



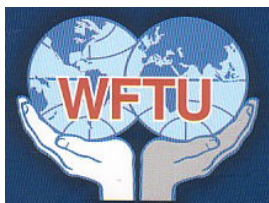
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Towards the 16th World Trade Union Congress

The World Federation of Trade Unions appeal to all workers of the world to 16th World Trade Unions Congress will take place from 6 to 9 April 2011, in Athens, Greece.



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

1st May 2010.

Comrades, leaders of WFTU members and friendly organisations!
Colleagues, leaders of progressive and democratic trade unions!
Workers, unemployed people, young people, men and women!



Today we are setting off on a long and beautiful path, preparing for the celebration of the 16th World Trade Union Congress to be held in April 2011 in Athens, the capital of Greece, a city with a rich history of civilization, democracy and struggle.

After Damascus, New Delhi and Havana, it is now the turn of Athens and Europe to prove themselves in organizing a

militant, democratic, modern and class-oriented World Trade Union Congress open to dialogue and criticism.

The 16th World Trade Union Congress will analyze the current situation in all sectors and at all levels. It will examine the progress of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the successes and failures, the new tasks ahead, in defending workers' interests, trade union rights and freedoms and dealing with the just concerns of all peoples and nations the world over.

Join us on this path. Take part and play a main role.

Dear friends,

In the five years since the last Congress the WFTU has taken major and important steps.

The WFTU is alive! It's getting stronger! It is struggling!

Today it has in its ranks 200 national and sectoral trade unions in 110 countries with 72 million members! The current strength and the potential of the new WFTU is not only in figures. It lies mainly in its positions and action, in its strategy, its tactics and initiatives. It is mainly based on the significant role of the Regional Offices in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. It is based on the important militant initiatives of the national trade unions' affiliates and the branch organizations of the big class-oriented family of the Trade Union Internationals (TUIs) of Construction, Metal, Transport, Energy, Public Services, Agroalimentary, Finance, Education and Hotels and Tourism.

The current dynamics of the new course of the WFTU are reflected in its clear positions within the International Organizations and its active involvement in the struggle, facing all current problems that affect workers.

The dynamics of the WFTU are based on its class-oriented and mass nature, the internationalism and solidarity it has followed since its foundation in 1945. It

resides in its capacity to face criticism and self-criticism regarding its weaknesses and mistakes with a positive eye.

Dear friends,

The period we live in is one of aggressive imperialism, anti-labour neo-liberal policies and of the international economic crisis of the capitalist system. This crisis is expressed in all sectors: in the economic and social level, the environment, the quality of life, culture and climate change. Crises are in the DNA of capitalism and for this reason they come again and again. It is impossible for capitalism to solve the problems of the peoples of the world.

Look at what is happening in Africa; a continent rich in wealth-producing resources but with the poorest people. The average life expectancy at birth in Zambia is 38.6 years. In Nigeria, Africa's richest country in oil, ¾ of the population are homeless and, according to UNICEF's 2010 Report, 42% of the population in Nigeria with no access to drinking water, while diarrhea is the second largest killer of children, causing as many as 17% of the deaths of those under the age of five. In Somalia the imperialists are exacerbating conflicts, in Sudan the USA and its allies are trying to dismember the country, in the Western Sahara the problems continue. The monthly minimum salary in South Africa is 104€ for farm workers. In Botswana minimum wages for urban workers are 43€ per month. In the Ivory Coast the minimum wage varies by occupation, with the lowest set at 56€ per month for the industrial sector.

In Asia the picture is no better: in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the USA and the European imperialists are continuing their occupation and military operations. They are threatening Iran and plundering the Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. In Bangladesh the basic salary is \$26 per month, in Sri Lanka \$59 per month and in Pakistan \$71 per month.

In the Middle East the torment of the heroic Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian peoples continues. Israel, with the substantial

support of the USA, the European Union and its allies is still illegally occupying the Syrian Golan Heights, keeping Gaza isolated, murdering people in Lebanon and posing a grave danger to stability and peace in the Southeastern Mediterranean.

In the Americas the situation is also complicated. In North America, unemployment and poverty are growing. The unemployment rate in the U.S. is 9.7%.

