

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Durban II: The ITUC Reaffirms its Commitment to Eradicating all forms of Discrimination

Brussels, 28 April 2009 (ITUC OnLine): Despite the many incidents and uncertainties, the conference to review the progress made since the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa (2001) did finally take place and was able to complete its programme as planned.

The international trade union movement was well represented, having successfully rallied a good number of its national and sectoral organisations. The ITUC was in no doubt as to the importance of attending the Conference, to reaffirm its commitment and determination to eradicate all forms of discrimination and to show solidarity with all those affected by it. Far from being abstract entities, the victims of this scourge are human beings, working men and women whose rights are being flouted.

Given the context surrounding the conference and the constant threat that it might fail, the international trade union movement considers it all the more positive that the conference did go ahead and, above all, that a text was adopted. The international trade union movement supported the text, but nonetheless expressed regret that certain groups vulnerable to racism, xenophobia and discrimination were excluded from the concerns reflected in the document, including those discriminated against based on their caste, their sexual orientation or their gender. We also expressed regret that decent work and the Millennium Development Goals were not seen as key instruments in ensuring the eradication of racism and xenophobia.

The trade unionists attending the conference committed to keeping up their surveillance of the governments that have not signed, ratified or applied international mechanisms such as the international labour standards of the ILO, the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of disabled people or the rights of migrant workers.

The final document of the DPPA and the Durban Review Conference can be used by trade union organisations to press their governments to guarantee decent work, good working conditions and decent pay for all and to bring an end to discrimination in the workplace, which fuels racial discrimination. These texts constitute tools that can be used to press governments to assume their responsibilities in the fight against the worst of ideologies, which seeks to advance the view that we are not all equal. The international trade union movement pledged that it would keep up the fight for a world that reflects the best of humanity and, above all, to fight the political instrumentalisation of human rights.

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

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