

Trade Union Closing Statement
22/04/2005

A number of countries have mentioned the importance of major group input, and we encourage a strengthening of these input mechanisms, both in CSD and in the Millennium Review.

There are a number of items we see could be improved in the content, so as to better move from words to action.

The potential help from workers and their unions in reaching the MDGs is enormous, but largely untapped yet.

Sustainable production and consumption changes must be implemented rapidly. We can help through actions in our over 2 million of workplaces, and through our collective agreements with employers.

Our experience negotiating and implementing workplace improvements, including for occupational health and safety, job design, and for workplace equity is very much about SD.

Today trade unions from throughout all the Americas join trade unions here at the CSD to highlight the urgency of addressing worker death and injury from unsustainable workplaces

Our capacity to protect vulnerable groups, migrant workers, women workers, young workers and those suffering discrimination, including the working poor must be part of the CSD action programme.

In order to improve our workplaces and our communities, trade unions will apply the principles of "Just Transition" which ensure that workplace reforms are just and equitable.

But we need better tools, tools based on the ILO Core Labour Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights to Work, which include access to information, participation in decision making, and training and apprenticeship programmes. The ILO must get more involved in SD, including at the national and regional levels.

Chair, there are many areas that cry out for improvement. We call on the corporate sector to adhere to the highest standards, in the north and south.

We call special attention to workers in export processing zones and to the plight of those suffering the HIV -AIDS pandemic.

We hope that the final text will contribute to reaching the MDGs, but we have our doubts, especially given the weakening of the rights-based approach. We can reach the MDGs if there is commitment and willingness to act.