



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

GENERAL COUNCILBrussels, 2 - 4 February 2011

FINAL**RESOLUTION ON
TACKLING PRECARIOUS AND INFORMAL WORK****More than 50% of the world's workers require our determined action to extend organising and bargaining rights, decent jobs and social protection to workers in precarious and informal employment**

1. According to the ILO, at least half the world's work force is engaged in various forms of vulnerable work. And over 80% of the world population has no, or highly limited, access to social protection and is not covered by even basic labour protection including occupational health and safety laws. This situation has been exacerbated by the economic crisis since 2008, casting one hundred million more people into extreme poverty and effectively halting efforts to improve the social and employment prospects of millions of workers. It is a social crisis of massive dimensions requiring urgent worldwide action by all, with a particular responsibility falling to the trade union movement.
2. Precarious, atypical and unprotected forms of employment deprive millions of workers of the coverage of labour legislation and social security and undermine the union capacity to organise and bargain collectively. Such workers are effectively denied these rights because of the inadequacy of law or its application, which often does not cover the full range of relationships under which work is performed. Women make up the majority of workers with precarious jobs and of workers in the informal economy who are not protected by legislation, are denied fundamental rights and are subject to sub-standard conditions of work.
3. Temporary workers, those forced into self-employment, domestic workers, agricultural workers, cross-border workers, workers in supply chains and workers supplied by agencies, intermediaries or other labour brokers are often unable to exercise their rights in practice. Companies avoid the obligations that laws place on employers through contracting out work and by denying employment relationships. The growth of precarious work impedes organising; vulnerable workers are often reluctant to join trade unions even where they may have a right to do so. Where work is performed on an informal basis, as is the case for a majority of the workers in many developing countries, the right to organise and to collectively bargain is particularly difficult to realise.

4. Accordingly, the ITUC General Council instructs the General Secretary as a priority to work intensively with affiliates, regional organisations, TUAC and other Global Unions over the course of 2011 to implement a programme of actions to respond to the urgency and the gravity of the situation faced by the hundreds of millions of workers in precarious and informal work worldwide, incorporating the following measures:

a) To campaign together with the ILO for the extension of social protection to all, for ratification of ILO social security conventions and for a basic social floor for all, including the adoption of an ILO Recommendation on the establishment of a social protection floor set at a level above the poverty line, and sufficient to provide reasonable living standards;

b) To assist the ILO in promoting such efforts in the UNDP's work initiated by the Seoul G20 Summit to support developing countries to strengthen and enhance social protection programmes, and insist that the ILO's primary expertise and mandate in this area be recognised by the G20 as well as in the elaboration of the World Bank's new Social Protection Strategy;

c) To assist affiliates in pressing for broadly-based and higher minimum wages, both to protect vulnerable sections of the work force and, as recognised by the Global Jobs Pact, as this provides a vital means of raising aggregate demand and hence achieving economic recovery;

d) To realise the provisions of the ILO Employment Relationship Recommendation No. 198 (2006) and translate it into national law and action, as well as implementing the 2002 conclusions of the ILO general discussion on the informal economy and supporting effective labour inspection to ensure the application of labour law, as is central to eliminating poverty and exploitation in the informal economy, and to promote ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 181 (1997) on private employment agencies;

e) To seek a more robust programme of activities of the ILO to address these issues including through expert meetings, regional and sub-regional meetings and publications on specific aspects and through technical cooperation and policy guidelines aimed at strengthening administrative and judicial action;

f) To work with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the ILO to improve property rights and streamlined registration for currently informal businesses, giving them a stake in joining the formal economic system so that they increase investment and training, at same time as paying taxes and contributing to national revenues for development;

g) To work with the ILO, governments and donors to support active labour market programmes for vulnerable workers including increased access to public employment agencies and training, whilst ensuring equality in access for women;

h) To continue to participate in the Council of Global Unions Work Relationships Group to tackle precarious work and to address organising issues arising out of the various relationships under which work is performed;

i) To encourage unions to extend the scope of collective bargaining throughout the supply chain;

- j) To promote the Global Unions Principles on Temporary Work Agencies to prevent private employment agencies from contributing to precarisation of the workforce, and to ensure that such agencies respect all internationally recognised workers' rights;
- k) To campaign jointly with affiliates, TUAC and global union federations against deregulation and precarisation policies such as those advocated in the OECD's "Going for Growth" report;
- l) To intensify organising campaigns focusing on young workers performing precarious or informal work including the "Decisions for Life" programme for young women workers, as well as actions under the ITUC special action programme on the informal economy;
- m) To prepare reports on precarious and informal work worldwide with a focus on vulnerable groups particularly affected by the economic crisis and on identifying problems common to different countries and to proposing solutions;
- n) To work to eliminate trafficking in persons and illegitimate "labour migration" agencies, which frequently place people in a situation of precarious or informal work;
- o) To provide input to the G20 Labour Ministers and other relevant international fora on the situations of precarious and informal work and to make policy recommendations as to how governments should end these situations; and
- p) To organise a meeting involving affiliates, regional organisations and global union federations to discuss effective means to achieve the transformation of precarious and informal work into secure and decent work (entailing social protection, respect for workers' rights, employment and social dialogue), followed by implementation activities including an informal network of affiliates and global union federations to promote the development of policies and activities to this end.