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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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World Social Forum: Trade Unions Call for a New Growth Model

Brussels, 28 January 2009 (ITUC Online): On the occasion of the World Social Forum in Belem, the ITUC has released a statement on the global economic and financial crisis. For the ITUC, the financial markets of today are characterised by the reckless pursuit of quick profits against a background of unbridled economic and financial liberalisation. Casino capitalism is clearly to blame for the scale of the crisis. The financial markets have failed their primary mission, which is to ensure the financing of the real economy. Another key factor underlying the crisis are the imbalances arising from excessive market deregulation and the non-intervention of States.

The World Social Forum (WSF) is an international event drawing thousands of people to exchange views on globalisation, human rights and workers' rights. Following Nairobi in 2007, this year's WSF is taking place in Belem, in the Brazilian Amazon. The ITUC will be more active than ever this year, which is clearly marked by the global economic and financial crisis.

"We are here to exchange our views with civil society," comments Mamounata Cissé, ITUC assistant general secretary. "Together, we must prove capable of formulating proposals to change the current paradigm of economic growth. We want to see an economic model based on redistribution, respect for the environment and fair relations between rich and poor countries."

On the fringe of the WSF, the ITUC, ITUC-CSA (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas) and the Brazilian trade union organisations CUT, FS and UGT are organising a World Trade Union Forum, which will open on Wednesday 28 in the afternoon and close on Friday 30 January. It will be open to all the organisations and movements present in Belem. The WSF is being held at the Federal University of Para, on the bank of the Amazon River. The Trade Union Forum will be held in the WSF's "World of Work space" and will address the following themes: climate change and sustainable development; the triple crisis; the impact of migration on development; trade union rights; trade and decent work.

The Decent Work Alliance, led by the ITUC, the ETUC, Solidar, the Global Progressive Forum and Social Alert, will also be organising events during the WSF on the following themes: a new financial architecture to ensure decent work; a global welfare state; and the decent work, decent life campaign.

The ITUC underlines that without a social dimension, globalisation has forced workers from the North and South to compete with each other to attract multinationals and private equity funds whose profits were constantly soaring until the onset of the current credit crisis.

"A new model of growth must be developed without further delay; a model based on market regulation and that generates green growth, which will spawn huge opportunities in terms of job creation," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC.

The ITUC defends the idea of an economic system that is ecologically sustainable, socially just, geopolitically balanced, and that takes on board

the proposals of the trade union movement and other civil society actors.

To read the full statement:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Belem_crise_final_EN.pdf

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 316 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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

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