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ITUC General Council Accepts Four New Affiliates, Focuses on Global Crisis, Climate Change and Preparations for 2010 Congress

Brussels, 14 October 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has accepted four new member organisations into affiliation at its annual General Council meeting in Berlin on 6 - 8 October. The new members, CCSC Cape Verde, NUNW Namibia, CDTN Niger and the FTUB Burma, which is forced to operate in part outside the country due to the repressive policies of the military junta there, bring the total number of ITUC affiliates to 316 in 158 countries.

The Council meeting coincided with the 60th Anniversary celebrations of the ITUC German affiliate DGB and the second World Day for Decent Work on 7 October <www.wddw.org>. More than 460 events, involving several hundred thousand people, took place in over 110 countries to mark the World Day.

"This year again the World Day for Decent Work has been a resounding success, with people across the world mobilising in rallies, public events, flash-mobs, solidarity actions and a host of other activities, to demand action to end the global economic crisis, save and create jobs, and put social justice at the heart of the global economy. The high level of involvement of young people, bringing creativity and innovation to the Day, was especially remarkable, showing that the trade union message to support youth employment, education, training and young people's rights is getting across to a generation which is facing huge uncertainty in the face of the crisis. The General Council's decision to launch special campaign action with young workers is another sign of this," said Ryder.

A major part of the Council's discussions centred on the economic crisis and its devastating impacts on jobs and incomes. The Council endorsed further action following the meetings with G20 leaders at the Pittsburgh Summit, including fiscal and monetary stimulus to create decent jobs, promoting labour issues and the role of the ILO in international governance, special action to support developing countries, effective financial reform and regulation, and investment and "just transition" measures to support the shift to a low-carbon economy. The Council also put the final touches to the ITUC's work in preparation for the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December.

"Many of the bankers and financiers who created the economic mess are set to receive even higher payouts than before the crisis. Working people are rightly appalled at this, as millions of jobs are being lost in an employment crisis which has still not reached its worst depths. There are some positive signs that our pressure on the G20 is producing results, but we are still not convinced that the real lessons of this crisis are being learnt or that the economic reconstruction needed for sustainable, decent jobs and social justice is being undertaken with the necessary determination and commitment from governments," said Ryder.

A series of recommendations on workers' capital were adopted by the Council, including boosting the flow of information on violations of workers' rights by countries and companies to assist decision-making by worker representatives on pension funds, and better integration of activities on workers' capital with other areas of international trade union activity.

The General Council also expressed deep concern at developments in Honduras, where the ITUC's affiliates are leading the campaign to restore democracy, and in Guinea, where the unions are similarly at the forefront of the democracy movement. Trade unionists have been the target of violent repression in both countries, and the Council adopted special resolutions on each.

Preparations for next week's first ITUC World Women's Conference were also on the Council's agenda, along with discussion on the theme, resolutions and organization of the 2nd ITUC World Congress, which takes place in Vancouver in June 2010.

General Council members took part in the high-profile DGB anniversary celebrations on 5 October, including a special event addressed by Federal President Horst Köhler, DGB President Michael Sommer and ITUC President Sharan Burrow, which was attended by the leaders of all the main German political parties, the business community, judiciary and civil society groups. The Council was also invited to a reception hosted by Chancellor Angela Merkel on 7 October, prior to a special World Day for Decent Work event at Berlin's historic Brandenburg Gate.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 158 countries and territories and has 316 national affiliates. Website: www.ituc-csi.org and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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