Latin America feels the aggressiveness of North America. Slander and attacks against the heroic Cuban Revolution, attacks against Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, the occupation in Haiti, support for the dictatorship in Honduras. In Colombia, in the last five years, more than 210 trade unionists have been assassinated and the country is being transformed into an American military base.

But also in Europe, capitalism creates and multiplies the problems. Unemployed workers in the countries of the European Union number in the millions today. In February 2010, 23 million workers in the European Union were unemployed. The highest official unemployment rates among the member-states are in Latvia with 21.7% and Spain with 19%.

Privatizations, the undermining of social security and the reduction of wages and pensions are a common strategy of all the European Governments, both neoliberals and socialdemocrats. The Lisbon Treaty shows the reactionary attitude and the real role of the European Union.

Important Struggles

To this policy of capital and the imperialists, the global working class is responding with initiatives and struggles all over the world.

The demonstrations of children in Pakistan against child exploitation, the struggles of teachers and electricians in Mexico, of fishermen and coalminers in Chile, of metalworkers in Peru, of construction workers, of immigrants in France and the USA, of air and land transport workers and workers in the car industry in many countries, of workers in the oil industry

2010 elektron 10 (135) 3, FTE in Mexico in Nigeria, of workers in India, coordinated militant action in Brazil and Bangladesh, the dynamic strikes in Greece, Nepal, Iraq, Arab World, South Africa, Portugal, Turkey and many other countries have traced new paths in the class-oriented struggle.

Millions of strikers in all Continents with the participation of youth, women and migrant workers have provided a new dynamic and fresh hopes. The WFTU has always been ahead in the front line of struggle! And it will continue this way, with class unity and a militant perspective, against the policies of the monopolies and multinationals that create poverty for the many and big profits for the few.

The crucial question

Since the 15th Congress in Havana, under conditions of capitalist globalisation, we have posed the crucial question: under current circumstances, in the contemporary world, what kind of international trade union movement does the world working class need? Today, under the conditions of international economic crisis this question is even more pertinent and important.

- Do we today need an international bureaucratic mechanism to cooperate with multinationals and capital, or an international organization such as the WFTU that has chosen to move forward based on the principles, the culture and the values of the class-oriented trade union movement?
- Do we need an international bureaucratic mechanism that agrees with and shows understanding for the abolition of workers' rights, that agrees with the upheaval in labour relations or do we need an international trade union organization like the WFTU that demands and fights for the satisfaction of today's needs for every working class family, for a decent life and full rights?

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- Do we need an international bureaucratic aggressive trade union mechanism that in words keeps an equal distance from Israeli occupation forces and the people of Palestine, that will participate in the slander against Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia or do we need an international trade union organization like the WFTU that in theory and practice follows the principles and values of proletarian internationalism and labor solidarity?
- Do we need an international bureaucratic mechanism to spend money, one that will buy and sell-out trade unions and trade unionists or an international trade union organization based on ideology, on its political and social strategy?

Join us! You are invited!

Join us at the 16th World Trade Union Congress to give us your opinion, to freely express your criticism, to jointly decide and trace the prospects of the trade union

movement for the 21st century, opening new horizons for our class strategy.

Join us! Unite with ordinary people who were born and grew up with the working class in their countries, people who did not sell out their principles and values. Come to meet real sisters and brothers. Together we can achieve more.

Join us, become a member of the large WFTU family and take part in its bodies and leadership.

Come with us as a friend, even if you don't agree on everything with us.

On the new path of the WFTU all militant trade unionists have a place, to struggle all together for the abolition of exploitation of man by his fellow man. For a world without injustice, poverty and war.

You are invited. Confirm your participation now.

For further information you can contact us at our e-mail: wftu-16Congress@hotmail.com

The WFTU's Secretariat

This international call was presented by the FTE in Mexico after demonstration of the 1st May 2010 in Mexico City. Mexican workers begin corresponding preparations from now on. Long live to 16th World Trade Unions Congress! Proletarians of all countries, Unite!

Energy Workers' Front, FTE, in Mexico

Frente de Trabajadores de la Energía,
de México