

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

India: Government Should Heed Message of General Strike

Brussels, 2 September 2016 (ITUC OnLine): The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi should heed the clear message from a huge general strike in India today, as workers across the country backed calls for a living minimum wage and decent pensions, proper enforcement of labour laws, measures to stimulate creation of formal jobs and universal social security cover. Tens of millions of workers joined the strike, including in transport, banks, public services, manufacturing and other sectors.

The strike was organised by ten national trade union centres, including ITUC affiliates INTUC, HMS and SEWA, with unions from the public sector also mobilising against privatisation and outsourcing of government services. The unions also insist that the government should not unilaterally amend labour laws, that it should tackle commodity speculation to contain prices and preclude foreign investment in strategic sectors including railways and defence. A key part of the joint union platform is that the government should ratify ILO Conventions 87 on Freedom of Association and 98 on Collective Bargaining.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said “with 90% of jobs in the informal sector, the government should take heed of the joint union platform as the right pathway to decent and secure jobs for the many rather than the few. The unions’ proposals would not only help tackle rampant poverty in India, they would also stimulate sustainable and equitable growth through the increased purchasing power of ordinary people. Ensuring that labour laws are respected, and avoiding casualisation, privatisation and outsourcing are crucial for India’s further development and to the needs of the many millions who live in abject poverty.”

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates. Follow us on the web: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI> For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on [+32 2 224 02 10](tel:+3222240210) or press@ituc-csi.org