

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

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Millions of Workers Demand Nuclear Disarmament

Brussels/New York, 4 May 2010 (ITUC OnLine): Following the opening of the UN Nuclear Disarmament Summit yesterday in New York, international trade union representatives will today hand over a petition for nuclear disarmament signed by more than 6.7 million workers to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The web- and paper-based petition, “No to Nuclear Weapons”, is the result of campaign action led by the ITUC, its Japanese affiliate RENGO and Global Union Federation UNI.

“The massive response to our signature campaign underlines the importance of nuclear disarmament, and broader action for peace, to trade unions around the world. Global arms expenditure is now more than US\$1.4 trillion each year, money which would be far better spent on creating decent work in socially-useful sectors of the economy and tackling global poverty and climate change. Nuclear disarmament is crucially important to overall action to end conflict and reduce international tensions,” said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The petition calls for a decisive move towards complete nuclear disarmament at this month’s summit and a five-yearly review meeting of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), which has been ratified by 189 countries. Agreement between Russia and the United States to make significant cuts in their nuclear weapons stockpiles has helped give impetus towards disarmament; however, several countries known to possess nuclear weapons capacity have yet to ratify the treaty. The risk of nuclear conflict remains real, along with growing concerns about possible acquisition of nuclear weaponry by terrorist groups.

The trade union campaign has involved close cooperation with the international Mayors for Peace network, which groups 3880 cities across the world. Along with clear progress at the NPT Conference, the campaign also calls for support for international treaties banning nuclear weapons testing and regulating the use of fissile materials.

Ryder will address an international seminar at the UN Church Center next to UN Headquarters today, along with trade union leaders from Japan and South Asia. Gareth Evans, former Australian Foreign Minister and Co-Chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, will be key-note speaker at the seminar.

To see an OnLine version of the petition:

<http://petitions.ituc-csi.org/no-to-nuclear-weapons.html>

Mayors for Peace: <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/>

International Commission for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament:

<http://www.icnnd.org/>

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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