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ITUC and Global Union Federations Call on Chilean President to Deliver on Mine Safety Promises

Brussels, 14 March 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC and Global Union Federations ICEM and IMF are calling on the Chilean government to deliver on mine safety promises made to Chilean miners rescued in the San José mine last October.

“When the world’s media was still focusing on Chile, President Piñera committed to reform Chile’s weak mine safety laws within 90 days, and to ratify the International Labour Organisation Convention on safety in mines. Nothing has changed yet, and Chile’s miners are still facing unacceptable risks to their health and safety?” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

In an appeal for international support to press Chile to do what the President promised, the General Secretaries of the International Chemical, Energy and Mineworkers’ Federation, Manfred Warda, and of the International Metalworkers’ Federation, Jyrki Raina, have called on Chile to adopt the key UN regulation, ILO Convention 176.

“Convention 176 can and will provide the framework for revising the mine safety laws in Chile,” they say in a letter to the global union movement seeking support for the campaign. “It is a universal fact that when the union voice is part of monitoring mine safety, the risks in mining get reduced dramatically. This convention makes union involvement through safety committees an inherent part of the process.”

“On several occasions, President Piñera has highlighted the importance of ensuring sustainable development in Chile, recognising the fundamental role of workers and inspired by the courage, solidarity and vision shown by the 33 trapped miners,” said Burrow. “Sustainable development cannot become a reality in Chile without a comprehensive mine safety culture that includes respect for the rights of mine workers to union representation and genuine dialogue to bring urgently-needed reform.”

See the letter to President Piñera <http://www.ituc-csi.org/chile-convention-176.html>

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

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