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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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## Key decision-makers commit to Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life

Brussels, 5 November 2007 (ITUC Online): Key decision makers from national governments and international institutions signed the Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life\* launched last week in Lisbon, committing themselves to fighting for seven key demands, including changing unfair trade rules, protecting the rights of workers to organise, ratifying and implementing the UN and ILO conventions around the protection of migrant workers and providing social protection to the 60% of the world's population who live without it.

Signatories so far include Juan Somavía, (Director General of the ILO), Sha Zukang (UN Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs), Dayan Jayatileka (Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body), Carlos Tomada (Labour Minister of Argentina), Carlos Lupi (Labour Minister of Brazil), Jose Antonio Viera da Silva (Labour and Social Security Minister of Portugal, which currently holds the EU Presidency) and Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (President of the Party of European Socialists).

Juan Somavia, in being the first ever signatory to the Call in front of an audience of leaders from governments, trade unions and civil society from throughout the world, expressed his hope that the Call to Action will turn a policy concept into a reality for people around the world.

“What we have here is the beginnings of a movement. Just like other movements in history it is not until people get involved that decision-makers feel compelled to act,” he said.

The Decent Work, Decent Life campaign\*\* will be collecting signatures from people in both developing and developed countries for the next year before handing them over to international decision-makers. National decent work coalitions will also make the same demands to their governments. Trade unions, NGOs and progressive political parties will all be mobilised to collect signatures.

The full call is available in four languages at  
[http://www.decentwork.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=29](http://www.decentwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=29)  
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For further information and to arrange interviews, please contact the ITUC press department on +32 224 0204 or Elizabeth Tapper (Solidar) on +32 500 1020.

\*\*The Call to Action calls on governments to do the following:

1. Decent work: Reaffirm the contribution stable and quality jobs make to a

healthy economy and just and equal communities by implementing inclusive strategies for full and productive employment, including for those currently working in the so-called informal economy who need rights and justice to defend their interests. All people have the right to work, to good working conditions and to sufficient income for their basic economic, social and family needs, a right that should be enforced by providing adequate living wages.

1. Rights: Workers' rights to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively with their employer are fundamental to realising decent work, and all international organisations, governments and businesses must live up to their responsibilities to respect workers' human rights.

1. Social protection: Strengthen and broaden social protection coverage by ensuring access to social security, pensions, unemployment benefits, maternity protection and quality health care to all. These benefits should be available to everyone, including workers in the so-called informal economy.

1. Trade: Change unfair trade rules and ensure that trade agreements are used as an instrument for decent work, sustainable development and empowerment of the world's workers, women, the unemployed and the poor. Binding mechanisms for the promotion and enforcement of decent work, including core labour standards, must be included in trade agreements. Governments must stop making trade deals which hurt the poor, create unemployment and lead to exploitation. The demands of workers' organisations and the rest of civil society must be listened to.

1. Debt: Ensure that the priorities of the international financial institutions incorporate social and environmental concerns. Particularly, loan and debt conditions which force countries to deregulate labour markets, reduce public spending and privatise public services at the cost of access and quality must be stopped. All projects funded by these institutions must adhere to core labour standards in their implementation.

1. Aid: Ensure that governments keep their commitment to increase the level of official development aid of rich countries to at least 0.7% of GDP. Adequate financing for development is imperative if the UN's Millennium Development Goals are to be reached.

1. Migration: Ensure that migrant workers are not exploited and enjoy the same rights as other workers by ratifying the relevant ILO Conventions and the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

\*The Decent Work, Decent Life campaign is led by the International Trade Union Confederation, Solidar, the Global Progressive Forum, Social Alert International and the European Trade Union Confederation.

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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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