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Union Leaders Say G8 Have Abdicated Economic Leadership at the Toyako Summit

Brussels, 9 July 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Trade union leaders from the G8 countries and global labour organisations called on the G8 to address the worsening jobs situation and climate change when they met with the Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda in May. Yet at a time when working people were looking for leadership the conclusions of the economic discussion at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit fall short of even the limited expectations that many commentators had.

The outcome on climate change and aid commitments have been criticised by civil society organisations and some developing country leaders. Unions share these concerns. In particular the absence of a baseline year for greenhouse gas reductions' targets can only serve to confuse the negotiations on climate change. But also disturbing is the failure of the leaders to address the weakness of the global economy and the likely rise in unemployment that is now being forecast over the year ahead. Whereas the 2007 Heiligendamm summit took the building of the social dimension to the global economy forward, this summit barely addresses the issue. Instead the agenda looks like a business agenda of more rights and compensation for foreign investors and the usual warnings on protectionism.

Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation - the ITUC said "the G8 renewed their commitment to increasing aid to Africa - but with only two years to go to the 2010 target and aid budgets falling - there is little sign of this being met."

John Evans, General Secretary of TUAC said "the G8 say in their statement that they wish to enhance cooperation with all stakeholders including trade unions - and yet they have ignored much of what we have called for: coordinated measures to support and rebalance growth, action to create "green jobs" and decent work as well as encouraging workplace agreements between unions and management as part of the action to combat climate change."

The only positive notes in the view of the unions are the moves forward on health and developing the health workforce and in particular the decision to establish a mechanism for monitoring meeting commitments to universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention treatment and care by 2010. The decision to set up a group to report on the food crisis and calls for stepping up anti-corruption measures, international tax enforcement and

education are also needed commitments that will be followed closely by the unions.

For further information

Trade Union Statement to G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit - July 2008

"Responding to the global crises: the role of G8 leadership

<<http://www.tuac.org/en/public/e-docs/00/00/02/30/index.md>>

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

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