

Today, May Day 2005, workers around the world are celebrating the proud record of achievements of more than 100 years of trade union solidarity. We pay homage to all those who throughout history have done so much to promote and defend the rights of working women and men, create social justice and fight for equality, human rights and democracy.

This year, trade unions are joining with others all around the world in the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, demanding that the grand promises made by governments at the United Nations and elsewhere should be put into action urgently. The world can no longer afford to ignore the plight of the hundreds of millions women and men who live on less than one dollar per day. Creating decent jobs for all has never been more important, as divisions between the haves and the have-nots in the global economy grow ever greater. One billion people are unemployed, underemployed or working poor: 60% of these are women. In the Global Call, we demand debt relief to the poorest countries, greatly increased development aid and justice in the global trading system.

More than 200 million children are working instead of at school, while young people who have finished their education struggle to find decent jobs in countries across the globe. Millions of working people face exploitation, discrimination and insecurity, having to accept jobs which pay too little for them, and those who depend on them, to have a decent life. Trade unions themselves face enormous pressures, as governments and employers in many countries violate workers' rights, including outright assaults on the trade union movement. Our global action is critically important to put an end to union-busting, and to defend the rights of those, particularly women, who are the victims of the global race to the bottom.

We are confident that we can meet the challenge to change the path of globalisation. We will act across borders and across continents to help organise the millions of workers who are denied union rights, to tackle the exploitation of migrant workers and those who toil in the world's export processing zones, and to put women and men on an equal footing in our own movement, in the workplace and in society. We will take forward the reform, strengthening and unification of the international trade union movement, to make sure that we are equal to the enormous tasks ahead of us.

We demand a better world, a secure and peaceful world where social justice, equality and fundamental rights reign supreme. We pledge to do all in our power to build this better world for future generations.

Long Live Global Labour Solidarity!

