



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

Berlin, 03-04 June 2007

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### Agenda item 7

#### Programme of work

##### **b) Draft of ITUC General Youth Policy and Programme of Action**

**The Youth Committee is invited to discuss the following proposal for consideration by the ITUC General Council:**

1. Dealing effectively with the concerns and expectations of young workers, and achieving their full integration in trade unions, is vital to the future of the trade union movement everywhere. The ITUC must work to support decent work, quality education and training for young people that provides qualifications, and trade union action for improving recruitment, organisation and representation of young workers.
2. Young people around the world are amongst those most severely affected by unemployment, inadequate allocation of government resources for education and training, and exploitation and discrimination at work, causing many to become alienated from the societies in which they live. Many young workers begin in part-time, casual or temporary employment and then never succeed in escaping from such precarious employment, often under deplorable and unsafe conditions with lower wages, throughout their working lives. At the same time, the relatively low level of union membership amongst young workers means that they are often deprived of the protection, information and training afforded by union representation and advocacy. In export processing zones, the overwhelming majority of those employed are young women workers, while millions of young people have no option but to seek work away from their homes as migrant workers.
3. Governments, in partnership with employers and unions, must take firm measures to ensure universal access to quality education, improvements in the means through which young people can make an effective transition from school to work, and integrated policies for life-long learning, especially within the workplace environment and during working time. It is essential that employers increase their commitment to vocational training, providing qualifications, of the young workers in their workforce, which in many cases has declined seriously over recent years.
4. The nature of much of the precarious, informal work of many young people makes it more difficult for unions to organise than in more stable or permanent working situations. Nevertheless, reaching out to young people in schools, in the community and in their first experiences in employment is essential for increasing their participation in trade unions,

including later in life. Trade unions must take into account the changing ways in which young people participate in society, and relate to its institutions, as they develop their strategies.

5. The ITUC's action to influence the policies of international organisations, in particular the IMF and the World Bank, has particular relevance for young workers who have often been amongst those most affected by them. The United Nations and the World Bank have begun to increase their work concerning young people, in part through the UN/ILO/World Bank Youth Employment Network (YEN). The YEN and similar initiatives must, through accountable and transparent involvement of young trade unionists in consultation processes, policy development and evaluation of the effects of international policies on young people.

6. The ILO has a key role in encouraging and contributing to international policy development on issues of concern to young workers, in close cooperation with the Workers' Group, should ensure that it is funded and carried out effectively and that there is adequate follow-up.

7. Global Unions provides an important vehicle for cooperative action and the sharing of information and experience between international trade union organisations active on young workers' questions, and the potential it offers needs to be realised in full.

8. The involvement of young people in ITUC campaigns is a vital tool for promoting, developing and strengthening the organising and participation of young people within the trade union movement.

9. Many non-governmental organisations are active on youth issues at the international level, and a number of these share the objectives of the trade union movement. Cooperation with such organisations offers significant potential to increase the scope and impact of the ITUC's youth work. Initiatives of this type should be developed in line with the overall policy of the Confederation on cooperation with other organisations.

### **Action Programme**

10. The ITUC shall, in particular through its Youth Committee and networks of young people:

- a) Campaign for decent work for young people, and work to involve young people to the maximum extent in ITUC work, including campaign activities, international days of action and other initiatives;
- b) Encourage and support efforts of unions at the national level to influence government policies concerning quality education, youth employment, vocational skills development, training and school to work transition, and the creation of decent work opportunities for young people;
- c) Develop trade union education activities and materials for young workers, and resource materials on organising young workers and on policy issues affecting them, including innovative and effective strategies to organise young workers in formal and in informal and unprotected work, including migrant workers;
- d) Monitor trends in trade union membership of young workers, and support trade union initiatives to improve the collection and analysis of such information at the national level;

- e) Develop international mechanisms, including through communications technology, to enable exchange of information between trade union organisations on effective strategies for organising young workers, and where appropriate offer direct support for such strategies;
- f) Support the participation of young trade union representatives in ITUC structures and activities and encourage affiliates, where appropriate, to establish trade union youth structures and to ensure adequate representation of young people in their decision making structures;
- g) Work to influence the policies and participate in the consultation mechanisms of the international institutions which have particular relevance to quality education, youth employment and training, including the ILO, the UN and the World Bank, in order to promote decent work for young people and access to quality education and training;
- h) Urge the ILO to intensify its activities in favour of decent work for young people, including through technical assistance to trade unions and to governments;
- i) Develop cooperation with youth organisations which share the trade union movement's objectives, in line with the overall ITUC policy on cooperation with other organisations; and
- j) Encourage cooperating partners to provide financial support for the implementation of the ITUC youth policy and activities, including through the holding of national, regional and international activities on key policy issues and on organising young workers.