



ITUC CSI IGB

Programme of the ITUC

*(Adopted by the Founding Congress of the ITUC
Vienna, 1 - 3 November 2006)*

1. The delegates, representing 168 million members of 304 affiliated national trade union centres in 153 countries and territories at the Founding Congress of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Vienna, 1-3 November 2006 pledge to work together in a spirit of solidarity, democracy, and equality to make the Confederation the instrument of a new trade union internationalism, capable of realising the aims set out in its Constitution.

2. Congress assumes the task of combating poverty, exploitation, oppression and inequality, ensuring the conditions for the enjoyment of universal human rights, and promoting effective representation of working women and men worldwide. It recognises that, to succeed, it must adapt the working methods of the international trade union movement to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation, make international trade union action an integral part of the work of national trade union organisations, and mobilise worldwide action in support of its objectives.

3. Congress instructs the General Secretary to implement the policies set out in this Resolution, combining advocacy, mobilisation, and campaign work and working closely with its partners in the Global Unions Council. It calls on all affiliates to remain active, committed and vigilant in discharging the shared responsibility of globalising solidarity.

4. The policies set out in this Resolution draw inspiration from the rich body of existing policy and experience of all ITUC affiliates, including the decisions of the 18th ICFTU World Congress, Miyazaki, Japan, 5-10 December 2004, those of the 26th Congress of the WCL, Houffalize, Belgium, 21-23 November 2005, and those of the previously non-affiliated organisations that are joining the ITUC.

Changing Globalisation

5. Congress pledges the ITUC to change globalisation fundamentally, so that it works for working women and men, the unemployed, and the poor. It is essential to the achievement of the permanent aims of the Confederation that the policies of free market neo-liberalism, and the manifest failings and incoherence of the international community in respect of the current process of globalisation, give way to governance of the global economy which:

- Combines the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental;
- Guarantees universal respect of workers' fundamental rights;
- Generates decent work for all;

- Puts an end to mass poverty and substantially reduces inequality in and between nations;
- Promotes growth with equitable income distribution.

6. Congress mandates the ITUC to convene a Day of Action worldwide to call for immediate international action to formulate and implement an agenda for a new globalisation, including the ILO's decent work agenda and, as a minimum, full realisation of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Confronted with unacceptable levels of unemployment and underemployment, the achievement of full employment and decent work for all must be central to this international action. Industrial countries must, without delay, have official development assistance meet the UN-set minimum of 0.7% of gross national product. They must equally take decisive action to end the tragedy of developing country debt, including cancellation of their debt, in priority for least developed countries which respect human rights, the shifting of resources into social investments, and the creation of a fair and transparent mechanism for international debt arbitration and restructuring including a review of public and private debts aimed at identifying the respective responsibilities of creditors and debtors.

7. Combating social inequalities and fighting for redistribution is at the heart of developing a new model of globalisation. An international tax on foreign currency transactions is needed, both to finance development and to curb speculative financial movements with their disastrous social consequences.

8. The provision of quality public services for all people must be at the heart of this new model of globalization. It is the responsibility of governments to guarantee the right to education and equitable access to health and other essential services, including clean water and sanitation. Making life-long education a reality for all is the key to participation in the knowledge society.

9. Effective and democratic governance of the global economy requires fundamental reform of the international organisations concerned, particularly the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation. There must be greater transparency and democracy in the decision-making processes of each and greater coherence in their collective policy positions. At the same time, all organisations must recognise the primacy of human rights over financial, commercial or economic regulations. Governments must take more seriously their responsibility to govern them and to make them work in full coherence and cooperate accountably to achieve democratically decided goals.

10. Congress calls on the ITUC to work, together with its Global Unions partners in the global union federations (GUFs) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, to make international organisations responsive to trade union goals to integrate development, social, labour, environment and gender considerations into their work programmes, and to denounce and confront them if and when they act against the rights and interests of working people and the poor. Dialogue with these institutions needs to be carried out to bring about the deep changes in their policies that are necessary.

11. The IMF and the World Bank continue to implement anti-worker and anti-poor programmes, typically promoting privatisation, trade and investment liberalisation and labour market deregulation. In many countries, these have undermined the capacity of the state to undertake effective governance. The IFIs must adopt the alterna-

tives proposed by the ITUC which would genuinely promote sustainable and socially just development instead of undercutting it.

