

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 13.06.2008 10:19 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

114/130608

Crucial ILO Social Justice Declaration Adopted

Brussels, 13 June 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Following two successive years of debate, the ILO's annual International Labour Conference adopted a major Declaration on "Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation."

"The Declaration speaks of the need to make a different reality possible," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "In place of our world of income inequality, high levels of unemployment and poverty and the growth of unprotected work, the adoption of this Declaration demonstrates a common commitment to build a world based on social justice."

The Declaration provides for regular review by the ILO of the components of decent work, which are now codified as inseparable and inter-related. It comprises, in particular, many paragraphs confirming the mandate for the ILO - deriving from its Constitution - to examine all economic, financial and trade policies, since they all affect employment. It is clearly the ILO's role to evaluate those employment effects in order to place employment and decent work at the heart of economic policies. Achieving this will require the ILO to make a strong and effective impact on the activities and policies proposed by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organisation.

South African trade unionist Ebrahim Patel, who led the workers' side in the negotiations, said, "This is an excellent Declaration. It is a statement about the present and about the future, about helping to create a world in which social justice is at the heart of the global economy and in which decent work is the tool to get it there."

Other parts of the Declaration emphasise gender and non-discrimination, and call for a new package of international labour standards to be promoted everywhere, in particular the "governance" standards, covering tripartism, employment policy and labour inspection, in addition to the core labour standards. Freedom of Association and Collective bargaining are now formally codified as the enabling rights for the realisation of Decent Work for all.

Governments are put on notice to put in place effective country programmes in order to attain decent work. The role of the ILO in achieving the extension of social security to all is emphasised, as well as a basic income for all in need, a minimum living wage and safe and healthy working conditions.

"The Declaration demands policy coherence based on social justice outcomes," said Ryder, "and consolidates decent work's status as the cross-cutting objective of the global community."

A follow-up implementation plan is to be discussed at the next ILO Governing Body meeting in November 2008.

The full text of the Declaration is available on the ILO website:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_094042.pdf

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: www.ituc-csi.org

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