**ITUC MODEL LETTER TO MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN YOUR GOVERNMENT**

**United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) 20-22 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

Dear (*insert name of Minister*),

2012 more than ever demands leadership from governments at the international level. Rio plus 20 offers this moment. It is not just a necessity but a moral imperative. Unregulated markets are creating greater social inequality and environmental crises. Unemployment and precarious work are at crisis levels, resulting in more poverty and uncertainty, which in turn is driving violence, racism and xenophobia in too many countries.

The labour movement is committed to an alternative growth model that works for people and the environment.

The 1992 United Nations “Earth Summit” in Rio, 20 years ago was an historic and foundational moment to globally address development and environmental challenges. At that time, leaders believed that a coordinated plan could change the face of the earth and lay the foundations for a world in which everyone could have a decent life in a healthy and secure environment.

The Rio+20 UN Conference in June 2012 needs to show that there is indeed hope to achieve global equity, that multilateralism has an important role to play, that cooperation and solidarity between countries and their people is necessary and feasible. This can only be done if governments deliver concrete measures which will put our societies on track to achieve social equity, decent work, environmental protection, development and prosperity, and on track towards truly sustainable development.

The (*name of your organisation*) is affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 175 million workers through its 305 affiliated organisations in 151 countries and territories. We are writing to convey to you the trade union position for these crucial negotiations, as well as our specific demands aimed at improving the social and labour dimensions of the Rio+20 negotiating text.

We urge you to support the proposals it contains in the informal negotiations being organized in the run up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (20-22 June 2012), as they would ensure the conference delivers for workers, their communities and the environment.

The international trade union movement has three key demands to governments:

**Top 3 demands**

**1. Green economy principles**

The green economy must be different. We ask that you ensure that the green economy debate incorporates a set of principles to ensure the social and environmental performance vital to sustainable development. These principles include:

Social principles require commitments to social equity, inclusion of vulnerable groups, decent work for all green jobs, social protection, democracy and rights.

Environmental principles must endorse the need for efficient use of natural resources, prioritise renewable sources, internationalize social and environmental costs for the poorest countries, a life cycle analysis of products, trend commitments to zero emissions and zero waste.

Economic principles require strong financial regulation, constraints on speculation and support for the real economy.

**2. Concrete commitments from day 1**

The zero draft as it stands delays many decisions to future meetings. This is not serious.

Unions globally want to see specific green job pledges, a commitment to the implementation of a 'social protection floor' for all people and commitments to kick start or strengthen provisions in the poorest countries and the launch of a 'financial transactions tax.

**3. Civil Society as partners and environmental justice mechanisms**

There must be a sound framework for civil society participation. The same is necessary to access for information and justice mechanisms. Proposal on the table, such as an ombudsman (10) are not dealt with seriously in the zero draft and deserve further consideration for decision at RIO + 20.

In addition, there is a series of amendments attached to this letter that we would like you and your negotiating team to consider.

We would be happy to facilitate a discussion of the trade union position between our country’s delegation to the Rio+20 negotiations and the sustainability experts of the national and international trade union movement, in particular during the Lobby Week that the ITUC is organizing in New York (5-9 March).

We call for your serious consideration of the points raised in this letter and for your support of its proposals in the Rio+20 discussions. We offer the commitment of trade unions in working at the national level in addressing these crucial challenges for our society.

We look forward to receiving your views.

Yours sincerely,

*(insert name of President or General Secretary)*