12. Since its creation, the WTO has been the vehicle for an unsustainable model of trade liberalisation that exacerbates workers' exploitation, developmental inequalities, environmental destruction, and gender imbalances. Congress recognises that the international trading system is not working for development and has to be made to do so, as part of an integrated effort by the whole multilateral system. Developing countries must have the space to pursue domestic industrial development strategies coherent with the decent work agenda, and to play a full part in WTO decision-making processes.

13. Congress further insists on the compelling need for the WTO to address social and labour issues, and calls on it to establish a working group or standing working forum on trade, social development and labour standards, with full ILO participation. The ITUC must work for the incorporation of a workers' rights clause into WTO statutes, which would require all products and services traded between countries to be produced and distributed in compliance with core labour standards. Such a clause would be anti-protectionist, pro-development, and a crucial instrument for social justice in an open world trading system. It should be accompanied by technical cooperation to assist countries to comply fully with labour standards.

14. All these concerns are equally significant in regional and bilateral trade, investment and co-operation agreements. The ITUC must follow such agreements closely and ensure that they duly consider workers' rights and contain clauses to guarantee their implementation. Workers' organisations should have a consultative status in the elaboration and the implementation of the agreements.

15. Congress affirms that vital public services, notably education, health, water, public transport and other essential utilities, must be excluded from negotiations on trade liberalisation, with governments retaining the right to regulate and to protect in the public interest.

16. Congress underlines the need for the international community to implement an overarching strategy for sustainable development. It calls on the ITUC to integrate the link between health and the environment fully into its work, particularly in respect of workplace, enterprise, and national action to protect occupational health and safety and working conditions, and by bringing workers' issues fully into the activities of the Commission for Sustainable Development, the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme. It further calls for an end to unsustainable consumption practices, and cooperation for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Challenge of Multinational Business

17. Congress recognises that multinational enterprises are a key driver of globalisation, which makes intergovernmental cooperation, and the international regulation of business increasingly necessary and urgent. International business activity, and the changing organisation of business pose particular challenges to the respect of workers' rights. Effective exercise of the right to organise and to collective bargaining is becoming increasingly difficult, as companies use the threat to relocate operations and their increased power to dictate the conditions under which work is undertaken, and to

evade their responsibilities to workers and to the communities, societies and environment in which they live.

18. Congress condemns the recent wave of corporate malfeasance and criminality, as well as the indecent levels of compensation awarded by top management to itself. It underlines that existing national legal and institutional frameworks for the regulation of business activity are increasingly inadequate and that binding regulation, as well as further collective agreements, to achieve corporate accountability and governance is urgently needed. Companies must be assigned greater liability for the social, and environmental and human rights impact of their operations, with affected states and parties having access to legal redress and the imposition of penalties.

19. Congress therefore instructs the ITUC to work for the effective national and international regulation of business, including full compliance with the provisions of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. Corporate Social Responsibility must not be permitted to be used as a substitute for the proper role of government and of trade unions. The ITUC should assume a lead role in public policy debate on Corporate Social Responsibility with the purpose of ensuring that such initiatives complement regulation and collective bargaining and agreements. National labour inspection systems are an integral part of such regulation and need to be strengthened.

20. Congress recognises the importance of global social dialogue and welcomes the conclusion of global framework agreements between multinational enterprises and GUFs, with which it instructs the ITUC to cooperate closely to tackle multinational business effectively.

Defending and Promoting Trade Union Rights

21. Congress reaffirms that trade union rights are a key part of human rights at work, that universal and full respect of trade union rights constitutes a key objective of the ITUC and that globalisation adds to the urgency of its achievement. Respect of trade union rights is a precondition for justice at the workplace, in society, and worldwide. Only when workers are able to organise and to bargain freely can they claim a fair share of the wealth they create and contribute to equity, consensus and cohesion in society, and to sustainable development. The violation of trade union rights – still widespread – is a source of unfair competition in the global economy and needs to be prevented on economic as well as human rights grounds: repression anywhere constitutes a threat to liberty everywhere. The exploitation of the more than 50 million workers, mainly women, in the world's export processing zones (EPZs) provides a concrete demonstration of how governments are succumbing to the pressure of unregulated international competition to deny trade union rights.

