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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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UN Post-2015 Report: Decent Work and Rights Needed

Brussels, 31 May 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is urging the United Nations to lift its poverty benchmark from \$1.25 per day following the release of the report of its High-Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda, to help realise the ambition of ending extreme poverty through sustainable development. Though the report offers a solid starting point, UN Member States will need to go much further in their commitments if the Post 2015 Agenda is to be truly transformative.

"There is much which is good in this report, and we now need to see much stronger focus on providing decent work, universal social protection and meeting the massive challenge of tackling inequality," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "We need the UN to throw its full weight behind efforts to realise fundamental rights, to ensure working people can lift themselves out of poverty and provide for their families. These ambitions cannot be achieved if the global community carries on with business as usual."

The Panel's emphasis on human rights and the accountability of governments, public institutions and the private sector to people is notable, as is the acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of economic and social development with environmental sustainability and climate change.

While unions welcome the emphasis on inclusive growth, financial stability and long-term investment, the absence of an absolute commitment to achieve decent work for all is a serious omission.

Job creation, worker's rights, social protection and social dialogue cannot be seen as too lofty an ambition for developing countries. This is discriminatory and an acceptance of exploitation.

The reports emphasis on the role of business in development is understandable, but should be complemented by the equally important role of workers. So it is regrettable again that Panel fails to recognize the importance of the Social Dialogue for increasing productivity, creating better working conditions and building stronger and more cohesive societies.

"Instead the report sets a goal to bring the number of people living on less than \$1.25 per day to zero. This is what Bangladeshi workers producing garments for global markets are paid today, as are construction workers building skyscrapers and football stadiums in Gulf countries and agricultural workers producing for global food corporations. Corporate accountability cannot be left out of the equation if we are to truly tackle the roots of extreme poverty, and multinationals should reform their own operations and supply chain responsibilities to ensure environmental sustainability, decent work and a proper living wage" said Burrow.

Finally, the international trade union movement stresses that the path forward for UN Member States to agree Post 2015 commitments must be democratic and inclusive. It remains committed to achieving an outcome that responds to the demands of workers and communities around the world.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates.

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