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Yemen: ITUC Calls for Urgent Humanitarian Aid

Brussels, 17 August 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is calling on the international community to respond to the humanitarian emergency in Yemen, where shortages of food, water, electricity, fuel and other essential goods are worsening by the day. Many companies and factories have closed down, leaving tens of thousands of workers on the street. "The people in this the poorest country in the Arab world are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their most basic needs. Urgent action must be taken to bring them the aid they need," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

Over the five months since the start of the protest movement against President Saleh, who has been in power for 33 years, the humanitarian situation has seriously deteriorated. Prior to the start of the protests in January 2011, Yemen was already suffering from endemic poverty, with 40% of the population living on less than two dollars a day. The alarming lack of jobs, poverty and corruption were, moreover, key factors driving many Yemenis to manifest their discontent and their desire for change when the wave of protests sweeping the Arab world first began.

The United Nations Security Council has recently expressed serious concern over the deteriorating economic, humanitarian and security situation in the country. It has also urged the parties to the conflict to stop targeting vital infrastructures. The IMF, meanwhile, has forecast that the rate of inflation could reach 30% this year.

Echoing the serious concerns expressed by the ITUC affiliated organisation in Yemen, the GFYWTU, the international trade union movement has insisted on the "urgent need for a peaceful and democratic transition to bring a long-awaited response to the demands expressed by the population". "Alongside the efforts to bring an end to the political deadlock that has already caused too much suffering and loss of life, the relevant international institutions must take urgent measures to come to the people's aid," added Sharan Burrow.

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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