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ITUC Mourns the Passing of Global Trade Union Leader Neil Kearney

Brussels, 19 November 2009 (ITUC OnLine): It is with profound sadness that the ITUC has learned of the passing of global trade union leader Neil Kearney in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 18 November. Born in 1950 in Donegal, Ireland, Neil Kearney served as General Secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation since 1998, following 16 years as a national trade union official in the UK.

In his long and distinguished service to the trade union movement, Neil Kearney achieved many notable successes in improving the wages and working conditions of some of the most exploited workers in the world, in a sector where workers have borne the brunt of the worst excesses of globalisation. In the same way, he was a tireless and effective campaigner against child labour, working closely on this, as in other areas of his activities, with the ITUC and the Global Union Federations from other sectors, as well as with other civil society organisations in support of workers' rights.

"We are shocked and saddened at the loss of our dear brother and colleague Neil. He was an inspiration and a mentor to a tremendous number of people within and outside the trade union movement, and impressed everyone he met with his passion and dedication to advancing the cause of working women and men in the textile and garment sector, and to social justice for all," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "The tragic and untimely death of Neil Kearney has deprived working people of a tireless and devoted advocate. Our deepest sympathy goes to his family, and to his colleagues in all parts of the world."

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.

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

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