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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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WTO Ministerial Must Support Decent Work and Development

Brussels, 27 November (ITUC OnLine): A 60-strong trade union delegation at the WTO Ministerial meeting in Geneva next week will press for WTO rules and negotiations to promote sustained and decent employment growth. A special conference on 29 November - "Trade, Growth and Development: Can the WTO Promote Decent Work?" organised by the ITUC will engage the international trade union community with WTO Director General Pascal Lamy, trade ministers from Argentina, Brazil and South Africa, and European Union and US representatives as well as ILO Executive Director Kari Tapiola.

"While, in the midst of the global economic and jobs crisis, the WTO meeting is not likely to bring concrete results, it is absolutely clear that the deregulated free-market policies which have framed international finance, economics and trade have totally failed. The WTO, as a rules-based organisation, must set rules which favour decent work, not undermine it," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The demands of the ITUC in this phase of negotiations would mean that developing countries would get the policy space they need to develop viable and sustainable industries, and that they would not be obliged to fully liberalise manufacturing in specific sectors. Trade liberalisation must not result in a threat to domestic regulation, and neither should it apply to vital public services.

"Our demands at this WTO Ministerial are specific and cover extremely important issues of national development, social justice and sustainability. Along with this, we need to see the WTO build up cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, and make sure that its rules support ILO standards," said Ryder.

The 29 November "Trade Growth and Development" Public Conference will take place at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva, from 15.30 to 17.30.

The ITUC Statement is available at:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Final_-_Statement-WTO-19-11-09.pdf

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

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

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