



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

2nd WORLD CONGRESS

Vancouver, 21 - 25 June 2010

RESOLUTION

ON

**DEMOCRACY, PEACE, SECURITY AND THE ROLE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

1. Congress reaffirms the ITUC's commitment to achieving a peaceful, democratic, secure and stable world, where people from all countries coexist in mutual respect and tolerance, free from the threat of armed conflict, terrorism or other forms of violence or occupation. Peace is a precondition for achieving trade union goals. Congress rejects unilateralism in world affairs and pledges the ITUC to support in every possible way the principal role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and the peaceful resolution of disputes.
2. Congress affirms that social justice, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, including international law, are foundations for peace, and pledges its utmost support to the work of the United Nations to promote them.
3. Congress notes with profound concern the appalling toll of death, injury and disease across the world which results from armed conflict. It is often the most vulnerable who are the principal victims, with systematic rape and other forms of violence against women and girls used as a weapon of war particularly in ethnic conflicts and so-called "ethnic cleansing". Hundreds of thousands of children are forced into combat and military slavery in conflicts around the globe. War and the threat of war are also responsible for the displacement of millions of people within and between countries. Most dramatically, the failure of entire states has brought a complete end to the rule of law.
4. As Congress meets, armed conflicts of varying intensity affecting people in more than 20 countries and territories worldwide are taking place. All too frequently, this is exploited by those who supply weapons to or otherwise seek to profit from countries in situations of conflict. There is serious danger of international conflicts and instability leading to an increase in repressive security measures and the erosion of hard-won democratic rights. The ITUC must remain watchful to ensure that measures to fight terrorism are proportional to risk and do not undermine the full respect of fundamental ILO conventions, particularly Conventions 87 and 98, or other human rights.
5. Congress condemns terrorism in all its forms and under whatever pretext, as well as the policies of 'preventive war' and 'selective assassinations' defended and practiced by certain states. It also condemns the use of torture, and insists that governments fully apply the Geneva Convention, including with respect to prisoners of

war. Efforts to defeat terrorism must address effectively those factors, notably poverty, injustice, ethnic and religious discrimination, and unemployment which enable terrorist organisations to build support and to recruit and must not, themselves, violate human rights, including trade union rights. International cooperation must also break the connections between terrorism and organised crime.

6. Conflicts often have their roots in economic and social deprivation. Devoting additional resources including development assistance to generating decent work opportunities, particularly for young people, is an essential element in addressing the causes of social instability and conflict. With their enduring values of social justice, solidarity, non-discrimination and tolerance, and their role and presence in the workplace and in society, trade unions have a unique capacity to work for peace and for preventing the development of conflict and dealing with its aftermath. Congress salutes the courage of trade unionists around the world who reach out across lines of conflict to promote peace and understanding.

7. Global military spending has increased 45% in real terms in the past 10 years to record levels, with some countries allocating as much as 10% of their GDP to it, at the expense of vital investment in social and economic development. Congress calls urgently on the international community to make major cuts in military expenditure, and insists that the transition from military to socially-useful production protects the livelihoods of the workers affected.

8. With as many as nine countries possessing nuclear weapons capacity and at least two others believed to be actively pursuing nuclear weapons programmes, there are more than 23,000 warheads in the world – sufficient to destroy life on the planet many times over. The potential for nuclear weapons to be used remains high, and clandestine transfer of nuclear technology has increased the risk of yet more states acquiring nuclear weapons capacity, and of terrorist organisations acquiring and using nuclear weapons. Congress calls for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to be able to carry out inspections in all countries to improve control and avoid proliferation.

9. Congress recognises the importance of the 2010 Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the UN, and welcomes the work done by trade unions around the world to promote its success. All governments must ratify and meet in full their obligations under the NPT, and the international community must redouble efforts to eliminate nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), rejecting once and for all the notion that they are needed as deterrents. They must also ratify and fully implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Congress calls for rapid, multilateral progress on international agreements to regulate the trade in small arms and other conventional weapons, including universal ratification and implementation of the 1999 Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and supports a UN Arms Trade Treaty to regulate the trade in small arms.

10. The catastrophic war in Iraq clearly underlines the absolute requirement for respect for international law and the role of the UN in developing and implementing multilateral solutions to potential and actual armed conflicts. Building democracy and respect for human rights and international law in a sovereign Iraq will require substantial and prolonged international backing, particularly through resources for infrastructure, services and the creation of decent jobs, which Congress commits the ITUC to support. Restrictions on the right to form and join free trade unions in Iraq

are inhibiting the contribution of trade unionism to the promotion of peace, democracy and workers' rights. Congress therefore supports the Iraq Labour Campaign for the implementation and enactment of a fair and just labour law.

11. The gravity of the situation in Afghanistan shows the need for the international community to demonstrate the necessary political will to commit the resources required to tackle corruption, the drug trade and warlords through the eradication of poverty, the promotion of employment, the strengthening of education and the fight against gender discrimination and other inequalities, and so achieve a peaceful resolution to the violence which pervades the country. Military action alone cannot achieve these goals. Social justice, democracy and full respect for human rights and international law are central to bringing about the necessary transformations and the conditions under which the people of Afghanistan can map out a decent future. In this context, the international trade union movement should play an important role in cooperating with, supporting and strengthening Afghan trade unions and civil society. Congress emphasizes the leading role of the UN in achieving peace, security and democracy in Afghanistan, including through the promotion of an International Peace Conference with the participation of all the involved parties and the governments of the region.

