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New ITUC action plan to fight against HIV-AIDS

Brussels, 30 November 2007 (ITUC Online): On the eve of World Aids Day on December 1 and in support of the World AIDS Campaign, the ITUC is launching a global action plan against HIV-AIDS.

The World AIDS Campaign has launched the Stop AIDS Leadership Pledge to mark the 2007 and 2008 World AIDS Day on the theme of "Leadership". In collaboration with national, regional, and international partners, people from all over the world are being called upon to make a pledge to take the lead to stop AIDS.

Almost 40 million people across the world are currently living with HIV. More than half of those infected form part of the active population and are between 15 and 49. Many workers are no longer physically fit enough to go to work and depend on their children to meet the family's needs.

According to the World AIDS Campaign, experience has clearly demonstrated that significant advances in the response to HIV-AIDS have been achieved when there is strong and committed leadership. Leaders are distinguished by their action, innovation and vision; their personal example and engagement of others; and their perseverance in the face of obstacles and challenges.

Since its foundation, the ITUC has made important efforts to fight against HIV-AIDS. The new global ITUC action plan will focus on 3 main aims. The first is to enhance HIV-AIDS work by ITUC affiliates, based on action plans in the different continents and especially in Africa. Secondly, as part of the Global Unions family, the ITUC will strengthen global advocacy on HIV-AIDS, especially focussing on workplace policies and on specific issues and sectors that serve to highlight health system development and delivery for better prevention of disease or injury, or for better treatment and care of workers. This includes, naturally, the provision of public health care for occupational and other diseases and injuries, and the further strengthening of our collective response to AIDS at the same time. Thirdly, the ITUC will engage in coordination and cooperation in fighting HIV-AIDS between national centres and the Global Union Federations.

"Twenty-five years into the AIDS pandemic we have seen many promising breakthroughs over the years" said Guy Ryder ITUC General Secretary. "Like peeling back the skin of an onion, the trade unions, who have taken leadership in the workplace approach on HIV-AIDS in many countries, have found that devising the right response to AIDS often reveals another layer. By increasing prevention and access to AIDS treatment, the years of neglect of health care systems and the deteriorating conditions for health care workers have been made all too clear."

"Strengthening health care systems is a priority challenge that must be taken up, but this is no time for band-aid solutions. One thing is certain-it makes little sense to offer solutions to the pandemic without improving the health care system including the conditions for its workers," Ryder concluded.

For more information:

<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/index.php/en/home>

<http://www.global-unions.org/hiv-aids/>

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.

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