



SHARAN BURROW
PRESIDENT
PRÉSIDENTE
PRÄSIDENTIN
PRESIDENTA

GUY RYDER
GENERAL SECRETARY
SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
GENERALSEKRETÄR
SECRETARIO GENERAL

In reply please quote:
Circular N° 3(2008)

**To all affiliated organisations
To all Global Union Federations**

For information:
To all General Council Members

HTUR/JB

15 January 2008

Towards a Global Trade Union Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking

Dear Friends,

This is to inform you that, at its last session (Washington, DC, US, 12-14 December 2007), the ITUC General Council endorsed a plan of action for future trade union activities in the areas of forced labour and trafficking. This decision was an essential step in the establishment of a Global Trade Union Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking, a process initiated in April 2007 (Circular N° 19(2007))¹. More specifically the General Council approved the action points listed hereunder and “urged all affiliates to integrate them into their work programmes as appropriate in their national circumstances”.

Earlier work had revealed a general trend to fight forced labour and trafficking and the existence of significant trade union activities and structures already addressing the issues from different angles. This came to light, among others, from a survey (Circular N° 24(2007))² and additional consultation rounds with affiliated and Regional Organisations, Global Union Federations (GUFs) and the ILO Bureau for Workers’ Activities, from 9 to 11 September 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and from 23 to 25 October 2007 in Turin, Italy. This process further showed that there were already many common points to be addressed across geographical regions and sectors of activity. The survey, however, also confirmed that much remained to be done to ensure that the full extent and nature of forced labour and trafficking, and the wide variety of forms in which they occur, are fully understood and combated by the global trade union movement.

Action Points

The following action points will be the basis of a Global Trade Union Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking:

- the promotion of ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions 29 and 105, 81 and 129, 181, 97 and 143³;

¹ http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_19_Forced_Labour.pdf

² http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_24_forced_Labour_and_Trafficking_Survey.pdf

³ Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (N°29), Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (N°105), Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (N°81), Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (N°129), Private

- awareness raising on forced labour and trafficking aimed at trade union members and officials, and the wider public;
- addressing forced labour and trafficking issues in bipartite and tripartite negotiations and agreements;
- promoting political and material support within trade union organisations for the development of policies against forced labour;
- monitoring of employment agencies as well as companies, including their supply chains to detect and combat forced labour and trafficking practices;
- identification, documentation and public exposure of forced labour issues and cases;
- bilateral, sectoral or regional trade union cooperation agreements, and appropriate alliances or coalitions with civil society organisations having recognised expertise and experience in relevant areas;
- cooperation with labour inspection services, law enforcement and other relevant national, regional or international authorities or interagency working groups;
- outreach and direct support to informal, unprotected and migrant workers at risk, to address their specific situation and needs, including through their integration in trade union ranks;
- ensuring that proper attention is paid to all aspects of racism and discrimination, including in particular its gender dimension, as women and girls are especially at risk;
- working closely with GUFs to target sectors where forced labour and trafficking are most likely to occur.

The General Council further instructed the General Secretary to promote networking and campaign activities by affiliates, regional organisations, and GUF's through training and advocacy materials to develop the work of the Global Trade Union Alliance, in particular through support to affiliates and close cooperation with Regional Organisations, the GUFs and the ILO.

Based on these principles, the ITUC is finalising its implementation programme for the coming three years of which a detailed outline will follow shortly. We hope we can count on the active involvement of your organisation to help tackle this worldwide problem through effective trade union solidarity.

Please consult our "Forced Labour and Trafficking" webpage⁴ on the ITUC website and do not hesitate to contact our Project Coordinator in the Human and Trade Union Rights Department⁵ for more clarifications or to keep us informed of any related activities within your organisation.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (N°181), Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (N°97), Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (N°143)

⁴ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?rubrique156>

⁵ jeroen.beirnaert@ituc-csi.org , Tel.:+32 2 224 03 14 , Fax.: +32 2 224 02 97