22. Congress pledges the ITUC to combat trade union rights violations wherever they occur, and without distinction, in the conviction that trade union rights are an integral part of the human rights of all workers, in all countries, in all circumstances. It will not be deterred by the power and influence of those responsible for abuses or who benefit from them, nor by the bogus arguments they use in self-justification. Congress condemns the impunity which frequently enables the violation of trade union rights by despotic and anti-democratic forces and governments. It further calls on the ITUC to promote and defend the role of the ILO in the setting and supervision of international standards defining trade union rights, including the right to cross-border solidarity ac-

tion, and its leading role in the international system's shared responsibility to ensure their universal respect. It commits the ITUC to make the fullest use of the opportunities offered in all relevant UN bodies, including the new Human Rights Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly

Fighting Discrimination, Achieving Equality

23. Congress pledges the ITUC to campaign to put an end to discrimination in all its forms so that millions of women and men who today are denied jobs, confined to certain occupations, denied advancement at work, offered lower pay, or subject to intimidation and harassment because of their sex, religion, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, social origin, age or disability, can live and work in conditions of equality, dignity and justice. It commits the ITUC to securing full and effective application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

24. Congress recognises that deep and pervasive gender discrimination remains a universal reality in the world of work, and in society in general, and that many aspects of globalisation are making it worse. Therefore Congress pledges the ITUC to ensure that the gender perspective is fully and transversally integrated into all its policies, activities and programmes at all levels. Congress knows that the future strength and vitality of the trade union movement depends on women joining its ranks and becoming leaders and calls on the ITUC to adopt an action programme to promote gender parity in trade union structures and the full integration of gender issues in trade union policies, and to combat any discrimination, harassment or abuse of women and obstacles to their progress in the trade union movement. Congress urges the ITUC to redouble its efforts at organising women in the sectors in which women are predominant, working under precarious conditions, or in which trade unions are still poorly represented (informal work, export processing zones, migrant workers and atypical jobs).

25. Congress pledges to uphold respect for diversity at work and in society and actively to promote measures to fight racism and xenophobia, in particular in the workplace and the labour market. It underlines the responsibility of the ITUC to campaign against the discrimination and the unfair and often exploitative conditions of work and life faced by the world's migrant workers and their families. It calls on the ITUC and its affiliates to play a more active and visible role in promoting the rights and equal treatment of migrant workers and in the fight against racism and xenophobia. They must raise public awareness of the contribution to society of migrants, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities and ensure that anti-terrorist measures and asylum policies do not encourage racism and discrimination.

Ending Child Labour

26. Congress commits the ITUC to carry forward the historic struggle of the international trade union movement to eliminate child labour and to ensure that every child can go to school. It rejects arguments that child labour is inevitable, economically beneficial, socially acceptable, or to the advantage of the children concerned and their families.

27. Congress calls on the ITUC to campaign against child labour in all its manifestations, and with proper regard to all its causes and ramifications: in the informal as well as the formal economy; through universal public provision of free, compulsory,

quality education and family income support; by building public awareness and commitment; by campaigning for ratification of ILO Conventions 138 and 182 and their respect by employers including in their supply chains; and by maintaining pressure on international organisations to ensure that trade, economic, and financial policies support the elimination of child labour instead of pushing children out of school and into work. The ITUC will work with NGO's which share its objectives, analyses and approach to child labour, prioritise elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and target the specific forms of exploitation of girls and of boys.

A Decent Future for Young Workers

28. Congress recognises that the situation of young workers, who represent the present and the future of the world, is in general extremely vulnerable. Congress recognises that dealing effectively with the concerns and expectations of young working women and men, and achieving their full integration in trade unions, is crucial to the strengthening, revitalisation, creativity and future of the trade union movement everywhere. It commits the ITUC to campaign for decent work, and quality education and training for young people and to promote action to improve organisation and representation of young women and men in trade unions. Congress calls on the ITUC to develop and implement policy and action on young workers' issues, to facilitate the exchange of national experiences, to involve young trade unionists in its campaigns, and to be a catalyst to develop their potential for the movement.

