

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

L20 Unions Call for G20 Commitment to Fair Globalisation

Brussels, 17 May 2017 (ITUC OnLine): The G20 Summit in July must finally agree on conditions for fair globalisation, according to the international trade union movement. This was the central message in the statement of Labour-20 trade union centres handed to German Chancellor and G20 President Angela Merkel at a meeting in Berlin today <http://www.ituc-csi.org/l20-statement-to-the-g20-labour> .

Reiner Hoffmann, DGB President and host of the L20 delegation, said: “We take the Chancellor at her word – at the G7 Summit in 2015 she said that decent work is the basis for economic success, and that appalling working conditions cannot be accepted. These words must finally be turned into action. Exploitation and inhuman working conditions are rife in many countries, with the sole objective of increasing profits and ensuring cheap prices for consumers. Companies must respect human and trade union rights everywhere, and eliminate violations from their operations regardless of where they occur. International labour standards must in particular be embedded in trade relations and trade agreements.”

“Digitalisation must also be taken into account in shaping fair globalisation and trade relations. Good working conditions, secure jobs and access to social security are needed to ensure that globalisation and digitalisation are in the interests of people. New technologies and more intensive digitalisation are bringing revolutionary change, and governments have to take care to regulate correctly in this new reality. These changes offer a new opportunity for the world of work, but this opportunity must be used properly,” said Hoffmann.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: “The G20 has a responsibility to ensure that the rule of law and due diligence are applied throughout the global economy, including across the whole of corporate supply chains. When international labour standards are respected, workers are able to organise and bargain for decent wages and safe work, and with the right macro-economic settings, the inequality and insecurity which characterise today’s failed model of globalisation can become a thing of the past.”

John Evans, General Secretary, Trade Union Advisory Council to the OECD, said: "High jobs gaps, income inequalities and numbers of workers in the informal economy persist. The G20 needs to take measures and apply regulations in view of the digital transformations across sectors to avoid job displacements and ensure that workers have the right skills and social protection to keep their jobs or move into new ones. Regulatory arbitrage that we observe in the platform economy not only creates more precarious work but also oversteps existent competition and tax laws. This can have harmful effects on an effective digital diffusion and public finances. The G20 should put brakes on such business practices."

Corporate globalisation is not working for the majority of the world’s people. Eighty-five percent of people in the ITUC Global Poll 2017 say it’s time to rewrite the rules of the global economy to promote growth and share prosperity, giving the G20 a clear mandate to act.

A new film released at the L20 Summit, “Exporting Greed through the Panama Canal” shows how less than 3 cents on a melon is the price of a minimum wage and less than 2 cents on a banana is the price of decent work conditions (www.endcorporategreed.org)

The DGB President will also hand Chancellor Merkel a letter asking her to use her influence on German phone company Deutsche Telekom, whose US T-Mobile subsidiary has been violating national and international labour standards for several years. Workers seeking to unionise at T-Mobile USA are subjected to monitoring and discrimination and are forbidden to discuss working conditions with each other, at work and in their private lives. “Deutsche Telekom is a passive observer of the wild-west methods of its US subsidiary, but social partnership should not be confined to national borders,” said Hoffmann.

“I have seen at first hand the way T-Mobile USA treats its workforce as objects, not as human beings. A company that has a decent reputation at home must accept responsibility for all the people in its global business, and not leave its US workforce at the mercy of unscrupulous and dictatorial management,” said Burrow.

To read the L20 Statement: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/l20-statement-to-the-g20-labour>

To learn more about T-Mobile USA’s union-busting:

“In the Basement” video: https://www.cwa-union.org/video/entry/what_happened_in_the_basement

T-Mobile letter, in German: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/joint-afl-cio-dgb-letter-about-t>

To watch the video “Exporting Greed through the Panama Canal”, and send a message to G20 leaders www.endcorporategreed.org

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For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on [+32 2 224 03 52](tel:+3222240352) or <mailto:press@ituc-csi.org>