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Governments Urged to Act on UN Jobs and Social Protection Call

Brussels, 2 February 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has welcomed calls by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for governments to act on job creation and universal social protection in a report being presented at the UN Commission on Social Development.

"We welcome the Secretary-General's emphasis on employment to reduce poverty, as well as the recognition of the deep crisis of youth unemployment. Governments need to heed the UN's call to deliver decent incomes and security, and the protection of international labour standards," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

According to the report, "...for economic growth to contribute to poverty reduction, macroeconomic and social policies should focus on job creation, reducing inequalities and providing social protection." It also concludes that "...the trends towards austerity in response to the debt crisis, if not reversed, will worsen inequality and exclusion and ultimately dampen prospects for economic recovery."

The report and its recommendations are being discussed at the UN Economic and Social Council meeting in New York from 1-10 February. It acknowledges that the economic policies advised by international financial institutions over the last three decades, marked by deregulation, liberalization and privatization, have failed to address the root causes of poverty. The Report also reflects the trade union view that increasing workers' bargaining power has a positive impact on reducing poverty and inequality, and that "the provision of minimum wages and employment protection can be important tools for an equitable distribution of productive opportunities and inclusive growth."

Importantly, the report recommends that governments consider the implementation of national social protection floors as a means to provide systemic insurance against poverty for all.

The UN Secretary-General's report can be accessed here: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/590/98/PDF/N1159098.pdf?OpenElement>

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