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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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WTO Conference Must Focus On The Global Crisis

Brussels, 2 December (ITUC OnLine): As the third day of a short WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva opens, trade unions have strongly criticised the fact that the overwhelming majority of speeches in the WTO Plenary have failed to recognise the links between trade, jobs and the global crisis.

"It is absolutely lacking credibility for Ministers speaking in Geneva to ignore the dramatic jobs impact that the crisis is having back home," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "Some seem to be living in an unreal world where they can discuss world trade in the abstract, rather than think of the impact that trade liberalisation would have on workers already facing the worst economic crisis in over sixty years."

Neither is the WTO meeting grappling with tough problems of the reform of the multilateral trading system to add a genuine development dimension and include sustainability in its structure.

"The WTO Conference should be examining how to change WTO structures and trade rules for the benefit of all WTO members, such as incorporating decent work and core labour standards into WTO trade policy reviews," Ryder added. "This 7th WTO Ministerial Conference is a missed opportunity to tackle issues that are fundamental to the long-term future of the multilateral trading system."

Click for main ITUC Statement:

<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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