

UN CSD 15
Statement from Workers and Trade Unions
02/05/2007

For the trade unions, we had prepared to speak in yesterday's session and would have wished, on behalf of workers from around the world, a happy labour day to all.

The link of access to energy and poverty reduction is clear, as is the link of energy production and consumption to climate change. These parallel dynamics make our task here so difficult, but so urgent, both for poor people and for our planet.

Workers and unions are ready and able to partner with employers, with governments and with communities to resolve these tensions.

The basis of our position is that decent employment is the only reliable way out of poverty.

As well, the workplace is one of the most important action points of the issues dealt with here, whether it be energy efficiency, pollution reduction or changes in production and consumption. We suspect that this potential is not recognised here.

We support statements from Pakistan for the G-77 and China, of Germany for the EU, and of South Africa and Venezuela on many of the policy recommendations they raised, especially as regards the needs of developing countries.

We join them in calling on CSD 15 to **recognise the key role of public infrastructure**, especially for ensuring that poor communities, whether urban or rural, have access to modern energy services.

Chair, we must recognise that most wealthy nations strategically used public ownership and management to build and extend energy infrastructure to all citizens.

Without this public infrastructure, rapid, systematic and equitable growth in these countries would not have been possible.

So, why are now seeing these same countries impose privatisation of energy infrastructure for developing countries? This contradiction must be dealt with honestly, and not serve as a pretext to impose corporate priorities in the sector.

Poor communities don't have the luxury to wait until they become profitable enough for public-private partnerships. **IFIs and donors should not use loan and grant conditionalities to impose privatisation in the energy sector and should support improvements in the public utilities, including with appropriate financial tools.**

Chair, workers and unions have submitted our policy recommendations to all country delegates and to the bureau, and we urge their consideration.

We call on CSD to **include governance requirements into energy policies, such that they are built on the basis of transparency, accountability and participation, and reflect local needs.**

We call for **greater regulation of the new private equity investors which are buying up public utilities and using high levels of debt financing to extract massive private profits.**

We urge **countries to act on the employment potentials offered by new technologies, renewables and conservation, and call for much more rigorous analysis of the social impacts of the changes needed.**

We wish **CSD to encourage joint employer-union approaches on energy and resource efficiency at the workplace through target setting, monitoring and reporting. This should include using the more than 2 million collective agreements as a mechanism for sustainability.**

Chair, governments and the international community must recognise the huge potential of workers and their unions as demonstrated through successful programmes for example in Germany, Brazil and Spain.

We must all act on the human energy potential of workers, human energy which is renewable, sustainable and fundamental to turning all of these fine words into action.