

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Spectre of Delay Haunts Durban's Corridors

Crowd of workers, campaigners and activists gather for all-night vigil to keep UN climate talks alive

Durban, 9 December 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The international trade union movement is making a final call on Ministers attending the Durban Climate Change talks to make a U-turn on the road they are taking to climate disaster.

After two weeks of negotiations, the talks are entering their final hours with negotiations expected to continue into the early hours of Saturday morning.

“As the talks go on, the negotiations are taking us further away from the goal of capping the rise of the earth temperature to two degrees.

“The gap between the science and decision makers is widening, which will leave a terrible impact for the planet and people.

“It is not acceptable for governments to turn up at meeting after meeting, with the same blinkered mandate, and ignore the actions called for by voters, workers and communities,” said Sharan Burrow.

Unions had come to Durban to ask government to join a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, yet a postponement on its ratification until 2012 in Qatar, without solving the loopholes in the Protocol rules, seems likely.

“We came asking a mandate for a global legally-binding outcome, to be negotiated as soon as possible, and it seems we'll again see a postponement, with merely an apolitical call to draft a mandate after 2012. This risks delaying climate commitments until 2020, and reducing the scope for a Just Transition for our people.

“We came asking for an operational and democratic Green Climate Fund; we might get just an empty bank account with weak governance mechanisms.

“But, unions will not be postponing our work to tackle climate change. Instead we will bring an ambitious and rights-based voice to the UN climate talks in Qatar in 2012. And we will mobilise thousands of people in support of green and decent jobs on the streets for the Rio+20 meeting,” said Sharan Burrow.

Unions will be mobilising in workplaces and taking action at their national level to make governments hear their concerns and maintain the call for Just Transition. Governments will no longer be able to arrive at a UN Climate change meeting without delivering on the mandate people give them.

“As the sun sets in Durban, Governments have a chance to put people before their short-term interests,” said Sharan Burrow.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 308 national affiliates.

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

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