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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC Online

Millions of people stand up worldwide against poverty

Brussels, 17 October 2007 (ITUC OnLine): Today, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, GCAP¹ members and supporters, united by wearing white wristbands, are standing up to protest against the massive levels of poverty and inequality still persisting today. Last year, on October 17th, 23 millions people took part in the call to action against poverty. This year again, the ITUC has asked its affiliates and partner organisations to take action as a way to demonstrate workers' solidarity with hundreds of million of women and men who have to survive on less than a dollar a day. Many trade unions and organizations all around the world will take part in the action.

"Decent work for all is at the heart of ending poverty. Because of this, and because trade unions refuse to accept more excuses in a world where 50,000 people die every day as a result of extreme poverty and where the gap between rich and poor keeps widening, today we are joining GCAP members and supporters as we stand-up and speak out for decent work" says Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ITUC. "Special action is needed to tackle the feminisation of poverty, as women are heavily over-represented amongst the poorest", he added.

The ITUC insists that global and national policies must be fundamentally transformed to ensure that all people have a fair share of the vast wealth currently in the hand of a small minority.

The trade union' view on how to end poverty and inequality can be summed up with two words: decent work. Unions around the world are united in their fight for more and better jobs enabling each woman and man to live in dignity and to enjoy the benefits of social protection and social dialogue.

One of the core demands of the GCAP coalition concerns meeting and exceeding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed upon in 2000 by 189 heads of state at a UN summit. The MDGs are 8 clear-targeted key objectives to be achieved by 2015 which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education. The international trade union movement fully supports the MDGs and their achievement. But it is deeply concerned that in 2007, the mid-term year of the MDGs (2000-2015), many mid-term objectives and targets have not been reached. GCAP calls upon world leaders to strengthen their political commitment to put the MDGs back on track.

1. The ITUC is one of the founding organisations of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP). GCAP is a world coalition of trade unions, NGOs and other civil society organisations working together since 2004 to put pressure on world's leaders urging them to keep their promises to end poverty and inequality.

<<http://www.oct17.org/>>

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>

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