

Durban Climate Change Negotiations Must Deliver Decisions for Workers and the Planet

Brussels, 23 November 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The international trade union movement is urging governments meeting at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change conference in Durban to step out of their comfort zones and take decisions to extend the Kyoto Protocol, deliver a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive legally binding instrument for all countries, and fund the US\$100 billion Green Climate Fund.

The Kyoto Protocol, signed by 180 developed countries, with commitments to reduce their emissions, expires at the end of 2012.

“We support developed country governments willing to extend the Kyoto Protocol. It is essential to avoid a gap in emission reduction commitments and preserve the legally binding and top-down aspects that an extension to the Kyoto Protocol could bring,” said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

As negotiators meet in Durban, the world is facing the second wave of the financial crisis with rising unemployment and inequality.

“High levels of debt in developed countries has been used as an excuse by governments to cut public services and roll back labour rights. The financial crisis must not be used as an excuse for inaction on climate change. Workers, in decent jobs, in green jobs, will help drive many countries out of the financial crisis and tackle climate change,” said Sharan Burrow.

“Further delay by governments to negotiate a legally binding agreement will lead to even more unfairness and inequality. Distractions by climate deniers ignore the daily reality that people face as climate changes affects their lives and livelihoods. From farmers affected by droughts in the Horn of Africa, to industrial sites being shut down outside of Bangkok from flooding, where over 100,000 workers lost their livelihoods – all sectors of the economy, and workers, have to carry the cost of government inaction,” said Sharan Burrow.

The international union movement is calling on leaders to put in place a roadmap for the Green Climate Fund to fund global action on climate change which details public sources and incorporates innovative sources of finance such as a Financial Transactions Tax.

“We can put the money that is sitting in derivatives traders bank accounts to work for the environment. A tax on financial transactions could raise USD\$650 billion a year globally, and create green jobs and sustainable development,” said Sharan Burrow.

A delegation of 300 workers representing unions from over 40 countries will be setting up camp in the ‘World of Work’ pavilion, where unions will set out solutions to tackle climate change and limit the global temperature increase to two degrees or less. Over 30 seminars will be held during the two week conference.

Read the ITUC contribution ‘Workers and Climate Change’ to the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/durban-climate-conference-ituc.html?lang=en>

In French: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/durban-climate-conference-ituc.html?lang=fr>

In Spanish: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/durban-climate-conference-ituc.html?lang=es>

Check out the events at the World of Work Pavilion 29 November – 6 December 2011
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/wow>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 308 affiliated national organisations from 153 countries and territories.

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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