

ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) - www.ituc-csi.org



The ITUC's primary mission is the promotion and defence of workers' rights and interests, through international cooperation between trade unions, global campaigning and advocacy within the major global institutions. The Programme Document adopted at the ITUC founding Congress sets out the Confederation's overall policy framework (see link below), which builds on existing ICFTU and WCL policies¹. Its main areas of activity include:

- + trade union and human rights
- + economy, society and the workplace
- + equality and non-discrimination
- + international solidarity.

The ITUC adheres to the principles of trade union democracy and independence, as set out in its Constitution. It is governed by four-yearly world congresses, a General Council and an Executive Bureau. The chief executive of the ITUC is its General Secretary Guy Ryder, supported by Deputy General Secretaries Mamounata Cisse and Jaap Wielen.

The ITUC head office is based in Brussels, Belgium. The ITUC regional organizations are the Asia-Pacific Regional Organization (ITUC-AP), the African Regional Organization (ITUC-AF) and the American Regional Organization (TUCA)

The ITUC also cooperates closely with the European Trade Union Confederation, including through the Pan-European Regional Council, which was created on March 2007.

The ITUC has close relations with the Global Union Federations and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), working together through the Global Unions Council.

The ITUC works closely with the International Labour Organisation. It maintains contacts with several other UN Specialised Agencies.

Along with its Regional Organisations and their sub-offices, the ITUC has offices in Amman, Geneva, Moscow, New York, Sarajevo, Vilnius and Washington DC.

¹ ITUC is a merger between ICFTU, WCL and an additional number of national trade union centers

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 trade union national centers as affiliates.

Web link <http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?rubrique58> to:

- ▶ [ITUC Constitution and Standing Orders](#)
- ▶ [ITUC Programme](#)
- ▶ [ITUC Constitutional Bodies](#)

ITUC Brussels has the following departments:

- Equality
- Human and Trade Union Rights
- Economic and Social Policy
- Communication and Campaign Department

The main aim of the ITUC **Equality Department** is to work to ensure that those millions of people can live and work in conditions characterised by equality, dignity and justice.

Gender issues are a reality throughout the world of work and in society as a whole. The ITUC therefore needs to ensure that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in all its policies, activities and programmes at all levels. Women need, for example, to be organised in the sectors where they form the majority, where they are working with insecure contracts and where the unions are still poorly represented (e.g. in informal work, export processing zones, migrant labour and atypical employment, etc.).

The ITUC has a Women's and Youth Committee who meet once a year.

Promoting respect of diversity at work and in society and implementing effective measures to combat racism and xenophobia, in particular at the workplace and in the labour market, are priorities for the ITUC. To that end, campaigns are being run on combating the discrimination and the unfair and often abusive working and living conditions that women workers, migrant workers and the members of their families are facing throughout the world.

Young men and women workers are another vulnerable group, despite the fact that they represent our world's present and its future. Addressing their concerns and expectations effectively and ensuring their full involvement in trade unions are essential tasks.

Together with its affiliates, its regional organisations, the Global Union Federations, as well as with non-governmental organisations, the ITUC **Human and Trade Union Rights Department** carries out ongoing campaign action for the universal respect of trade union rights, as guaranteed by the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The ITUC defends trade unionists whenever their fundamental human rights are violated as a result of their trade union activities. It also takes action against other labour rights

violations, and other violations of human rights especially where these affect working people.

- ▶ Scores of trade unionists are killed each year due to their union activities.
- ▶ Several thousands more are imprisoned, beaten in demonstrations, tortured by security forces or others, and often sentenced to long prison terms.
- ▶ Each year, tens of thousands of workers lose their jobs merely for attempting to organise a trade union.
- ▶ Throughout the world, millions of workers, often women and children, are forced to work against their will. The ITUC fights against forced labour wherever it occurs.
- ▶ In many countries, workers are discriminated against for political, ethnic, religious or other reasons. The ITUC confronts governments and employers that are responsible for such situations.

The ITUC's work in this area includes research and documentation of national labour laws and practices, international trade union solidarity actions to support those whose rights are under attack, publicising violations to bring public pressure on those responsible, putting pressure on governments and employers which violate workers' rights and by taking cases to the international judicial mechanisms of the ILO and also to United Nations human rights bodies.

A globalised world economy requires effective global governance. The **ITUC Economic and Social Policy Department** seeks to increase intergovernmental cooperation to ensure that the social dimension of globalisation, including decent work and fundamental workers' rights, is right at the centre of decision-making at world's major global and regional institutions. This includes the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation, United Nations and its specialised agencies, especially the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with its tripartite structure and mandate to set international social standards.

The ITUC also works with its Global Unions partners to promote effective rules governing the behaviour of private business. We seek to achieve international frameworks for social dialogue and collective bargaining, and systems of corporate governance that hold management accountable for the social impact of business activities.

This requires a combination of campaigning and mobilisation with advocacy and lobbying so that the policies of these institutions and companies support, rather than undermine, the achievement of decent work for all. This includes action around:

- Trade, investment and labour standards
- Health and safety at work and sustainable environmental practices
- Global governance
- The social responsibilities of business including global social dialogue
- Social protection and sound legal employment relationships
- Trade union organising

- Fighting HIV and AIDS
- Combating child labour and forced labour

A major focus of ITUC work is to ensure full and universal respect for the Fundamental Workers' Rights of the ILO, which guarantee the right to organise in a trade union, the right to collective bargaining, protection from discrimination, and the elimination of child labour and forced labour.

The ITUC **Campaigns and Communications department** works to initiate and coordinate at the international level campaigns that national trade unions are involved with. We do this through producing support materials, coordinating actions and participating in international events (eg. World Trade Organisation Ministerials, G8 meetings, the World Social Forum etc).

On some of the issues, we work together with other members of civil society such as non-government organizations (NGOs) and political parties who support our cause. We also work closely with Global Union Federations (GUFs) who represent workers at the international level on issues related to their industries. For a full list of GUFs go to www.global-unions.org.

ITUC is involved in campaigns like:

- Decent Work, Decent Life – a campaign to ensure all people benefit equally from the process of globalisation;
- Fair Play at the Olympics - a campaign urging the International Olympic Committee and the major sports brands to respect the rights of workers in the sportswear industry;
- Global Call to Action against Poverty – a campaign aimed at ensuring we achieve the Millennium Development Goals as set out by the United Nations to lift billions of people out of poverty.
- We are also involved in ongoing work on the following issues:
- HIV/AIDS – working to maximize prevention programs whilst at the same time fighting discrimination in and outside the workplace and ensuring everyone has access to life-saving medication;
- Child Labour – working to ensure every child is in full-time education instead of being forced to work;
- WTO, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – working to ensure that global governance strategies pursued by these organizations is changed to benefit workers and the poor.