

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

Argentina and the crisis: the need to make decent work a priority

Vancouver, 24 June 2010 (ITUC OnLine): Defending the right to decent work was a priority for the government during the 2001 crisis in Argentina said the country's President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, speaking to delegates at the second World Congress of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in Vancouver. President Kirchner also called for the regulation of the financial markets.

"During the Argentinian crisis, my obsession was to protect and create jobs" said Kirchner, to the warm applause of delegates. "The G20 and European countries now facing draconian economic recovery measures should remember the example of Argentina" she added.

Speaking of the current crisis, the Argentinian President echoed the view of the trade union movement: "the workers weren't invited to the party, but now they have to pay the bill". Kirchner was on a brief visit to Vancouver on her way to the G8 and G20 meetings in Ontario. Many trade union leaders will also take part in the G8 and G20 meetings to press for far-reaching reforms and the regulation of the financial sector. "We need in-depth reform of the unrestrained capital movements that were one of the principal causes of the crisis we face today" said Kirchner. "And we need to totally rethink the structure of the multilateral institutions that are now managing the consequences of the crisis."

"I agree with Kirchner: the cause of the crisis is more political than economic" said Gerardo Martinez, the delegate from the Argentinian trade union confederation Confederación General del Trabajo. "The solution is to promote production, reactivate the market and protect jobs. And there has to be structural change in the multilateral institutions" he added.

Since it opened on 21 June, several world leaders have addressed the Congress including George Papandreou, Prime Minister Greece, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Director General of the International Monetary Fund, Pascal Lamy, Director General of the World Trade Organisation and Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

Over 1 400 delegates representing 176 million members from 155 countries and territories are taking part in the second ITUC World Congress in Vancouver, Canada, whose theme is « Now the People – from the Crisis to Global Justice ». The Congress closes on 25 June with the election of a new president and general secretary.

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