Making Workplaces Healthy and Safe

29. Congress pledges to strengthen occupational health and safety for all workers, to put an end to the loss of over two million lives each year as a result of occupational accidents and work-related diseases. It demands that access to safe and healthy work be accepted as an undeniable right of all workers, recognises that involvement of workers and their representatives reduces injuries and illness, and calls on the ITUC to promote national and international initiatives by and cooperation with employers and governments to promote health and safety.

30. The ITUC will campaign for a total world ban on the use and commercialisation of asbestos; for proper, strengthened safeguards to protect workers and communities that are or will be exposed to asbestos products; and for employment transition programmes for workers displaced by the ban. It will act to stop the social dumping resulting from the replacement of safe and healthy workplaces in one part of the world by more dangerous ones in others.

31. Congress calls for world-wide recognition and observance of 28 April as the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers.

32. Congress is convinced that the workplace is a key battleground in the war against the HIV/AIDS pandemic and commits the ITUC to work for strong and effective action to prevent, control, and ultimately eradicate HIV and AIDS. This must include measures to prevent and penalise discrimination on the grounds of HIV status; voluntary, confidential testing and counselling; and care, support and treatment for those who are HIV positive, their families and their communities. The ITUC will encourage trade union education on HIV/AIDS issue, and campaign for justice in the distribution of life-saving drugs in order to achieve universal access.

The International Labour Organisation: Global Reference Point

33. Congress affirms strong support for the International Labour Organisation in pursuit of its enduring historical mandate to promote social justice and the rights and interests of working people worldwide. It commits the ITUC, through the ILO Workers' Group, to strengthen the ILO, to increase the participation of women in it, and the effectiveness of its work.

34. Congress expresses support for the ILO's Decent Work Agenda – the application of international labour standards, policies for full employment, social protection, and social dialogue – which has increased the organisation's standing and visibility, and calls on the ITUC to participate fully in its concrete implementation.

35. Congress recalls that setting and supervising international labour standards remains the ILO's essential core task. It calls on the ITUC to engage actively in all initiatives to strengthen ILO standards-related activities while opposing firmly those whose real intent is to politicise and weaken them.

36. Congress emphasises that tripartism provides the ILO's key comparative advantage and calls on the ITUC to ensure that tripartism remains the central feature of its activities and structures.

37. Congress welcomes the opportunity provided by the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation for the international community to address globalisation in the context of the ILO's commitment to social justice and workers' rights. It commits the ITUC to act to ensure that the opportunity is not lost and that concerned international organisations, especially the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF take part in joint activity to give effect to the Commission's recommendations and to secure the improved international policy coherence needed for a fair and inclusive process of globalisation. In this regard Congress stresses the urgent need to establish an effective programme of cooperation between the ILO and the WTO on the relationship between trade, standards and other social and employment questions, as well as strengthened interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Peace, Security and the United Nations

38. Congress affirms the ITUC's commitment to achieving a peaceful and secure world, where people from all countries coexist in mutual respect and tolerance, free of the threat of armed conflict, terrorism, whether by state or by non-state actors, or other forms of violence. Peace is a precondition for achieving trade union goals.

39. 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 peaceful resolution of disputes. It condemns the decision in 2003 to launch the war in Iraq in the absence of explicit UN authorisation, and calls for a UN role to end the occupation of that country.

40. Congress calls for the reform and strengthening of the international system as an instrument to promote peace, security and development. This should include a strengthened and more democratic United Nations and the creation of a UN Economic, Social and Environmental Security Council. The recent conflict between Israel and Lebanon demonstrates the need for the international community to be able to act deci-

sively, under the multilateral framework of the UN and the rule of law, to find adequate and timely solutions based on full respect for relevant UN Resolutions.

41. Congress also condemns terrorism in all its forms and under whatsoever pretext, as well as the policies of “preventive war” and “selective assassinations” defended and practiced by certain states. It calls on the ITUC to be alert to ensuring that counter-terrorism measures do not whip up xenophobia and discrimination or erode hard-won democratic rights.

