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In reply please quote:
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**To all affiliated organisations
To all Global Union Federations**

For information:
To all General Council Members

ESP/CC

28 November 2007

**World Social Forum (WSF) Global Day of Action
January 26, 2008**

Dear Friends,

For several years the international trade union movement has been involved in the World Social Forum (WSF) which brings together many civil society organisations and networks under the slogan “*Another World Is Possible*”. You may recall that the first three Forums were organised in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the fourth (2004) in Mumbai, India and the fifth (2005) again in Porto Alegre, while in January 2006 “polycentric” Forums took place simultaneously in Venezuela, Mali and Pakistan. In January 2007 there was significant trade union involvement in the Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya.

During its evolution, the Forum has become a productive location for social actors to meet and interact. The “open space” character of the WSF offers the opportunity for trade unions to communicate their positions, exchange ideas and find convergence with other organisations and networks sharing our values and objectives.

For 2008, the International Committee (IC) of the WSF - of which the ITUC is a member - has decided to organise a Global Day of Mobilisation and Action, in place of one global meeting. It will be held on 26 January, 2008. The objective of the WSF Global Day of Action is for each member of the WSF to interact with friendly organisations, networks and movements, leaving it up to each actor to decide on the topic and the form of their mobilisation.

As a member of the IC, the ITUC is taking part in the WSF Global Day and in order to make sure that trade union viewpoints are heard on January 26, we encourage your organisation to take actions on that day and to share those actions with allied organisations and networks. You will find more information on the WSF webpages:

<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br> and <http://www.wsf2008.net>

Although it is up to you to decide on specific issues and activities, the ITUC would propose in particular that you give consideration to the following themes:

1. Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life

At the last WSF in January 2007, the ITUC launched the “*Decent Work for Decent Life*” campaign with its civil society partners, as reported in ITUC Circular No. 15 (2007). Promoting the effective implementation of decent work and its integration into national, regional and international agendas is the best way to reverse the worldwide trend towards the expansion of precarious work. As reported in ITUC Circular No. 54 (2007), the ITUC and Global Unions’ campaign on Decent Work, Decent Life for Women due to start on March 8, 2008 offers opportunities to call against the discrimination endured by women at the workplace and in the labour market.

In order to increase international support for the decent work agenda, the ITUC with its partners recently launched the *Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life* (see website for more information at <http://www.decentwork.org>), which is the subject of a separate ITUC circular. We would like to encourage your organisation to use January 26, 2008 to disseminate information about the *Call to Action*, including its gender dimensions, and to collect signatures and support for this campaign.

2. Respect for trade union rights

There remains an appalling level of brutal violence meted out to many workers worldwide merely because their trade unions have tried to stand up for the rights to democracy, to decent work, to fair pay or to acceptable working conditions. Human and trade union rights are severely violated in Burma, Colombia, Guatemala, Zimbabwe, Guinea and Iran, to name but a few. Workers are murdered due to their trade union activities in every single continent. In addition, trade unions rights are massively violated in those sectors where the majority of workers are women. We would encourage you to make respect for trade union rights a theme of your activities on January 26 and to use the occasion to ensure people know of the gravity of the situation in so many parts of the world and especially in the countries mentioned above.

3. Fair trade rules in multilateral and bilateral agreements

International trade should help to reduce inequalities among and within countries and so contribute to a better standard of living for workers everywhere and an end to poverty. Trade must sustain and not impede the development of the poorest countries. Women workers are often the direct victims of unfair trade rules, such as best illustrated by their situation in Export Processing Zones (EPZ). Trade unions are concerned that often trade does not fulfil the aspiration of workers, and consider it vital to change and reorient the world trading system so as to achieve social justice, respect for workers’ rights and decent work, economic and social development and quality public services. This area of work needs to form another part of the themes you promote on January 26.

In developing your activities for the WSF Global Day of Action, we recommend that your organisation take full account of the gender dimension and ensure that women’s rights and interests are highly visible in your activities.

We have established a list-serve for the exchange of information between trade unions interested in WSF activities, global-unions-wsf@forum.ituc-csi.org. If you have not yet subscribed to this list, please do so by sending an e-mail to lyris@forum.ituc-csi.org with

the message “Subscribe global-unions-wsf”. We would encourage you to use that list actively in order to keep the ITUC and other trade unions around the world informed of your plans and activities for the WSF Global Day of Action.

If you wish to receive more information about the Day, please contact the ITUC at wsf-fsm@ituc-csi.org

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary