

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC Media Release

Unemployment and inequality challenge global growth, warn unions on eve of G20 Summit

One in eight people can no longer pay for basic living expenses – new international poll by global unions

Stalled growth in developed economies and emerging markets, rising unemployment and increasing income inequality are the key challenges G20 leaders must address as they meet in St Petersburg for the annual G20 Summit.

The ITUC Global Poll 2013 released on the eve of the G20 Summit found that more than half of all respondents are no longer able to save any money. One in eight are struggling financially and can no longer pay for basic living expenses.

The survey of the general public in 13 countries including Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, Spain, South Africa, the UK and the USA by global market research company TNS represents half the world population.

In emerging economies of the BRICS countries 54 percent of people have directly experienced unemployment or the reduction of working hours and 78 percent report their income has stayed the same or fallen behind the cost of living in the last two years.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, warned about the latest signals from BRICS nations, as they show that we are at best facing an era of prolonged stagnation and an economic leadership crisis that the G20 Leaders must address.

“The global economy is no more stable today than it was six years ago. While output has stopped falling in some economies, unemployment continues to rise. A key driver of social and economic progress – hope that the next generation will be better off – has been lost.

“64 percent of people think future generations will be worse off than their own. G20 leaders need to foster youth inclusion in the labour market and increase long-term investment in infrastructure and the green economy to rebuild our economies,” said Sharan Burrow.

The Labour 20 will be presenting the findings of the ITUC Global Poll 2013 and their policy recommendations to G20 leaders in a consultation meeting during the summit.

“A G20 jobs action plan that sets national employment targets and raises sustainable aggregate demand and reduces income inequality must be a centrepiece of the G20 response to rising unemployment and inequality,” said John Evans, General Secretary, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD.

“G20 leaders have the opportunity in St Petersburg to regain trust in their ability to coordinate policies necessary to drive growth which creates jobs and pulls economies out of the crisis. Working people expect governments to make sure corporations pay their fair share of taxes and end the scourge of tax havens.

“G20 commitments appear not to be acted on as people feel abandoned by their governments with 80 percent of respondents saying their government has failed to tackle unemployment. Only 13

percent of people feel that governments are acting in the interests of working people," said John Evans.

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For interviews with Sharan Burrow or John Evans in St Petersburg contact Gemma Swart +32 479 06 41 63 or gemma.swart@ituc-csi.org

Read the L20 Priority Recommendations for the G20 Leaders' meeting : <http://www.ituc-csi.org/l20-priority-recommendations-for>

Read the ITUC Global Poll 2013 Economic and Social Outlook: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-global-poll-2013-economic-and>

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