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Guatemala: Report on the situation of Guatemala's indigenous peoples

Brussels, 1 April 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC, the Indigenous and Rural Workers Trade Union Movement of Guatemala (MSICG), the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (ITUC-TUCA) and the Council of the Peoples of the West (CPO) have published a report on the situation of Guatemala's indigenous population, "The Right to Consultation of the Peoples of Guatemala: The Breakdown between Words and Practice". The report sets out the results of research carried out between 1996 and March 2010.

The report states that "Every Guatemalan government since 1996 has imposed a questionable development model that has increased levels of exclusion. This has made the indigenous peoples ever more determined in their struggle for the respect of their right to achieve their aspirations, determine their own development and preserve their culture and identity, intrinsically linked to their environment and nature.

The report takes a harsh look at the reality in Guatemala and the failure to consult the indigenous peoples as required by ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. The report confirms the findings of the supervisory mechanisms of the International Labour Organisation, namely that the indigenous peoples of Guatemala continue to be the victims of racism, discrimination, repression and exclusion.

Although Convention 169 was an integral part of the Peace Accords signed in 1996, recent United Nations reports and indicators show that the exclusion of these peoples has been exacerbated, notes the report. It further concludes that the crucial problem in Guatemala is not the lack of legislation but the lack of political will by the State.

The ITUC together with its regional organisation for the Americas, TUCA, therefore decided to organise a Forum on Convention 169 in Guatemala on 25 and 26 March. The Forum was attended by affiliated organisations and indigenous organisations from countries with a large indigenous population and representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and the ILO. For two days they exchanged experiences on their work in the field and discussed initiatives for integrating and coordinating the work on indigenous peoples by trade union organisations, indigenous peoples' organisations and the ILO in order to advance the implementation of the Convention and promote the respect of indigenous and tribal peoples' rights.

To read the full report please see: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/el-derecho-de-consulta-de-los.html?lang=es>

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