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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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Haiti: Trade Union Assistance Arrives

Brussels, 21 January 2010 (ITUC OnLine): In the wake of the earthquake in Haiti, the ITUC launched a trade union appeal for humanitarian support for the victims in cooperation with its regional organisation for the Americas, TUCA. Funds raised under the appeal are primarily being used to supply humanitarian assistance to the ITUC's Haitian affiliate, the CTH, via its affiliates in the Dominican Republic, CASC, CNTD and CNUS. Trade unions around the world are also organising campaigns to raise funds for Haiti.

Starting in the first few hours after the earthquake, the Dominican organisations sent food, water and medicines to Port-au-Prince. The contribution dispatched immediately by the ITUC has been added to the donations that they and their professional federations managed to collect. Everything is being transported to Haiti, including to the CTH training centre, whose building is still standing. Since last Thursday, it has been a refuge for dozens of affected workers and a distribution centre for food rations and medical aid. Two ambulances were sent there by solidarity organisations on Thursday itself, with medicine and skilled medical personnel, who have since been replaced by other teams.

The disaster monitoring committee set up by the three Dominican trade union centres is working round the clock on this operation. On Tuesday 19, in particular, a convoy of four lorries coordinated with the Dominican National Transport Federation transported food, water and medical equipment. The trade union delegation was met and assisted at the border by Haitian trade unionists, before travelling on to Port-au-Prince. This convoy was closely followed by another, containing medical personnel and volunteers. Today, a new shipment will make its way to the trade union centre. In the meantime, the humanitarian agencies operating in Port-au-Prince have been contacted to ensure that the centre is included in the distribution lists for supplies. Haitian trade unions have recently been involved in the government committee in charge of coordinating aid distribution. They are also liaising with their Labour Minister in response to the emergency.

ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder said: "This trade union operation is still at the humanitarian emergency stage. Decent work must be central to the reconstruction efforts. In particular, there will need to be a focus on the importance of new development mechanisms favouring green jobs. In the meantime, the ITUC is appealing to companies in areas unaffected by the earthquake to continue operating and thereby to safeguard existing jobs."

Funds for the appeal may be transferred to the following ITUC account:

No. 375-1008200-61

Banque ING, Brussels Branch Institutionals, 1 rue du Trône, B-1000 Brussels

IBAN code: BE 62375100820061

BIC/Swift code: BBRUBEBB

The communication "SOS Solidarity - Haiti" must be included with each transfer to this account.

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>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on: +32 2 224 0204 or + 32 476 62 10 18

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