

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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WILL 2006: Trade unions mobilise for joint action on labour and the environment

Brussels, 13 January 2006 (ICFTU OnLine): Nairobi is set to host the global Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment, an event organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Sustainlabour and the United Nations Global Compact Office. The aims of this important conference bringing together trade union leaders from the around the globe include promoting trade union action on the environment and sustainable workplaces, reinforcing the social and labour dimension of sustainable development, and strengthening the relationship between trade unions, industry, other major groups, UNEP and other UN bodies to advance with the environment and sustainability agenda. It will also provide an opportunity to map the trade union movement's objectives in terms of environment-related issues such as climate change, energy, chemicals, health, water, or corporate social responsibility.

In 2004, the UNEP commissioned an analysis of the current and potential role of trade unions in the processes leading to sustainable consumption and production. Prior to that, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002), a high level meeting organised by the ICFTU, TUAC and UNEP entitled "Fashioning a New Deal" had identified the links between viable working conditions and sustainable management of the environment. The meeting led to an agreement aimed at establishing a joint work programme on labour and sustainable development.

For the trade union movement, its role in the promotion of sustainable development is self-evident. Decent employment, poverty, development and the environmental are issues that are intrinsically linked. The conclusions of the Assembly will no doubt be encouraging and contribute the implementation of realistic trade union initiatives linked to the environment. Leaders from the ICFTU and the World Confederation of Labour will address the Assembly alongside the speakers from UNEP. <http://www.will2006.org/>

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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