

**2nd WORLD CONGRESS**Vancouver, 21 - 25 June 2010

RESOLUTION**ON****A DECENT LIFE FOR YOUNG WORKING MEN AND WOMEN**

1. Congress reaffirms the need to ensure young workers' fundamental rights are respected. Young workers' education, employment and general well-being must be at the heart of trade union policies to counter the negative effects of the global economic crisis. Young women and men represent not only the future, but also the present of the trade union movement and of society. Without a committed, educated and engaged youth, a new, sustainable and fair globalisation that puts people, jobs and their decent livelihoods at the centre will not be achievable.

2. Young people are among the hardest hit by the global crisis which has exacerbated the obstacles to their access to decent work. If viable and urgent solutions are not found, the personal development and employment prospects for millions of young people will be threatened; the risk is of a lost generation. Youth are almost three times as likely to be unemployed as older workers, with young women the worst hit, and make up as much as 40 percent of the world's total unemployed. Between 1997 and 2007, the number of unemployed youth rose from 63 million to 71 million, and is still rising dramatically. Young workers are not only more often unemployed than adult workers, they are also more often employed in precarious, informal and temporary jobs, with lower wages and less social security and in which their educational achievements are not usually recognised. Furthermore they often face differential treatment that creates a gap between the working conditions of young people and their more senior colleagues.

3. Congress underlines that the lack of decent work opportunities at the beginning of working life can permanently compromise employment and life prospects, and that the critical position of young workers is particularly dramatic in developing countries. Even during periods of sustained economic growth, most countries failed to create enough decent and productive jobs for young people, and it is clear that the impact of the crisis on them will be long-lasting. For millions the harsh reality is of exclusion from education, basic social services and working life, leading to social marginalisation and poverty, as well as increased vulnerability to informal work. Their situation is the most brutal manifestation of the social drama engendered by the crisis.

4. Congress insists on the need for targeted and integrated policy and priority to be given to youth in order to counter the most extreme social effects of the crisis. Young people need experience and training but are severely affected by the absence of new work opportunities and the pressure on public employment, training provision and social protection from deteriorating public finances. Urgent action is needed to break

this vicious circle of youth poverty and unemployment. It is necessary to tackle the gaping decent work deficit for young people by strengthening public labour systems and creating national agendas for decent work for young people. Congress strongly supports equal access to adequate education to generate improved labour market outcomes and greater gender parity among young people, and active labour market policies to improve job opportunities for young people and the transition from school to work, including measures to increase income, stimulate employment generation and raise the quality of employment for young people, strengthen collective negotiation, enhance social protection and promote sustainable development. Congress calls on trade union organisations to step up their awareness-raising activities so as to secure government policies that include a clear focus on vocational training, which is essential for ensuring full participation in work and life for all young workers. It calls on the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to prioritise vocational training for young workers and to fund projects that include vocational training elements.

5. Congress recognises that young people are critical to the future of trade unionism and to the strength, effectiveness and legitimacy of trade union organisation. Youth does not reject trade unionism and often identifies strongly with its principles and values. But they too frequently face difficulty in finding their place in trade union structures and activities. It is crucial that unions respond better in their policies and activities to the needs and expectations of young workers, make them feel welcome and remove the obstacles that prevent their full participation, and for unions to make the first move by meeting young people where they are.

6. Young people entering the labour market are the first internet generation. The development of information technologies and the evolution of communication tools in the last 20 years has had a major impact on young people's lives and attitudes. While many young workers in developing countries do not have access to modern technologies, nevertheless these offer great opportunity for international trade union activity and Congress calls on the ITUC to utilise fully the creative potential of youth in this regard.

7. Congress expresses its support for education programmes for all and literacy programmes for young people and particularly girls, who are the worst affected by illiteracy around the world.

8. Congress recognises and supports the role of the ITUC Youth Committee in initiating and developing policies and actions that promote identification and active participation of young people in trade union internationalism. The Committee has particular potential and value in international trade union campaigns, mobilisation and communications, and should continue to facilitate exchanges of information and experiences.

ITUC Action Programme

9. Congress instructs the ITUC and regional organisations, working together with Global Unions partners and affiliates, to:

- (a) Work to promote a targeted and integrated policy for youth in all areas addressed by this resolution;
- (b) Support ITUC Youth Committee activities and promote youth activities by affiliates;
- (c) Encourage greater youth participation in ITUC structures and activities;

- (d) Encourage affiliates to ensure adequate and specific youth representation in their structures and to develop formal youth structures, to include the issues that affect young people in their policy agendas, and to increase resources for youth activities;
- (e) Support and encourage exchange of information and experiences on trade union work concerning young people, through the ITUC Youth blog and other communication technologies;
- (f) Strengthen and support the role of working youth in trade unions through international trade union campaigning and mobilisation at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels;
- (g) Bridge the communication gap between youth and trade unions by adapting to new communication channels and developing new media and other modern technology applications that will reach out to young people and by presenting the ITUC and its affiliates in ways attractive to young people, while also assisting the large numbers of young workers with limited or no access to modern technologies;
- (h) Work to ensure that trade unions raise issues affecting young workers in order to win their active participation and identification with the goals of the union movement;
- (i) Undertake campaigning and communications work to focus attention on the necessity to improve the serious situation of working conditions and employment among young people;
- (j) Develop the capacity of trade unions to ensure that young workers are aware of alternatives to the failed current model of market fundamentalism, and the need for development alternatives;
- (k) Promote close collaboration with the Global Unions Federations on youth issues;
- (l) Maintain and develop partnerships with appropriate training institutions, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions at all levels dealing with youth issues;
- (m) Develop special and targeted programmes aimed at attracting young people including through educational materials, sports and arts;
- (n) Devise sustained trade union campaigns for the transition from the educational system to work, including trade union participation in educational activities during the final school years, together with other measures for monitoring the initial stages of work aimed at granting young people full rights and combating unfair employment situations.