

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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Myanmar: National Trade Union Centre Officially Registered

Brussels 28 July 2015 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has written to the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar to congratulate them on their official registration by the government.

In the letter to CTUM President Maung Maung, ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said: “The ITUC and the international trade union movement are proud to have walked through the darkest period in the history of Burma’s independent labour movement with you and many other brilliant leaders and organisers. At this historic moment of celebration, I want to pay tribute to the workers, activists and their families who had been arrested, or lost their freedom and lives in Burma and in exile since 1988. History will remember them, and it is their bravery that has sustained the struggle.

“The ITUC and the global union federations (GUFs) had the fortune of working with you and activists in exile and witnessed the establishment of FTUB, the ITUC office in Yangon, and now the CTUM which has more than 650 affiliated unions across different sectors. We believed and shared with you in one thing that there is no magic formula in building a strong independent trade union movement except through workers’ education, persistent organising and the construction of democratic trade union structures. We will continue to support the CTUM and the independent trade unions in Myanmar on these fundamentals.

“Myanmar is a beautiful country endowed with rich natural resources and a young labour force yearning for knowledge, development and protection of their rights. The latecomer integrated into the global economy is becoming a new refuge to investors seeking low wages in the Asian region. We believe that the working people and trade unions of Myanmar have the right and opportunity to choose a model of economic and social development that is fair, just and environmentally sustainable rather than the race to the bottom. The growing influx of foreign direct investment must be accompanied by the protection of fundamental labour standards, fair living wages and effective collective bargaining with independent trade unions.

“The official registration of CTUM and the legislation on statutory minimum wages are the first steps. There are tough challenges ahead. The ITUC and the international trade union movement will continue to support the CTUM and the independent trade unions in Myanmar for better legislation, decent jobs, sustainable living wages, and democracy at the workplace.”

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 328 national affiliates.

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