

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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ITUC May Day Declaration, 2009

Ending the crisis and transforming the global economy

Brussels, 30 April 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The world is facing its gravest economic crisis in over 60 years. Tens of millions of jobs are being lost due to the greed, plunder and incompetence which have, through decades of free market deregulation, led the world into deep recession. Global poverty and inequality are increasing fast, and working women and men everywhere face levels of insecurity unprecedented in recent times.

Trade unions demand far-reaching, urgent and coordinated action to pull the world out of recession. Governments must act to keep people in work and create new jobs, to avoid an even deeper and longer-lasting crisis. These actions are essential, but alone they are not sufficient.

We demand nothing less than a full-scale transformation of the world economy. A new global economy is required, which is built on social justice and which:

- * Delivers decent work, with full respect for trade union rights, to all;
- * Is based on effective, democratic and accountable global governance which puts the needs of people first;
- * Ensures strong financial regulation, putting finance at the service of the real economy and the real economy at the service of people;
- * Guarantees respect for the rights of all working people and puts an end to poverty, inequality, discrimination and exploitation; and,
- * Secures sustainability through green investment and green jobs.

Governments have the responsibility and the possibility to build the new global economy. The trade union movement will press forward its demand for governments to fulfill this responsibility, and insist on full involvement at every level in making it a reality.

We will not accept a return to the politics of greed, which allowed a tiny elite to amass vast wealth at the expense of the many, robbing workers of their dignity and security. Central to this is restoring the role of government in regulating the private sector and ensuring public provision to meet fundamental social needs. Decades of free-market ideology have weakened the essential functions of government as regulator and provider, with the IMF and the World Bank playing a major role in ensuring that governments comply with that discredited ideology.

These institutions have now been given huge responsibilities and resources to combat the recession. Their structures and their policies, and those of the WTO, must be changed dramatically in order for the new global economy to be possible.

The central role of decent work in the new global economy must be fully realised. It is essential to meeting the needs and aspirations of people everywhere, and is the only sustainable way to restore demand for goods and services. The rights to organise and bargain collectively are central to maintaining and improving living standards and to stimulating growth. We call upon world leaders to agree urgently on a Global Jobs Pact to deliver decent work, and we insist that the ILO be placed at the heart of the governance of the world economy.

The removal of rules governing banking and finance has been the biggest single cause of the crisis. Strong national regulation is required. But in a global economy, no country can properly regulate in isolation, nor can any country alone stop taxpayers being cheated by the vast flow of money into tax havens. Governments have to work together to design the new rules and put them into place, and they must do this without delay.

World leaders have come together many times to pledge to defeat poverty and hunger, to promise development and guarantee that fundamental rights at work and in society would be respected. Yet the economic system they built ensured that many of the pledges they made would remain just words, while the crisis today is being used as yet another excuse to strip working people of their rights and entitlements. The new global economy must support, not undermine, the timeless and universal rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO core labour standards.

Time is running out to save the planet from the ravages of climate change. The new global economy must be a green economy, where high-carbon jobs are transformed into low-carbon jobs, and where investment in this transformation and the creation of new green jobs is assured. The world community must agree this year, at the Copenhagen Climate Summit, to far-reaching measures to cut emissions, build green infrastructure and jobs and ensure that the transition to the green economy is just and fair.

The world's biggest economies, at the G20 Summit in London, opened the possibility for work on the new global economy to begin. They agreed that jobs are central to recovery, and that there must be new regulation, global cooperation and reform. They committed to work on a Charter for Sustainable Globalisation, which could become a blueprint for the kind of world economy which working people demand. But these are still no more than the first few steps along the necessary path.

The trade unions of the world will carry forward our quest for the new global economy. Building on our firm traditions of global solidarity, our capacity to mobilize for change and our determination to hold decision-makers to account for their actions, we will pursue our agenda for change with governments, at the UN and the G20 and in every other place that matters.

From the ruins of the crisis, a new era of prosperity, equality, democracy and peace must arise. We proclaim our continued resolve to bring this new sustainable era into being, and to oppose, with every means at our disposal, those who stand in its way.

Join the World Day for Decent Work on October 7!

Unions act on the crisis - webpages:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?rubrique262>

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries and territories.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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