

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

No Social Justice Without Environmental Protection

By Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary

Rio de Janeiro, 22 June 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The global trade union movement is bitterly disappointed at the Declaration of the Rio+20 Summit, a declaration that lacks the concrete measures necessary now to end senseless environmental destruction, drive investment into the green economy to create jobs and reduce the alarming growth in inequity with the guarantee of social protection for the most vulnerable people.

Words are not enough; a UN process with no targets, no timelines and no serious inclusion of unions and civil society does nothing to alleviate the anxiety of people suffering from unemployment, from poverty or from environmental destruction of their lands and/or livelihoods.

For national leaders to be fearful of embracing a new model of development with integrated action across environmental, social and economic fronts is shocking for the unions and civil society representatives who came to support their leaders in a strategic vision for planetary justice.

Decisions in Rio open a series of processes whose outcomes are unknown. Will they be able to raise the bar in negotiations? Will the sustainable development goals satisfy ambitious goals on energy, food, green jobs, decent work, social protection and water? Will governments finally agree to unblock the funds to help the poorest countries catch up with sustainable development?

The answers to these questions will depend on the willingness of governments to back multilateral decisions with real commitments that radically shift the model of economic development of the global economy.

The ITUC global poll completed in the lead-up to this summit demonstrated the shocking reality that overwhelmingly people believe that the next generation will be worse off and alarmingly that only 13% of people believe that voters have real influence on the economic decisions of government.

Democratic trust must be rebuilt.

This is in our hands, as the failure of leadership demonstrated in Rio has simply strengthened the determination for trade unions to go back to our countries, activate our 175 million members and their families and build the social power that will make the alternative model we are proposing the best possible solution.

There are no jobs on a dead planet!

To see the ITUC Declaration: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-statement-on-the-rio,11586.html>

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>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 62 10 18.

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