

ITUC OnLine

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Putting Haiti on the path to recovery and development

Brussels, 22 April 2010 (ITUC OnLine): An important contribution has been made to the recovery process of Haiti by a meeting of more than 120 trade unionists from all over the world, including many workers representing the majority of the labour movement in Haiti. They all took part in a major unifying summit in Santo Domingo, 8-10 April to explore what role trade unions can play in the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

As well as trade unions from the Caribbean region, the Americas, Africa, Europe and global union federations, the summit brought together representatives from the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the Minister of Labour of the Dominican Republic, the ILO and several solidarity organisations. The final outcome of the summit was a trade union roadmap that emphasises the decent work agenda, the strengthening of Haitian trade unions and social dialogue as key in rebuilding Haiti stronger and fairer than ever.

“The unity of action stressed by the Haitian unions will be decisive in securing the changes called for in the roadmap. Both the Haitian government and the international community need to put the decent work agenda at the heart of a new development of Haiti. We are committed in the long term to support that objective but essentially this is a process that belongs to the Haitian workers”, said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. The roadmap details how a national employment policy should be established, what needs to be carried out to create decent work and salaries for women and men, and how to ensure respect and protection of workers’ rights. Good governance, political and judicial reforms and an integrated social protection system for all are mechanisms that will enable social and economic development in the longer term. The meeting also made a call to foreign and local employers, including NGOs and international organisations, to promote decent jobs and to respect ILO labour standards and the Haitian Labour Code.

“The delivery of international aid to Haiti must be conditional on the respect of core labour standards, while Haiti needs to regain its sovereignty. The trade union movement also calls for a stronger presence of the ILO in Haiti itself and for the full respect of trade union rights in Haiti”, said Victor Baez, Secretary General of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas - TUCA.

The roadmap was handed over to the representative from the Haitian Ministry of Labour who committed his government to including the unified Haitian trade union movement in the recovery process.

At the closing ceremony, trade unionists expressed their solidarity with the affiliates of the Old-Age Insurance Office Union (SEONA), a member of the ITUC affiliated organisation CTH, and its President, Reginald Petit-Homme. They were victims of harassment, unfair transfers and anti-union dismissals after a new manager stepped in at this public entity. Today trade union rights remain seriously jeopardised in Haiti.

To read the full roadmap : http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ENGLISH_Haiti_Road_Map.pdf

To read the background document : http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20100420094845-Haiti_Background_document_-ENGLISH-final.pdf

The summit was supported by the ITUC, TUCA, BWI, EI, IUF, PSI and UNI.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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