

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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ITUC Leaders in Chile to Support National Strike

Brussels, 24 August 2011 (ITUC OnLine): ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow has expressed the Confederation's full support for a two-day national strike called by national trade union centre CUT. Burrow is in the national capital Santiago along with Victor Baez, General Secretary of the ITUC Regional Organisation for the Americas, TUCA
<http://www.csa-csi.org/>

"I am honoured to accompany our brothers and sisters from the CUT in the magnificent fight being waged together with students, teachers and workers. This fight for free education, for health, social security, a new labour code and a new constitution is not only a fight for a better Chile but also for a better world. I bring greetings from 175 million workers around the world, who are looking on at this action with pride," said Sharan Burrow.

"The world's attention is turned towards Chile and the Chilean government, which has no concern for the workers' demands and has done nothing to tackle inequality," she added.

"We are with Chile because we know that neoliberal policies exclude workers, they are not working and are doing us no good. The determination shown by the CUT and the workers in their fight for social justice is what will win the fight to make Chile a different place and allow us to live in a better world," the international trade union leader went on to explain.

The TUCA General Secretary Víctor Báez, for his part, said, "We are at last seeing a united response from workers and students, and in the same way as reference is made to a May in Paris, we hope that in the future we will be able to talk of Santiago's August."

"For many years, neoliberals have presented Chile as an example for other countries to follow. But what they keep to themselves is the fact that the social inequality here is so huge that it's shameful. This is why we have come to show our support and to pass on the greetings of 52 million workers from across the Americas who are standing by these workers, students and teachers speaking out in favour of a better Chile," added Báez.

The president of the national trade union centre CUT, Arturo Martínez, said: "This visit is very important to us. And coming as it has, as we are about to launch a national strike, this visit gives added strength to our just fight."

"There is nothing better than this acknowledgement and show of solidarity as we launch our massive mobilisation for equality and justice, especially at a time when the government, in desperation, has started issuing threats and creating a climate aimed at criminalising our call for strike action," added Martínez.

"We have called for the country to be brought to a standstill in every sense, we have called for nothing more, and are astounded that the Labour Minister is announcing things that are not part of our instructions; she will have to take responsibility for what she is saying," he insisted.

"Our strike call is very clean and public. They will undoubtedly bring out the entire police force, but this will not stop us from demonstrating in support of the issues set out in the call for strike action. The world will be observing the government's conduct over the coming hours," stressed Martínez.

"This is the trade union movement and its solidarity that is starting to open the way for the establishment of social democracy throughout the world, now," concluded the Chilean union leader.

Trade union centres from many other countries, in the Americas and in other regions, are sending messages of support and solidarity to their Chilean colleagues. Further information may be found on the CUT website: www.cutchile.cl

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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