

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
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New Trade Union Body Takes up the Challenge in the Arab World

Brussels, 6 October 2014 (ITUC OnLine): A new sub-regional structure for trade unions in the Arab countries has been successfully launched with a founding Congress of the Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) in Amman.

Houcine Abassi of the UGTT Tunisia, who was unanimously elected ATUC President, said in his opening remarks that "this historic development will enable the democratic and independent trade unions of the Arab World to confront the huge challenges facing workers in the region much more effectively and with great strength."

The Congress, which was chaired by Mazen Maaytah, President of the Jordanian host organisation GFJTU, elected a 32-member General Council, with 30% of its seats reserved for women, and 10% for young workers. Mustapha Tlili was elected ATUC Executive Secretary at the Congress, which took place on 1 and 2 October.

Amongst the decisions of the Congress, the ATUC formally supported the ITUC's Call for Action on Gaza <URL <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-call-to-action-on-gaza>>

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said "workers in the Arab countries are facing massive unemployment, vast inequalities in wealth and opportunity, gender discrimination and attacks on the very foundations of democratic rights, including workers' rights to freely organise unions and bargain collectively. The ATUC structure provides a new and authoritative voice for working men and women in the region, and a platform through which the unions throughout the Arab world can work for a better future."

The ATUC, which is formally recognised by the ITUC as a sub-regional structure, brings together 17 member organisations from 11 Arab countries. Union organisations from a further three countries are applying to join.

For more information, see the Arab Trade Union Confederation website, including news feeds from the MENA Observatory, at: <http://atuc.ituc-csi.org/>

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 161 countries and territories and has 324 national affiliates.

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