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Dear Justine

Post-2015 Development Agenda – Trade Union Priorities

I write to request the UK Government's support for the trade union position on some of the key issues currently under discussion in the intergovernmental negotiations in New York.

The TUC has kept a close watch on recent developments in the debate. Indeed, the TUC participated in the Trade Union Advocacy Seminar held in New York from 11 to 13 May 2015 and is pleased that there is growing support for our position on some issues of importance to us, notably, within the EU as well as in developing countries. We were disappointed that the UK ambassador to the UN did not attend the breakfast meeting held at the UN on 13 May 2015 which gave an opportunity for our delegates to discuss the issues with representatives of the respective UN missions. The Seminar identified a number of outstanding issues which need further attention and support from governments before being integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

Sustainable development goals

- Decent Work

The concepts of decent work and social protection developed by the ILO command extensive support within the UN as well as in the European Union. Decent work with its key four components - job creation, respect for workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue – is integral to any comprehensive development strategy and constitutes the most effective means of helping people work out of poverty. The international trade union movement is pleased that the Open Working Group (OWG) has identified *sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all* as one of the 17 goals. However, we are keen to ensure the inclusion of the set of specific indicators developed and refined by ILO experts in the metrics to be used for assessing progress in important areas such as collective bargaining and social dialogue.

- Respect for Core Labour Standards

In our view, one of the most effective means of reducing inequalities within nations is to ensure that fundamental rights at work are respected in line with ILO conventions ratified by countries and that they are rigorously enforced and adequately supervised by the authorities. In this regard, we would appreciate specific reference to compliance with Core Labour Standards in the declaration to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in September this year and the incorporation of appropriate safeguards against violations of fundamental rights at work in the post-2015 framework.

- ILO Recommendation on Social Protection Floors

The ILO Recommendation on Social Protection Floors (R202) was adopted by the International Labour Conference almost unanimously with only one abstention in June 2012. We note that the need for social protection in the form of social protection floors has long been recognized by governments in the developed world, especially in the EU. The implementation of R202 at global level will go a long way to eliminating poverty, reducing inequalities and achieving social and economic justice. We have long advocated the establishment of nationally appropriate social protection floors for all in need and welcome the UK Government's support for the setting up of a global fund for social protection to facilitate the implementation of R202 in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

- Review and Supervisory Mechanisms

The implementation of the post-2015 development agenda warrants the establishment of robust systems of monitoring and evaluation within the UN. As you know, the majority of goals and targets bear upon the economic and social wellbeing of working people, their families and communities. It is our firm conviction that the ILO – the unique tripartite body in the UN family – should be part of the review and supervisory mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the framework.

Financing for development

- Official Development Assistance

In line with our support for the enshrinement in legislation of the target of 0.7% of GNI to be devoted to ODA, the TUC would welcome any initiative by the Government to encourage our European partners and other G7 nations, US and Japan in particular, to increase their contributions towards the UN-recommendation. The total amount of ODA, for instance, would have been more than twice the disbursements recorded in 2014 had all developed nations fulfilled the pledge made over forty years ago.

- Financial Transaction Tax

There is growing support for the introduction of a tax on all financial transactions at a very low rate, for instance, at 0.05-0.1% (well below the current UK rate of stamp duty on shares), with the possibility of part of the proceeds being used for financing development initiatives. As you

know, some developing countries like Brazil have already put in place similar initiatives for the purpose. In our view, the UK Government's support for the FTT at global level would facilitate its acceptance and implementation, thereby guaranteeing a steady flow of substantial funds for development.

- Tax Justice

We strongly believe that the mobilisation of domestic resources – both private and public – will be crucial to the successful implementation of the post-2015 development framework and indeed to the elimination of poverty. We are keen to ensure that multinational companies bear their fair share of the tax burden and that tax evasion and avoidance by companies and individuals are effectively dealt with. The TUC is part of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) call for an appropriate UN agency to be given a leading role in ensuring tax justice at global level.

I do hope that the UK Government agrees with us on these proposals and will play a critical role in mobilising support for them in the intergovernmental negotiations now in progress in New York and in the international conference on Financing For Development to be held in Addis Ababa in July. I should be pleased to discuss these issues further with you and your officials at a mutually convenient time.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O' GRADY
General Secretary