42. Congress recognises that conflicts often have their roots in poverty, inequality, violations of human rights including workers’ rights, lack of decent work, corruption, and bad governance, and that trade unions, through their struggle for solidarity and social justice, can contribute importantly to the preservation of peace. It salutes the role that trade unions have frequently played in promoting tolerance, respect and cooperation between working people across lines of conflict and calls on the ITUC to support and encourage such initiatives and understanding between cultures.

43. Congress declares that a comprehensive peace between Israel and Palestine based on the existence of two sovereign, independent and viable states requires renewed international attention and support as a matter of highest and urgent priority.

44. Congress calls on all countries to work to achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction within the shortest possible time and to convert war economies into peace economies. It calls for major reductions in military expenditure which diverts resources from urgent development needs and the provision of services, and for new initiatives to regulate and control world production of, and trade in, arms.

45. Congress finally welcomes the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International War Crimes Tribunals and supports further moves to strengthen the effective scope of international justice.

Organise!

46. Congress highlights the urgent need for working women and men to organise, now more than ever. The benefits of joining trade unions have never been greater or more important. Organising workers is and remains the fundamental task and the top challenge facing all ITUC affiliates, with freely negotiated collective agreements constituting the essential means of realising their members’ demands. With organising increasingly taking on an international dimension in the globalised economy, Congress calls on the ITUC, in close cooperation with the GUFs, to provide all support to affiliates’ organising activities and to strengthening their capacities.

47. Organising is the bedrock of trade union strength and influence, and provides the basis upon which the global trade union movement can be a genuine countervailing force in the global economy.

48. Congress declares that solidarity requires that trade unions extend the opportunity of trade union membership to the unorganised and that they should organise all workers in their spheres of activity, including the hundreds of millions working in the informal economy, or in non-traditional or atypical situations, such as part-time or temporary work, through extension of full rights and protection to those performing precarious and unprotected work. This must involve renewed commitment to reflect diversity in trade union membership and to organise women and youth.

49. Congress recognises that trade union education is a vital instrument for building the capacity of trade unions and their members to enable them to improve and strengthen their organisations, and to play a constructive, purposeful and creative role in their workplaces and societies. Congress calls on the ITUC to empower working women and men and strengthen affiliates, particularly in developing countries, through international programmes of education. Such programmes should reflect the main lines of action of the ITUC and be an integral part of its strategy to address the current globalisation process.

50. In this context, trade union development cooperation is crucial. Congress therefore calls on the ITUC to mobilise increased resources for development cooperation, and to ensure that they are managed efficiently and transparently in the framework of an agreed global strategy. It will have specific responsibility in respect of policy formulation, information sharing, and coordination while ensuring the full integration of gender perspectives. Congress calls on all trade union actors to contribute to that objective in conditions of cooperation and openness.

51. Congress calls on the ITUC to work to influence the development policies of industrialised countries and regional and international institutions so that they reflect trade union objectives and include trade unions adequately as development partners.

52. Congress instructs the ITUC to give priority to education of workers regarding their rights. Promoting knowledge and awareness of trade union rights through education is an essential component of work to ensure their full respect.

53. Congress is convinced that the commitment of ITUC affiliates to contribute resources for international solidarity is strong and that it is an important task of the ITUC to provide an efficient mechanism for its delivery. The Solidarity Fund of the ITUC will protect trade unions and trade unionists suffering oppression and strengthen trade union organisation, recruitment and membership, on the basis of clearly defined and agreed goals with clear reporting on the outcomes of their uses. Congress appeals to all affiliates to contribute to the Solidarity Fund.

54. Congress calls on the ITUC to adopt working methods and practices which will put it in the best position to confront the challenges facing trade unions worldwide and to implement this programme of work, and to keep them under constant review. It is essential that the ITUC work, from its inception, in close and systematic cooperation with other organisations in the democratic international trade union movement, and in permanent contact with its affiliates. Congress also calls for it to work jointly with political groupings and other civil society organisations which share its values and objectives and strengthen its capacity to initiate and sustain global campaigns to win broad public support for them. Such cooperation must be based on the independence and freedom of action of the trade union movement.

The New Internationalism

55. Congress solemnly commits to make the ITUC the instrument of a new trade union internationalism for the benefit of all working people. It calls on all affiliates to unite in common endeavour to put their solidarity and their influence to work for a better future in a more just world.