

ITUC OnLine

In support of Global Social Justice and World Public Services Day: Global Justice Now!" say 1500 rally activists

Vancouver, Canada, 23 June 2010.

About 1,500 trade union activists called on world leaders to move towards global justice at a rally held outside the Vancouver Convention Centre today. Delegates and guests to the ITUC Congress were joined by many local Canadian trade unionists, who together called for in-depth reform of the global financial system, including the introduction of a financial transaction tax. Rally speakers from all five continents also emphasised the critical role that public services play in our societies, and cheered in support of World Public Services Day, which is celebrated on June 23 every year. As Mody Guiro of the CNTS Senegal said: "Trade unions want strong public services at the service of the people and social security for all."

The ITUC is convinced that, after decades of injustice, it is now the turn of workers and citizens to enjoy the benefits of globalisation. Workers and taxpayers bailed out the banks during the financial crisis. In return, they are now losing jobs and access to education, healthcare and other critical public services.

"We insist that G20 governments increase economic stimulus to create more jobs. The 34 million workers who have lost their jobs since 2008 need public services," said Barbara Byers, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Labour Congress. "Seventy million children around the world are still denied basic education, yet governments are cutting education budgets. This is plain wrong," declared Susan Hopgood, President of Education International. "This is not only about public service workers but about all of us and our societies. This is about a commitment to collective values," added Peter Waldorff, General Secretary of Public Services International.

Daniela Aleksieva, President of the Pan-European Regional Council Youth Committee talked about the importance of decent work for young adults and added: "It's time to act now, because tomorrow depends on today."

Trade unions believe global social justice is the only equitable path forward from the crisis. "We have some clear messages to deliver: Now the People! No to austerity measures! Yes to jobs! Yes to a financial transactions tax," said ITUC president Sharan Burrow, alluding to the past three days of discussions at the ITUC World Congress. The world is at a tipping-point between one future which can offer decent work, sustainable and balanced development, improved living standards and respect of human rights and another which would plunge millions into unemployment, poverty and helplessness, with all the dangers as well as suffering that would bring, Congress discussions indicate.

At the midday rally, short and intense solidarity messages were delivered from all over the world: "Now the people. Always the people. We want justice, we want parity," were the rousing words of Thampan Thomas, President of Hind Mazoor Sabha India.

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