



New York, 30 April 2012

STATEMENT BY THE WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MAJOR GROUP

On the occasion of the meeting of the Rio+20 Bureau with Major Groups

Thank you Chair,

In our common statement, we made clear that for the labour movement it is key to ensure that Rio+20 outcomes reflect past commitments and agreed principles, including ILO core labour standards as well as other rights, such as the right to development, access to water and sanitation.

Let me now give you more details on two of our main proposals for Rio: the launch of an initiative on a social protection and the need for a global commitment to decent work for all, enacted by concrete goals and targets.

Delegates,

The eradication of poverty is a major priority for achieving sustainable development. As recognised in the negotiating text, social protection systems are fundamental for addressing poverty and reducing inequality and social exclusion. A global social protection initiative must be launched in Rio+20, to catalyse progress taking place at the national and international level by a variety of actors. Does it mean every country should have the same social protection system? No. It means that the international community will commit to secure guarantees to everyone, and each country will define the means to implement them. A Rio+20 outcome could therefore send a powerful message to the world: every citizen will have access to health services and income protection for the unemployed, for children, the disabled, the elderly and for maternity. The global initiative could also aim to integrate progressively environmental concerns in these schemes through socio-environmental protection initiatives. This would radically change our current approach to development into a truly comprehensive rights-based one and build a sustainability agenda based on people's needs.

Our second proposal is about Decent Work. Achieving sustainable development very much depends on the capacities of our societies to reduce unemployment, eradicate precarious working conditions and promote employment opportunities. Those opportunities must reduce the impact of production on the environment



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and take into consideration Earth's limited natural resources. We, the workers of the world call these green and decent jobs.

The negotiating text assesses clearly the challenges of the world of work. Unfortunately we are yet to see a decision arising from it. An action-oriented outcome that points to a global commitment to ensure Decent Work for all is crucial. An initiative where governments will commit to do their utmost to reduce unemployment, eliminate working poverty and develop jobs in sustainable sectors that are decent. An emphasis on women and youth -as mentioned in the in the current text- is key, however we'd like to stress the importance of this global strategy being placed within the 'decent work for all' framework .

We can not forget that all action-oriented Rio outcomes will need new financial resources to be implemented. The trade union movement believes that a financial transaction tax (FTT) will not only provide the necessary funds for it but will reduce speculation as well. We hope heads of states have the courage to agree on an FTT in Rio.

We have five more days to show that the international community can deliver concrete measures which will put our society on track towards social equity, decent work, environmental protection and development.

Thank you for your attention