

# ITUC 2017 May Day Statement

## End Corporate Greed – the World Needs a Pay Rise

The achievements of generations of working people, celebrated on May Day, are under continuous and systematic attack, as powerful multinational corporations and a handful of immensely wealthy people are writing the rules of the global economy. Governments are in retreat, pandering to the ultra-rich and failing in their duty to ensure decent work for all and an end to poverty. Nationalism and xenophobia are eroding solidarity, at a time when the world is confronted with the biggest refugee crisis in 70 years and as migrant workers are deprived of the dignity of equal treatment.

Tens of millions of women and men are trapped in modern slavery, and many more make up the hidden workforce of global supply chains, denied the right to a union or to a living minimum wage and often trapped in dangerous and degrading work. 40% of the world's workforce is caught in the informal economy, with no rights and living hand-to-mouth. The poisonous dogma of austerity, designed to transfer yet greater wealth to the 1%, is hitting women hardest and stopping any chance of progress on the great challenges of our time.

With more than a billion people affected by violence or insecurity and hundreds of thousands in the front lines of armed conflict, the threat of new wars is never far away. There can be no peace without human rights, and it is the guarantee of human rights, including the fundamental rights of working people, that is the foundation for prosperity and peace.

The economic system is broken, and the rules must be re-written, by and for the many rather than the few.

**“ 78% of people want companies to be held accountable for their supply chains**

**79% of people say the minimum wage is too low for a decent life ”**

**(ITUC Global Poll)**

Workers everywhere are fighting back, organising unions in the face of violent intimidation, campaigning for decent work and striking even where there is no right to strike. In the factories of East-Asia and the plantations of Central America, in towns and cities across Africa and throughout the world at large, working people are standing up to corporate bullies and demanding respect for their right to a union, to collective bargaining and social protection and for secure and safe jobs. Women workers are saying “Count Us In” for equality at work, investment in the care economy, an end to the gender pay gap and for their rightful place in union leadership.

For 130 years, this day has been a time to celebrate solidarity and to pay homage to those who have sacrificed so much in the cause of social justice. May Day 2017 is again a day to show the strength and determination of working people to fight oppression, to demonstrate solidarity at home and across borders, and to take forward the task of building a better world.

New challenges are arising, with technology transforming the world of work, with carbon emissions threatening yet more climate devastation and with populism and extreme-right dogma moving into the mainstream. We call on governments to stand up to the threats and intimidation of the elite which today controls the levers of power, and to stand with working people. We re-affirm our pledge of solidarity to all those who face repression, poverty and exploitation, and will never step back our mission to build prosperity, equality and dignity for all.