

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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ITUC Calls on Korean Government to Ensure Constructive and Inclusive G20 Meeting

Bruselas, 30 de September 2010 (ITUC OnLine): In a letter to the Korean government today, the ITUC has re-stated its key demands for the G20 meeting to be held in Seoul on 11 – 12 November, and raised civil liberties concerns about the meeting, in particular with the reported new “Special Law on the Safe Escort of the G20 Summit”.

“We are insisting that the G20 leaders commit to a package of positive and constructive economic measures instead of the current obsession with austerity, which is sure to cause deep and lasting social and economic damage. Fiscal consolidation should be based on growth and employment. At the same time, it is vitally important that the Korean government respect trade union rights and civil liberties leading up to the summit and beyond. The scale of the global economic crisis requires inclusive solutions which respect fundamental rights,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The letter, addressed to Public Administration and Security Minister Maeng Hyung Kyu, points to reports that the police are targeting undocumented migrant workers, street vendors and homeless people in the weeks before the summit, and highlights the failure of the Korean government to amend anti-union legislation, despite long-standing criticisms from the International Labour Organisation and the OECD. Repression of union organisation, especially severe in the public sector, includes the use of the Penal Code to imprison workers for trade union activity. Precarious and vulnerable employment is fast becoming the reality for the majority of workers as the government pursues “flexibilisation” policies.

The international trade union movement’s demands on the G20 include:
Retaining economic stimulus for job creation
Investment in people through education and training
A central role for the ILO in the G20 “Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth”
The introduction of a financial transactions tax and curbs on financial speculation
Ensuring that climate change policies are based on a “just transition”
Meeting aid commitments and supporting the Millennium Development Goals.
“Hosting the G20 gives Korea a real opportunity to show the world that it will respect fundamental labour standards and civil rights. We urge the government to seize that opportunity, and thus boost its international reputation,” said Burrow.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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