Check against delivery

**Peace is essential for us to rebuild a just world**

Greetings and solidarity in this global crisis.

The COVID 19 pandemic has taken some 200,000 lives to date and many more will suffer lasting health effects. Shutdowns and confinement now cover most of the world’s population

We are living through an historic act of global solidarity where people have given up civic freedoms to prevent loss of life and where millions of frontline workers in health and vital services go to work, risking their health, to allow the rest of us to survive in isolation.

On 1 May workers around the world will salute these workers. But we will also call for a new social contract as the basis for recovery and resilience. This will require redesign of our world to ensure that people and the planet are at the centre of a peaceful world where prosperity is shared.

We already faced a convergence of crises; Conflict is escalating with a military spend and numbers of refugees greater than WWII; we have massive inequality that was driving an age of anger and a distrust in democracy; the climate emergency is an imperative for action to save human beings from extinction; and progress on every indication has stalled for women. We are facing the choices associated with the best and worst of technology; And now we have Covid19 and the very real potential for 200 million jobs lost, up to 250 million people facing starvation and 500million people thrown back into poverty.

This requires us to push the reset button on our world and to ensure a just transition to a better future; a future where peace is a foundation for hope.

We need a new social contract to deliver peace and stability, but we cannot build a new social contract under the terror of the threat of war and nuclear attacks.

War and nuclear weapons are the antithesis of what the trade union movement stands for. Democratic decision-making and peaceful negotiations are cornerstones of our movement.

We cannot start building peace and prosperity if we do not lower our arms.

The ITUC supports UN Secretary General Guterres’ call for a global ceasefire to help create corridors for life-saving aid, open windows for diplomacy and to bring hope to places among the most vulnerable to COVID19.

Human memory can be short lived, and our Japanese affiliate JTUC-RENGO has, throughout our history, shown tremendous leadership to keep the memory of the injustice of the atomic bombs in Nagasaki and Hiroshima alive. It is shameful that after 75 years of these tragic acts of war we continue to face this man made evil.

In readiness for the NPT Review Conference - which must be held as soon as possible - JTUC-RENGO, together with GENSUIKIN and KAKKIN, have already gathered over 8.2 million signatures in a petition calling for nuclear disarmament.

The risk of the use of nuclear weapons is at its highest in decades. There are currently at least 2,000 tons of nuclear material for weapons stored in some 40 countries, enough to make 40,000 bombs the size of the one that devastated Hiroshima. Countries are building faster and more accurate nuclear arms, developing new weapon technologies with unpredictable implications and pouring more resources into their military forces.

The corporate world pushes its social responsibility aside when profits are to be made with weapons of mass destruction. Corporate greed fuels the arms race and push politicians to service greed and private interests rather than peoples’ safety.

The Pentagon wants to spend $1.2 trillion to upgrade its nuclear arsenal; Russia yearly spends an estimated $10 billion and the collapse of the INF Treaty may well have started a new nuclear arms race. Just imagine investing $1.2 trillion in health care, education, jobs in other areas of care for people and universal social protection for all the worlds people to build resilience for the next crisis.

The Global Days of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS) 2020 bring attention to the vast opportunity costs of the current levels of military spending, 1.82 trillion US$ a year, almost $5 billion per day.

Put that against the ITUC’s call for a Global Fund for Universal Social Protection for the poorest countries to support health care and income support which would cost just $35 billion for the poorest 28 nations for 5 years and $150 billion would fund all lower to middle income countries. This is the face of injustice!

Nuclear arms are inhumane and an illegitimate source of power, but after decades of solemn political declarations, governments still fail to deliver and in too many countries are rearming

At its last Congress in Copenhagen, the ITUC, decided to renew its commitment to fight for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the dismantling of existing arsenals. The message from the global trade union movement is loud and clear. We need to ban nuclear arms from our society now!

COVID19 has exposed that multilateralism is crisis. Global governance reform is fundamental to equip us to tackle our common global challenges in the 21st century, including human rights and our common security.

Trade unions call on the world to end nuclear terror and let solidarity rule. To put peace, people with social justice and a living planet first.

Poverty and inequality threaten this peace and stability. This has been the core of the historic alliance between the peace and labour movements and we should continue our struggles jointly across generations young and old.

Change will only come through the power and the solidarity of people everywhere. We need to organize, organize and organize.

One world: United we say – NEVER AGAIN

Solidarity 🌹

Sharan Burrow - ITUC General Secretary