

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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International Trade Union Bodies Meet With UN Secretary General in Davos

Brussels, 26 January 2006 (ICFTU OnLine): At a meeting with Kofi Annan at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 25 January, ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder said the global trade union movement had reached "good understandings" with the United Nations Secretary General on a series of key international issues. The trade union representatives welcomed the signs of growing commitment within the UN system, promoted by the union movement and the International Labour Organization, to tackle the global employment crisis, through the creation of decent jobs for the hundreds of millions of people worldwide who are struggling to survive in conditions of poverty.

The increasing engagement of the UN on the issue of international migration was a major feature of the talks, with a common recognition of the need for a strong UN role in pushing for effective international action on rights for migrant workers and the need for economic development and job creation in so-called "sending countries", as central planks of a cohesive and balanced global approach on the issue.

In discussions over the situation in Iraq, the Secretary General expressed his deep condolences on being informed by the union delegation of the murder that morning of Alaa Issa Khalaf, a member of the Executive Board of the Baghdad branch of the mechanics union, and underlined the positive role of trade unions in economic, social and political development.

Kofi Annan expressed his satisfaction at the forthcoming unification of the international trade union movement, pointing to the many challenges which the new organization will face in light of developments in the global economy. He also welcomed the new initiatives being taken between the trade union movement and the United Nations Environment Programme, and other areas of joint activity in the UN system. Prospects for moving ahead with the process of UN reform were also addressed during the talks.

"Commitment to the role of the United Nations has been a historical feature of the policies and activities of the international trade union movement, and will no doubt be a central plank of the new international trade union confederation which will be founded in Vienna in November this year", said Ryder.

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

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