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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Egypt: Labour Minister Appointment a Positive Step

Brussels 17 July 2013 (ITUC OnLine): Egypt's interim government has appointed prominent union leader as Manpower Minister in a move welcomed by the international trade union movement. On confirmation of his appointment, Abu Eita resigned his post as president of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, which has been a driving force in the campaign for trade union rights and social justice in the country. Another reformer, Ahmad El-Borei, has been appointed Minister of Solidarity and Social Protection.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "On top of the legacy of corruption and mismanagement by the Mubarak regime, the economic and social situation worsened dramatically under the Muslim Brotherhood, triggering the massive protests which resulted in the army's intervention. Respect for fundamental workers' rights must be a cornerstone of the country's transition to a genuine and inclusive democracy."

The two appointments, amongst 33 ministerial positions announced by interim President Adly Mansour, are seen as a clear signal that the administration is committed to fair and just social policies to combat mounting poverty and unemployment. Along with the severe economic and financial situation, the government is faced with an increasingly alarming security situation.

Along with increasingly violent street protests organised by Islamist groups, the Sinai region in particular is becoming a haven for terrorist groups. Most recently, buses transporting workers were attacked by armed militants. Condemning the attack, the Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services reported that 30 workers were killed and dozens more injured.

"The situation inside Egypt today is grave, with possible regional and international implications. The international community and progressive forces around the world need to show solidarity to help the interim authorities to tackle the crisis," said Burrow.

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

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