

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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New Report on Misery of Gulf Migrant Workers As Global Union Body Confronts FIFA about Qatar Construction Conditions

Brussels: Monday 31 May 2011 (ITUC OnLine): A new multimedia report uncovering the human cost of the huge migrant labour force in the Gulf States of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates is being launched today by the International Trade Union Confederation in Brussels.

The International Trade Union Confederation will be using the report to put pressure on FIFA and the Qatar 2022 World Cup, for which 12 stadiums are expected to be built over the next ten years.

“A huge migrant labour force, with very little rights, no access to any unions, very unsafe practices, and inhuman living conditions will be literally putting their lives on the line to deliver the 2022 World Cup,” Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation said today.

The report describes in very personal terms the working and living conditions of the mainly Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese workers in the gleaming cities of Doha and Dubai. These workers make up the majority of the population of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, but only as imported labour. With interviews of workers and human rights activists, the report also has vision of the living conditions of the workers in huge segregated mostly male townships.

“Just 6% of the working population of Qatar is Qatari – their economy and their ability to deliver the World Cup is totally dependent on severe exploitation of migrant labour, which we believe to be barely above forced labour conditions,” said Ambet Yuson, general secretary of the Building Workers International (BWI).

The ITUC and BWI are writing to FIFA President Sepp Blatter and Qatar’s FIFA delegate, construction magnate Mohamed bin Hammam, calling for the organization to explain how it is going to protect the hundreds of thousands of workers who will be subject to unsafe and unregulated working conditions on construction sites, with no independent unions or effective safety inspection. FIFA requires football manufacturers to respect workers’ rights in its licensing programme, but has no such standards for companies building World Cup venues.

The ITUC is also writing to the Labour Ministers of both Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to seek face-to-face meetings during the ILO Conference being held in Geneva.

To read the report, see:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/hidden-faces-of-the-gulf-miracle,9144.html>

To see the long version of the video Hidden faces of the gulf miracle: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/hidden-faces-of-the-gulf-miracle.html>

To see the short version: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/hidden-faces-of-the-gulf-miracle,9131.html>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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