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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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International Day Against Racism and Xenophobia

Racism is incompatible with decent work

Brussels, 20 March 2009 (ITUC OnLine): On the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the ITUC recalls that racism and xenophobia constitute serious violations of human rights. It is essential that racism and xenophobia be prevented and eradicated, all the more so in the context of the economic and financial crisis affecting workers in every part of the world. Promoting respect for diversity, particularly within the workplace and trade unions, is among the labour movement's top priorities.

Discrimination based on colour, ethnic origin, culture or religion is an insidious and changing phenomenon, difficult to quantify and to combat. Nonetheless, a show of real political will by all those concerned could lead to a world free of discrimination.

The United Nations conference on the review of the action plan and the final statement on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance adopted in Durban (South Africa - 2001), to be held from 20 to 24 April 2009, is an opportunity for States to unite in reaffirming their solid commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

This conference is all the more significant in the current context, in which discrimination of every kind is worsening and having serious repercussions not only on the lives of the workers concerned but on the very workings of our economies and societies in general. The international trade union movement has been following the preparatory process very closely, will take part actively in the conference and will mobilise all of its affiliated organisations to ensure that the decisions adopted are implemented. In the context of the economic crisis, with the increase in unemployment and labour mobility, the social repercussions are set to be alarming, particularly for the ethnic, cultural and/or religious minorities concentrated in certain regions of the world. Eradicating racism in the workplace is a key challenge facing the trade union movement today.

"Decent work is one of the keys to tackling the global economic and financial crisis," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "Racism and discrimination are incompatible with the notion of decent work," he added.

By taking part in the Conference, the trade unions of the world are underlining their fight and their commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination so that the millions of men and women who are currently deprived of jobs, confined to certain occupations, denied promotion opportunities or are poorly paid, harassed and intimidated, can live and work in conditions of equality, dignity and justice.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national

organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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

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