



**ITUC INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION
CSI CONFÉDÉRATION SYNDICALE
INTERNATIONALE**

Decent Work for All

A Key Objective for Economic and Social Development

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Statement to the 46th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development, New York, 6-15 February, 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The ITUC welcomes the progress made to date since the 2005 Summit of the General Assembly, in advancing the agenda of full and productive employment and decent work as central to efforts to eradicate poverty.
2. The current challenge for Member States at the 46th Session of the Commission for Social Development is to come to agreement on an effective Resolution for submission to the General Assembly through ECOSOC, aimed at making decent work a central goal to be integrated systematically into social and economic and development policies at international, regional and national levels.
3. Such an effort could not be more timely, given the alarming trends in unemployment in the wake of the current turmoil in global markets, just highlighted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in its *Global Employment Report 2008*
4. The ITUC calls attention to the serious lack of policy coherence between the international economic, financial and trading systems, and the social institutions promoting decent work objectives.
5. This policy incoherence is illustrated, inter alia, by the disproportionate demands being made of developing countries in the NAMA (Non-Agricultural Market Access) negotiations of the WTO, which run the risk of causing unemployment and usurping the policy space that should enable the growth of productive sectors.
6. Another case in point is the annual “Doing Business Report” of the World Bank which has the net effect of steering foreign investors away from countries observing good labour standards, discouraging corporate accountability and undermining the decent work agenda.
7. Achieving policy coherence and allowing policy space should therefore be key elements in the Resolution to the Commission, if it is to give effect to the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration’s call for the creation of “an environment at the national and international levels that is conducive to the attainment of full and productive employment and decent work for all as a foundation for sustainable development.”

8. With equal emphasis on the four strategic objectives (employment, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue), governments should seek to integrate the decent work agenda systematically and as a matter of priority into macroeconomic policies and development assistance frameworks at the national level.
9. Employment-intensive approaches to job creation should be pursued, with a sustained focus on addressing the decent work deficit of those trapped in informal working relationships, many of whom are women.
10. Regulatory frameworks should incorporate the principles upheld by the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work to guarantee workers' representation and rights at work. These frameworks should also incorporate the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, with a view to promoting good practices regarding the social responsibilities of business.
11. These frameworks should further incorporate the key Conventions aimed at overcoming the decent work deficit in relation to women's employment and conditions of work.
12. Strategies to address youth unemployment should be developed around the interrelated objectives of quality jobs, education and skills development, and improving the transition from school to work. Paralleling these strategies should be those which seek the elimination of child labour and the enforcement of the rights of all children to quality, publicly provided education.
13. Mobilising resources to finance the decent work agenda is key to the realisation of its objectives. These should include progressive taxation regimes, and the prioritising of support for decent work programmes in development cooperation.
14. The Resolution of the Commission should emphasise the need for instruments for measuring concrete progress in achieving decent work objectives, including the ILO Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, and decent work indicators to assess the effectiveness of strategies for achieving the new sub-target of MDG1 on decent work.
15. Decent work for all must become a global, universal goal throughout the international institutions, including both the UN agencies and those with less official ties to the UN family. Decent work objectives need to be prioritised across the board, and institutions of governance at global and regional levels must explicitly commit to mainstreaming decent work objectives into their policies and operations.