

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC May Day Statement - 2016

Brussels, 29 April 2016 (ITUC OnLine): Today is a day to celebrate the achievements that through generations union men and women have won: peace, democracy, rights and decent work for millions of people. But even as we celebrate the successes and triumphs of the great tradition of trade union solidarity, we know that the challenges faced by people across the world require collective strength and commitment to carry forward the fight for democratic rights and freedoms, equality and social justice.

When political and corporate leaders conspire to hide the vast wealth of the one per cent, avoiding the taxes that are the bedrock of social and economic development and the basis for social protection – support for the unemployed, health, education, child care, aged care and many other public services – then all are vulnerable.

When global trade relies on exploiting the majority in insecure, low-paid and often unsafe work in supply chains to secure yet more wealth for the global elite, then the world is on the wrong path.

When people seek refuge from conflict created by dictators clinging to power or from economic desperation, then we must support and welcome them, and demand that our governments play their part in removing the causes of the conflicts and economic desperation that blight the lives of hundreds of millions.

When corruption, exploitation, inequality and environmental destruction are the hallmarks of the global economy, then the values of the trade union movement provide hope, and set the standards required for transforming the world into a place where people come first and where the generations to come inhabit a sustainable world.

On this May Day, many will march under banners for freedom and against conflict and slavery, many will rally for justice for refugees, many will stand firm for minimum living wages and collective bargaining and oppose corporate greed, many will demand climate justice and many will welcome refugees. Uniting all these are the fundamental principles of equality and social justice which inspire the actions of trade unionists every day.

The collective voice and action of union women and men all over the world will continue to fight the corporate greed which fuels attacks on workers' rights, the enslavement of people, the corruption of tax evasion and the destruction of public services. Where our governments fear corporate power, we will stand up for democracy and an end to corporate greed. We will act for a truly inclusive future where prosperity is shared, where the planet on which we live is protected and where the common good is supreme.

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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