12. The quest for a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine, based on the co-existence in conditions of security of two sovereign, independent and viable states, requires renewed international attention and support as a highest and urgent priority. Congress asserts that the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, (1967), which recognises the 1967 borders, and 338 (1973), are fundamental to the achievement of a just and lasting peace. Congress recognises that action to address the plight of Palestinian refugees, also in light of the relevant UN Resolutions, is a key building block for peaceful and constructive relations between Israel and Palestine and their neighbours. Congress further calls for universal recognition of Israel's right to exist, next to an independent viable Palestinian state, acknowledging that this is essential to achieving a peaceful solution.

13. The continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the existence of illegal Israeli settlements there and their impacts on the lives of Palestinians including their access to water, along with the blockade of Gaza and the extremist policies of Hamas, impose severe constraints on the potential for Palestinian economic and social development and make many Palestinian workers dependent on precarious work in the settlements. Egypt's decision to impose heavy restrictions on its border with Gaza will worsen the already deep economic crisis affecting those living in Gaza.

14. Israel's December 2008 invasion of Gaza in response to rocket attacks, and the failure to respect the UN Security Council Resolution calling for a ceasefire were reckless and unacceptable, costing the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians. These events were yet another example of the deadly cycle of provocation and reaction, which only serves to deepen extremist attitudes and puts the prospect of a resolution of the conflict yet further from reach.

15. Recognising the ending of Israel's presence in Gaza as an important step towards resolving the conflict, Congress calls for the lifting of the blockade on Gaza in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) and for Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and to remove all settlements. Congress recognises that economic relations with the settlements help to sustain their existence, in violation of international law.

16. While every country has the right to defend recognised borders and the lives and well-being of its population, the building by the Israeli government of a separation wall which intrudes substantially into Palestinian territory is a violation of international law which can only make peace and mutual coexistence harder to achieve. Congress calls for the wall to be removed, recognising that the mutual security of and respect between Israelis and Palestinians is central to the quest for peace. Congress calls for Israel and Syria to reach agreement on Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, with the attendant guarantees for its security.

17. Congress urges both Israelis and Palestinians to renounce violence, commit to an immediate and lasting ceasefire and immediately engage in direct negotiations as envisioned in the "Road Map" launched in 2002 by the US, Russia, the UN and the EU. It recognises that agreement on the status of Jerusalem is central to resolving the conflict, and underlines the urgent and imperative need for the international community to support, in every way possible, the realisation of a peaceful and just solution.

18. Congress welcomes the landmark agreement between Histadrut and the PGFTU on the rights of Palestinian workers, which was finalised with the assistance of the ITUC in August 2008, and initiatives by Global Union Federations in their sectors to support cooperation in defence of workers' rights. This agreement, and other actions to promote decent work and end discrimination, are crucial to building the basis for just and equitable economic development.

19. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers are unable to find employment under current conditions, causing widespread despair and disillusion, and Congress calls for urgent action to promote decent work opportunities for them. Congress commits the ITUC to continue to support the strengthening of cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli trade union movements and calls upon the international community to support Palestinian economic reconstruction and development, including through the ILO Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection.

20. Just as furthering democracy and respect for human rights is fundamental to resolution of conflict in the Middle East, it is equally as important in all of the many other conflicts taking place around the world. In this regard, Congress recognises and supports in particular the important role of the UN Peace-Building Commission, established in 2006, as an instrument for post-conflict reconstruction. It also welcomes progress at the United Nations concerning the Responsibility to Protect, and calls upon all countries to fully support and engage in its further development. Congress urges all countries to become parties to, and accept the universal jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and to respect the authority of the International Court of Justice in relation to international disputes.

21. Congress recognises that a viable and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem will re-enhance peace and stability in the South-East Mediterranean region, underpinning relations among neighbouring countries Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. Accordingly, Congress welcomes the UN Secretary General's good auspices and support to the negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of the long lasting issue. It recognises the good will, and encourages the two Cypriot leaders' continuing efforts and determination to reach a comprehensive, viable and fair solution based on all relevant UN resolutions, and according to the principles governing the establishment of the EU.

ITUC Action Programme

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

- (a) Support and participate in the various activities of the UN aimed at building global peace, justice and respect for human rights and international law, and promote the fullest commitment by national governments to the unique and legitimate role of the United Nations;
- (b) Support actively multilateral action to consolidate and preserve peace, to resolve conflicts peacefully, to bring to justice those guilty of war crimes and other crimes against humanity, to strengthen the International Criminal Court, and to support the adherence of UN member states to the injunction of the Charter of the United Nations to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state;
- (c) Campaign with particular urgency for all governments to advance the peace process in the Middle East, based on the principles and the UN Resolutions referred to in this resolution;
- (d) Support and encourage action by the Histadrut, Israel and PGFTU, Palestine to press their governments to resume negotiations to achieve a just and fair resolution to the conflict, and to reinforce cooperation between Histadrut and the PGFTU;
- (e) Promote the development of enforceable instruments with a view to addressing the behaviour of multinational corporations operating in zones of conflict or post-conflict or weak governance zones, or benefiting from such situations;
- (f) Support and defend trade unionists confronted with violence, and offer practical and political support to affiliates working in conflict situations for peace, reconciliation and the building of democracy;
- (g) Work for substantial reductions in military spending and its transfer to meet pressing social needs, international development cooperation and the conversion of arms production to peaceful objectives;
- (h) Promote effective international regulation of the production and trading of arms; the non-proliferation of all armaments including nuclear weapons; and in particular the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction;
- (i) Promote trade union action to improve tolerance and understanding between nations and cultures, and encourage affiliates to coordinate their efforts of solidarity and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels and through cooperation with social and peace movements and other organisations which share the concerns and values of the trade union movement.