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Circular N° 16(2012)

To all affiliated organisations
To all Global Union Federations and TUAC

For information:
To all General Council Members
To all Women’s Committee Members
To all Youth Committee Members

HTUR/JSV
12 July 2012

ITUC Statement on recent Employers’ attack against fundamental rights

Dear colleagues,

I know many of us are still reeling from the Employers’ Group attack on the supervisory machinery of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the 101st International Labour Conference in June 2012. This year, the chosen target was the right to strike, which the Employers’ Group argued does not exist as a matter of international labour law – despite the decades of jurisprudence of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the tripartite Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA). As a result, workers in the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards were denied an important opportunity to present cases regarding serious workers’ rights violations.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) will not let this stand; however, we will need your help to win this fight. We have attached an ITUC statement expressing our legal analysis of the ILO supervisory system and the jurisprudence regarding an international right to strike. We have also drafted model letters for you to adapt and send to your respective governments and employer associations. Please send these letters at your earliest convenience and follow up with a meeting to seek their support in defending the independence of the system. It is important that when this matter is raised at the upcoming tripartite informal consultations and at the November 2012 Governing Body, we have as much government support as possible. Also, it may also be worth a discussion with your employer associations as to their views on this matter.

We will appreciate if you can inform of the outcomes of these meetings so that we know where we have support and where we will have to do additional work to bring governments to our side. Please send a copy of all written responses and reports from your meetings to tur@ituc-csi.org, with a copy to genevaoffice@ituc-csi.org.

The ITUC will also engage in an informal consultation in August with the International Organization of Employers (IOE) on the issues raised by the Employers’ Group. Further, we are assembling a group of experts on international labour law in advance of that
meeting in order to be armed with the best legal advice possible. We will also be consulting with you and your legal experts throughout this process.

This is an important fight, as the outcome will determine whether we will continue to have an effective supervisory system at the ILO. I appreciate the hard work that you put in during the ILC and thank you in advance for the efforts you will now undertake to ensure that the ILO remains a vibrant and useful institution for working people into the future.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

Encl.:

– ITUC Statement
– Model Letter to Employers
– Model Letter to Governments