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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

"MAKE OR BREAK" FOR COPENHAGEN CLIMATE TALKS

Brussels, 16 December (ITUC OnLine): Governments must finally step up to their responsibilities and reach a serious agreement at the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen before it is too late, the International Trade Union Confederation has stated.

"We cannot risk waiting any longer," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "Decisions must be taken and action has to start immediately. Governments must show the necessary flexibility to recognise that not everything they want can be had this week, yet achieve the most ambitious agreement possible to begin tackling climate change. It is essential that basic principles of solidarity be respected, in order to attain a just transition for working people and to provide differentiated responsibilities for developing countries. The human, environmental and economic costs will otherwise be massive."

Ryder was speaking at the close of activities at the World of Work pavilion, where some thirty events have been organised over three days by unions from all regions and sectors. Hundreds of trade unionists are in Copenhagen for the UN climate change conference, and are pressing their country's leaders to commit themselves to social justice in the transition towards low carbon and climate-resilient economies.

The ITUC has expressed its serious concern at the lack of access to the UN conference centre for civil society. "The exclusion of almost all civil society representatives from the most critical days of COP15 is unacceptable and must not set a precedent," said Ryder. "Trade unions and other civil society organisations provided much of the dynamism at the start of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Rio in 1992, and we have played a key role in the discussions ever since. It is vital that we again be able to play our full part in this process."

Guy Ryder will be speaking at an ITUC side-event on the evening of Thursday 17 December, entitled "Workers after Copenhagen - a Just Transition?"

The ITUC Statement "Trade unions and climate change - Equity, justice and solidarity in the fight against climate change" sets out the international trade union movement's position in detail, emphasising the need for urgent emission reductions in developed countries, finance for developing countries' adaptation, creation of green and decent jobs and the implementation of "just transition" policies, through investment in new low-carbon technologies to reduce the carbon footprints of existing industries.

To read the ITUC Statement on climate change: http://climate.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/COP15_TUstatement_Final_EN.pdf

See videos on climate change produced by Sustainlabour with the assistance of the ITUC:
You can watch the videos on youtube at the following links:

A call for action <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvTrg1nkjdA>

Union of Green - Climate Change <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajT4NzMhNYI>

Making it Happen - Climate Change <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvsZwfasPrY>

The Way Forward - Climate Change <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1ipyS1bZhA>

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