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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC : New Structure to strengthen democratic and independent trade unionism in the Arab countries

Brussels, 11 October 2013 (ITUC OnLine): At the request of 17 national trade union centres from the Arab region (in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine Tunisia and Yemen), the ITUC General Council meeting in Brussels (9-11 October) has endorsed the process of creating a new structure for the Arab countries. The founding instruments of the new structure will be submitted to the forthcoming 3rd ITUC World Congress in Berlin for adoption in conformity with the ITUC Constitution.

Considering the grave challenges which face the democratic and independent trade union movement in the Arab world and the urgent need to respond to these, the General Council gave its support to this new ITUC structure, which will give immediate priority to tackling frequent and massive violations of fundamental liberties, including trade union rights, to defending workers in the context of growing poverty and unemployment and to fighting against social injustice, which particularly affects women, young people and the poorest, including migrant workers.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow welcomed the decision, saying "Trade unions are at the forefront of the fierce and long struggle which is taking place across the Arab world, which sets democrats and progressives against authoritarian and retrograde forces. The trade unionists of the Arab World have expressed their urgent need for a specific space to better unify their forces and put in place a common strategy. The ITUC General Council has today expressed its full solidarity with their struggle in favour of democratic, progressive and independent trade unionism in this part of the world. »

"This new sub-regional structure will help us project a strong and unified voice in our ongoing struggle to defend and build democratic, progressive and independent trade unions in the Arab countries, » said Houcine Abbassi, General Secretary of the UGTT Tunisia and Acting President of the new Arab sub-regional structure of the ITUC during its transitional period up to the ITUC Congress.

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

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