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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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ITUC General Council Decides Ambitious and Comprehensive Action on Climate Change and Accepts New Affiliates from 7 Countries

Washington DC, 13 December 2007 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC General Council meeting has, at the start of its three-day meeting in Washington, adopted a far-reaching plan by the world trade union movement to tackle climate change. The 78-member council of trade union leaders from every continent endorsed an initiative to push forward a "Green Jobs" agenda as part of the plan, working with the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Labour Organisation. Parallel with the ITUC Council meeting, an 80-member delegation of union environment specialists at the Bali climate talks is putting forward a detailed statement http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/COP13_Statement.pdf which emphasizes the trade union commitment on climate change and calling for "just transition" measures to ensure that the urgent measures which must be taken are done in a way which are fair and just. Central to the plan is the international trade union commitment to the greenhouse gas reduction target of 85% by 2050 set by the UN Climate Change Panel.

"The social and employment aspects of this enormous challenge must be at the centre of the global effort, to ensure the massive public support which is necessary", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "We must also unlock sufficient investment for the millions of green jobs which can and must be created. Inaction or inadequate action on climate change would have drastic consequences for employment and societies as well as for the very fabric of the planet", he added.

The ITUC Council meeting follows a two-day Council of Global Unions Conference on union organising and collective bargaining, hosted by the ITUC's US affiliate the AFL-CIO. The Conference, which also focused on trade union communications, brought together over 200 trade union leaders from member organizations of the ITUC, Global Union Federations and the OECD-TUAC*. The first meeting of its kind, it led to a series of proposals for tackling corporate assaults on workers' rights to union representation and changing national legislation which allows employers to deny union membership and negotiation to workers. These will be discussed at a January meeting of the Council of Global Unions, which will set priorities for action in 2008.

The Conference was followed by a special hearing at the US Senate, involving US lawmakers and trade unionists from several countries, hosted by Congress member George Miller and addressed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and veteran Senator Edward Kennedy. The hearing discussed the aggressive union-busting industry which permeates the US economy and is increasingly being exported overseas. The union representatives were also briefed on the Employee Free Choice Act, which has already been passed by the House of Representatives as an attempt to restore basic union rights American workers, who face the most hostile legal environment in the industrialized world.

Trade union centres from The Comoros, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Sri

Lanka, Thailand and Surinam, with a total membership of some one million members were accepted into ITUC affiliation at the meeting.

*see www.global-unions.org <<http://www.global-unions.org/>>

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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For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018.

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