

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Message to the youth of the ITUC : “We need the unions and the unions need us”.

Vienna, November 3, 2006: (ITUC OnLine) : “We are young and all the problems just raised are common to young people all over the world. They must be taken on board and become part of the solutions”, said Yemisi Ilesanmi (NLC-Nigeria), leader of the young delegates who took the floor during the plenary session at the ITUC Congress this morning (Friday). “Young workers are united to fight for decent jobs, quality education and to say no to child labour, no to child soldiers, and yes to peace, justice and harmony. The birth of this new, united and strong International Trade Union Confederation should be the beginning of a better representation of young workers in decision making bodies, integration of young workers in trade unions at all levels and in all structures, and participation of young workers in all trade union activities. We are calling all union leaders to support and encourage the participation and representation of young trade unionists in the ITUC structures and activities at all levels, from the international to the local”.

Daisy Walaza (NACTU-South Africa): “Unemployment is ravaging my continent. Millions of young women and men are unemployed, keeping them trapped in poverty. Those who have jobs have no decent jobs. Many young Africans die in the sea trying to migrate in search of better opportunities. And HIV/AIDS is killing our young ones.

The creation of employment and decent jobs must be high on the agenda of all stakeholders. Governments must create an enabling environment for decent jobs. Trade union leaders must support us for a better future for young people and give hope for the creation of a better future for the world”.

Pankaj Sharma (HMS- India): “In Asia, we are losing our human resources, like nurses and teachers who migrate to look for decent jobs elsewhere. We see millions of children working as domestic workers, in mines or on the street. They produce shoes, clothes, food, tobacco, carpets, metal products and other products for sale at home and abroad. Children should go to school and not to work! Trade union leaders should give priority to stopping child labour and let us fight for access to free and quality education”.

Giancarlo Bermudez Conde (CEOSL- Ecuador): “I come from the Americas where the majority of workers are young, and are part of the contract or outsourced labour force. We don’t have decent wages or subsidised health care or pension plans, or job security. If we try to organise we risk being dismissed on the spot. We want the ITUC to recognise our leading role and our initiative as we try to organise this growing group of workers. Together, we young people, women and workers in general can work to ensure effective representation and collective bargaining to end the exploitation of contract labour and outsourced labour, and bring them into the trade union movement.”

Manar Faidi (PGFTU- Palestine): “ In the Middle East, we face a political situation which creates war, occupation and divisions. Young people do not have decent opportunities. Old men declare war, young people fight and suffer. We need peace and justice. We want peace and justice now!

Jean-Christophe Schuaab (UNIA-Szwitzerland): “ We think that it is important that trade unions be truly democratic organizations. Undemocratic practices should belong to the past, more democracy and transparency belongs to the future. If unions are undemocratic and unions do not ensure the participation and election of young people at all levels and trade union bodies, the young generation will stay away from the union movement”.

Finally, Yemisi Ilesanmi appealed to all delegates at the Congress of the new international: “We are your future now: we are the leaders of tomorrow. That is why we must be your partners today. Give us a voice”.

For more information contact the ITUC Press Department on: +43 (0) 664 593 6190.

Created on November 1, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 154 countries and territories and has 306 national affiliates.

The new website of the organization is: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>