

News

G20 Labour Ministers Must Not Fail Workers

26 September 2011: The international trade union movement called on the G20 Employment and Labour Ministers meeting in Paris on 26-27 September to step up to the plate and ensure that the G20 leaders tackle the jobs crisis as the central priority.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said time is running out, the G20 Finance Ministers meeting in Washington failed workers, and now it is up to the Labour Ministers to stand up for working people.

“With unemployment comes worsening social problems that will cause tension and strikes.

“By addressing unemployment and putting people back to work, politicians can boost the economy.

“If boosting the economy is the problem G20 leaders are most worried about, jobs and social protection is the solution,” said Sharan Burrow.

John Evans, General Secretary of the OECD-TUAC, said targeted investment in social spending such as health, infrastructure and green jobs will create jobs in the real economy.

“110 million jobs are needed over next five years, just to return to pre-crisis employment levels, yet with the new round of the crisis, we risk seeing jobs being destroyed again unless action is taken to change policy.

“The G20 promised to put quality employment at the heart of the recovery in their response to the financial crisis in 2008 - 2009, but their premature withdrawal of support for jobs has meant three years later we see a jobs emergency,” said Evans. In the midst of the ongoing financial turmoil and jobs crisis, workers right are also under attack.

“In Europe labour rights are under attack as governments try to strip away collective bargaining rights, which are critical for increasing wages, generating demand and recovery,” said Sharan Burrow.

Labour and Employment Ministers are meeting for the last time before the Finance Ministers in October and the Leaders meeting in November.

The ITUC, TUAC and Global Unions are calling on G20 Employment and Labour Ministers to:

- Ensure that their leaders put employment as the central government priority;
- Insist that their governments develop alternative sources of finance to provide funding for employment policies including making domestic taxation more progressive, combating tax evasion and tax havens, introducing a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT) and, for the Eurozone, “Eurobonds”;
- Set up investment in infrastructure and “green” jobs, skills development and other active labour market policies;
- Launch a G20 “Youth Pact” guaranteeing young people quality employment or education and training; and
- Establish a G20 Working Group on Employment and Social Protection.

Global unions' Statement to the G20 employment and Labour Ministers' Meeting

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.