

Van: ITUC Press <press@ituc-csi.org>
Verzonden: donderdag 21 november 2013 14:32
Aan: ITUC Online
Onderwerp: Trade unions join walkout of Warsaw climate talks - ITUC OnLine

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine
117/211113

Trade unions join walkout of Warsaw climate talks

Brussels, 21 November 2013 (ITUC online): The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) joins major environmental and development groups in protest action at COP 19 in Warsaw where Governments are not acting responsibly to tackle the threat to lives, jobs and livelihoods that climate change represents.

Unions joined civil society groups in a voluntary withdrawal from the Warsaw climate talks. This is the first time there has been a mass walkout from a COP meeting.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC, said democratic leaders have failed us. Even as the climate science warns of escalation of climate change with devastating impacts, negotiations backtrack on emission reduction targets, financing for developing nations, technology sharing and the just transition workers demand.

""We have been shocked by some of the wealthiest nations including Canada and Australia showing a lack of responsibility for ambitious targets and with almost all developed nations failing to commit vital finance and even questioning the need for 'just transition' measures for the world's workers and their families.

"Trade unions remain optimistic on the capacity of social dialogue to ensure that Japan returns to the negotiations next year in Lima, Peru, with renewed ambition and leadership.

"The corporate dominance which is on show here is unacceptable. It is the same companies that advocate environmental and social responsibility that exploit workers and the environment through their supply chains.

"The ITUC will now mobilise workers around the world to ensure that democratic governments are held accountable for jobs, rights and the vital investment in transformational technologies in all sectors to ensure full employment and decent work," said Sharan Burrow.

Read the joint media statement: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/media_statement_on_ngos_walk_out_from_cop19.pdf

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 325 national affiliates.

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