

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Will 2006 Conference: Trade Unions Agree Action on Environment with Key UN Bodies

BRUSSELS, 17 January 2006 (ICFTU Online): This week's Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment* in Nairobi concluded today with a series of undertakings from the trade union movement and key United Nations bodies.

The Assembly brought together more than 150 trade union representatives from developing and developed countries along with environment and sustainable development experts, governments and UN representatives.

The UN bodies ILO, UNEP and WHO affirmed their commitment to supporting trade union engagement on sustainable development, while the trade union organisations set out plans to extend practical work on sustainable development, building on programmes which are already in place. The Assembly also mapped out steps for joint follow up actions involving the UNEP, the ILO and the WHO.

The assembly agreed on major objectives including strengthening the links between poverty reduction, environmental protection and decent work, integrating the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development with a rights-based approach, and establishment of effective and democratic governance to ensure sustainable development. The Assembly also recognised that urgent action on climate change has to be taken, and that sustainable production and consumption patterns will have to be promoted.

To achieve these objectives, the trade union representatives at the Assembly committed themselves to strengthen trade union action on sustainable development and work on areas such as the reform of government policies and practice, and ratification and implementation of key conventions and instruments. Working with civil society allies to encourage workplace and community actions were among other important fields of work approved by the Assembly.

Through a common platform of the UNEP, ILO and WHO, the Assembly decided to undertake capacity building and training in areas such as climate change mitigation, corporate environmental and social responsibility and multilateral environmental agreements and law among other important issues.

The Assembly also underlined the need to facilitate engagement of the trade union movement with public authorities, support engagement with other major groups with common goals and promote environmentally and socially responsible job growth, including through of employment implications in environmental policy design. The Assembly decided to create and maintain a website to collect case studies such as those presented at the Assembly, which are being considered for eventual publication.

For more information: www.will2006.org

*The WILL 2006 Conference was organized by UNEP with the support of the UN Global Compact and with the collaboration of the ILO, WHO, ICFTU, WCL, TUAC and the Sustain Labour Foundation.

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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