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To the leaders, activists and members of
the Guinean Inter-Union Coordination
(CNTG & USTG) extended to the ONSLG
& the UDTG,
Conakry, Republic of Guinea

TRANSLATION

TUR/JK

19 February 2007

Continuing ITUC support to the Guinean trade union movement

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and of the 168 million workers whom it represents through its 304 affiliated national trade union centres in 153 countries, including your own, I want to renew towards yourselves and your members the full solidarity and unreserved support of the international trade union movement in the hard struggle which you are currently waging with a view to securing a return to the rule of law and the full respect in the Republic of Guinea of human and trade union rights and fundamental freedoms.

Taking place a mere few days after the return from Guinea of the high-level trade union mission which it was my privilege to conduct from 30 January to 1 February this year and which also constituted the very first international solidarity mission of our new international, the imposition of martial law and the ferocious repression which came with it have deeply moved the worldwide trade union community. The ITUC has publicly demanded and continues to call insistently for the immediate lifting of the state of siege, the full and immediate restoration of all fundamental freedoms, including freedom of assembly, movement and expression, an end to all forms of brutality by security forces towards the civilian population and, first and foremost, that an immediate and lasting end be put to the unacceptable excesses committed by these security forces, according to numerous witness accounts..

Reports from Guinea reaching us in the last few days, which speak of rape, warning or other shots leading to deaths and injuries, night searches, arbitrary arrests, threats, beatings and other violence, if confirmed, are an insult to human dignity and fundamental rights of the human being. Those responsible of such excesses, whoever they are and whatever their rank, must be identified, sought for, judged and punished with the full severity of the law. In that respect, the ITUC would appreciate it if you could send it without delay a detailed account of all above-mentioned violations which might have affected, in particular, the members, activists and leaders of your organisations in your country's various provinces and districts.

In any event, the ITUC full supports the participation of its affiliated Guinean organisations in the Commission of Inquiry foreseen under the Agreement of 27 January 2007 and the establishment, proper functioning and tangible results of which had been formally guaranteed to us by the highest authorities of Government and the "Republic's

ALL COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY -- TOUTE LA CORRESPONDANCE DOIT ÊTRE ADRESSÉE AU SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
DER GESAMTE BRIEFWECHSEL IST AN DEN GENERALSEKRETÄR ZU RICHTEN -- TODA LA CORRESPONDENCIA DEBE DIRIGIRSE AL SECRETARIO GENERAL

Institutions” whom we had met in Conakry during our mission. In the face of renewed excesses taking place following the imposition of martial law on 9 February, the ITUC now considers that the grave events which took place thereafter must also be examined by that Commission of Inquiry. Should such not be the case, or should that Commission lack credibility, the ITUC would find itself obliged to bring its unreserved support to the various voices heard in recent days, which call for the establishment of an international inquiry into these most grave events.

In full line with the demands of its Guinean affiliates, the ITUC continues to call firmly for the complete and rapid implementation of all provisions of the 27 January Agreement, including therein the appointment without further delay of a Prime Minister with extended powers, Head of Government and enjoying wide acceptance by the Guinean people. In this sense, the ITUC welcomes the unity of action of the Inter-Union Coordination of USTG-CNTG extended to the ONSLG and UDTG and cannot sufficiently insist upon the fundamental importance of maintaining and further strengthening the cohesion of the Guinean trade union movement in the face of the major challenges which it has to face in these dramatic times.

Meanwhile, the ITUC will not fail to continue at the international and regional levels its determined campaign to meet the legitimate demands of the Guinean people and trade union movement. I have already met, in Brussels just a few days ago, senior officials of the European Commission and informed them about our perception of the situation following our mission to Guinea. I have seized that opportunity to discuss with my hosts a number of measures aimed at obtaining from Guinea’s authorities the implementation of the January 27th Agreement. The ITUC continues similar contacts with the European Parliament as well as – though its affiliated organisations in the different Member States – with the EU Council of Ministers. It will also renew all relevant steps towards other actors of the international community, such as the International Financial Institutions and African regional organisations such as the African Union and ECOWAS. It can rely in this area on the unreserved commitment of its own regional organisations in Africa. In this respect, I take pleasure in informing you that Brothers Andrew Kailembo and Adrien Akouété, General Secretaries of the ICFTU-AFRO and ODSTA-WCL, respectively, who are today present in our Brussels Headquarters, have requested me to forward to you their warmest encouragement and the expression of their full solidarity in these trying moments.

Finally, I seize this opportunity to inform you that the ITUC has just produced – and put on-line on its website – a film about its recent mission in your country. This will no doubt contribute to spread knowledge throughout the world about the demands and legitimate struggle of the Guinean trade unions and further strengthen the feelings of solidarity within the world trade union movement.

Allow me to conclude by assuring you of the deep emotion, but also of the strong admiration which the struggle of Guinean trade unionists has provoked within our international movement. In the hope of a rapid solution to this crisis, we will continue this struggle alongside you.

Please accept – and forward to all your members – my most fraternal greetings.

[signed] General Secretary