

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

154/201010

Trade Unions Call for Action on Biodiversity

Brussels, 20 October 2010 (ITUC OnLine): Maintaining biodiversity is a central issue for working people and their communities around the planet, including through the creation of decent jobs, protection of livelihoods and ensuring resilience to climate change, according to the ITUC in its submission to biodiversity talks currently underway in Nagoya, Japan.

"Biodiversity loss is a major social and economic challenge with large implications for workers and their communities", said Sharan Burrow, ITUC general secretary. "The economic model in which we all live is not only responsible for the worst forms of inequality and poverty, but is also accountable for irreversible environmental destruction, such as climate change and the destruction of ecosystems on which we depend for our very survival."

In order to address the biodiversity challenge in a socially fair manner, it is fundamentally important to ensure that workers and their trade unions are actively involved in decisions on the protection of ecosystems.

The trade union movement calls for a 'Just Transition'* framework to be integrated in biodiversity policies, as a means for promoting investment, decent jobs and social protection policies that will help restore ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of all workers.

"Biodiversity protection is possible if we build together a different economic model, where workers can enjoy Decent Work opportunities and communities can benefit from the sustainable use of natural resources," said Burrow.

The trade union contribution to the 10th Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity, taking place in Nagoya, Japan, from the 18-29 October 2010, is set out in detail in the statement released by the ITUC today <http://www.ituc-csi.org/trade-unions-biodiversity-an-ituc.html>

*Just Transition refers to the need for long-term sustainable investments that create decent jobs, pro-active training and skills development policies, social dialogue with trade unions, employers and other stakeholders, research and early assessment of social and employment impacts of biodiversity policies, the development of social protection schemes, and the need to develop local economic diversification plans.

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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