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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Trade Unions Call For APEC Summit To Support Labour Proposals

Singapore/ Brussels: 27 October 2009 (ITUC OnLine): In preparation for a meeting with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore today, trade union leaders gathering at the XV Asia Pacific Labour Network Conference have called for a far-reaching reorientation of the policies of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in order to address the negative effects of the economic crisis. Singapore is the host of the 2009 Leaders' Summit, taking place on 14-15 November.

"We have already felt the impact of the crisis on the lives of millions of people," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "APEC must urgently adopt policies to address the negative effect on migrants, women, laid-off workers and young people, as well as millions of others, through the implementation of the ILO's Global Jobs Pact and the ILO Decent Work Agenda."

The trade union statement to APEC calls on APEC to broaden the scope of its activities, and to promote the integration of social and labour provisions into bilateral and regional free trade agreements. At the same time such action would result, in the longer term, in fairer and more sustainable trade among the APEC economies, for the benefit of all the people of the Asia - Pacific region.

The statement expresses concern at the common work that the World Bank has been undertaking recently with APEC on elaborating an "Ease of Doing Business" study with a view to setting priority areas for regulatory reform in APEC economies. Given that the Bank itself has repudiated the use of the labour indicators in its own "Doing Business" report, it is essential that these anti-worker indicators be rejected in the framework of APEC as well.

Trade union leaders have welcomed the news that a meeting of APEC Human Resources Development Ministers will be held in 2010, after a nine year gap since the last such meeting. This needs to be the starting point for a new commitment from APEC to bringing sufficient attention to bear on social priorities.

The trade union conference in Singapore will argue that labour should provide a vital input to APEC institutions in order to achieve a sustainable recovery, and should set up a Labour Forum to enable workers' representatives to get their voice heard in APEC structures.

These are among the key messages that union leaders will be relaying to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and to the Executive Director of APEC and the Chair of the APEC business advisory committee (ABAC), when they meet them during the two-day ITUC/APLN Conference. Union leaders will call on the Prime Minister to convey their proposals to create decent

work and mainstream social concerns to the APEC Leaders' Summit in three weeks' time.

For the full ITUC/APLN Statement, please consult:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20091026105456-Microsoft_Word_-_FINAL_APLN_statement_2009_EN.pdf

Background document:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20091026105448-Microsoft_Word_-_FINAL_APLN_2009_Background_Document_EN.pdf

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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