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International Youth Day: Green Jobs - Our Challenge, Our Future

Brussels, 12 August 2009 (ITUC Online): Today is International Youth Day, as declared by the United Nations General Assembly, and young people all over the planet are mobilising around the theme: "Sustainability: Our Challenge, Our Future"

On this International Youth Day, the ITUC and its Youth Committee have decided to focus more specifically on climate change and green jobs, as young trade unionists are fighting today for the right to have sustainable, decent, green jobs.

Climate change is the main environmental problem facing humanity. It is the cause of the multiplication of extreme weather events, such as drought, floods, heat and cold waves. Its consequences are aggravated desertification and erosion processes as well as irreversible changes in ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. It will deeply affect all aspects of young people's lives: food and water supplies, the patterns and influence zones of diseases, the way we produce and consume. It will also have effects on employment, where young people are already at greater risk than others.

The aggravation of climate will have direct consequences all over the world, but its immediate impacts will target first the poorest and most vulnerable. It will leave a planet that is less inhabitable for future generations.

Intra and inter-generational solidarity is a key principle for solving climate change. An unfair distribution of today's costs of climate change will affect the most vulnerable, and aggravates the critical situation in which they already live. Not taking changes today to move faster towards a low-carbon economy will undermine livelihoods and prospects for tomorrow.

Young trade unionists want to be part of the solution for a fairer, environmentally responsible society that respects human and labour rights. They share the double ambition to achieve solidarity today while also protecting future needs.

They stress the need to support and assist those who are the most vulnerable during the transition process and the need to build a sustainable green economy that simultaneously creates new jobs while addressing environmental, economic and social inequalities.

Climate justice, the defense of rights and social protection are crucial to a fair and sustainable future!

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 157 countries and has 312 national affiliates.

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <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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