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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero to Open ITUC Development Aid Conference in Madrid

Brussels, 15 March 2010 (ITUC OnLine): Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero will open a high-level ITUC conference "The Global Crisis and Aid Effectiveness" on 16 March in Madrid, which aims to put development assistance at the centre of the response to the global economic crisis. Columbia University Professor José Antonio Ocampo, a former UN Under-Secretary-General, will also address the conference, along with Togo Labour Minister Octave Broohm and senior officials of the ILO, the European Union and the OECD, as well as representatives from the European Parliament.

"The economic crisis has had a devastating impact on the world's poorest, wiping out much of the progress which had been made on reducing global poverty. Banks have been rescued, but people are being left behind. There is a growing risk that the plight of hundreds of millions of people will slip to the very bottom of the international agenda. We need to keep up the pressure for action on jobs and meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ITUC and its Global Unions partners have been pushing hard with governments, at the G20 and international finance and economics bodies, to keep development at the forefront of action to end the crisis and redesign the global economy. With trade unions emerging as major players in development assistance, both as advocates and as in implementing projects, the Madrid Conference will focus in particular on the effectiveness of aid programmes, their long-term impacts sustainable economic growth, and the contribution to providing decent employment.

The conference is being held in Spain to coincide with the Spanish Presidency of the European Union, following a similar event in Sweden in October 2009. The EU, with its member states, has a pivotal role in setting international aid policy as well as delivering assistance.

"We will continue and deepen our engagement with the EU and with other major actors in development aid, to underline the priority which the international trade union movement gives to development, and to demonstrate the substantial added value that trade unions bring. The focus of this event on aid effectiveness is crucial in building and keeping support for development aid, both in countries which provide it, and in those which receive it," said Ryder.

To see the programme for the conference: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ProgramaCSI_3_.pdf

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 155 countries.
<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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