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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Decent Work Essential to Effective Development Aid, Unions to Tell International Conference

Brussels, 28 August 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Trade unions will press the case for Decent Work as a primary benchmark in development aid at a major international conference on the effectiveness of aid, being held in Accra, Ghana from 2 - 4 September. This High Level Forum takes place at a time when even the modest gains of recent years in tackling world poverty stand to be wiped out due to escalating prices of food and other commodities, the global financial crisis and the impacts of climate change.

The ITUC, which is fielding a delegation of international and Ghanaian trade union representatives at the forum, is working with other civil society organizations to ensure that democracy, the creation of decent jobs, gender equality and a range of other key concerns are fully integrated into future aid strategies. The unions are also strongly backing moves to stop donor countries unilaterally imposing onerous conditions into aid packages, especially as these "conditionalities" often contradict democratic decisions taken by national governments and undermine democratic ownership and overall progress on development.

"Genuine partnership is essential to ensuring that development aid is effective and brings sustainable results, and while some steps have been taken in this direction, there is still a heavy hangover of past practices that often bred dependence, and hindered rather than helped equitable economic development," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The Ghana Forum needs to focus on how international aid can support and promote decent work, which will not only directly benefit workers and their local communities, but help ensure that the assistance provided will have real impact in tackling poverty and generate lasting economic development. The union delegation in Accra will press for this and for real progress on ensuring the economic empowerment of women through development aid as well as action to create employment for young people.

"Development aid has an important contribution to make in tackling the massive challenges confronting the world community. Making sure that aid is truly effective is a key part of the overall transformation in global economic relations, which the world so badly needs. Trade unions have a unique and pivotal contribution to make in ensuring aid effectiveness and accountability alongside their broader role as major actors in civil society as guarantors of democracy, equality and sustainable development," said Ryder.

Following a preparatory meeting in Accra on 30 August, the trade union delegation will take place in a two-day gathering of civil society organizations to finalise common positions to put to governments at the High

Level Forum. The ITUC is a member of the International Steering Group of civil society organizations.

For more information, see <http://www.betteraid.org/> and <http://www.accrahl.net/>

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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