealth.

The ICFTU is a founding partner of the Global Call to Action against Poverty, the world's largest ever campaign for poverty eradication.

For more information, please contact the ICFTU Press Department on +32 2 224 0245 or +32 476 621 018.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers through its 234 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories: www.icftu.org.

The ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions:
<http://www.global-unions.org>

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