



TUAC Makes Occupational Health & HIV/AIDS a Priority for 28 April

On this 28 April, the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) is taking part in an OECD Environment Ministerial meeting, as part of its efforts to convince the OECD Council of Ministers next June and the G8 next July to strengthen the linkages between public and occupational health. Marie-Louise Knuppert from LO-Denmark will be among the trade union speakers at the meeting.

General Secretary, John Evans of TUAC said the delegation would signal the significance of 28 April with the Ministers today but it aims also to influence the G8 to take up the issue of occupational health. The trade union statement, prepared by TUAC, will be released next week, ahead of consultations with Japanese Ministers on 13 May. It deals with current social and economic issues but contains a section on *Linking Poverty Reduction and Public Health Strategies*.

🔗 The entire trade union statement to the G8

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpT_11Bd.EN.pdf

(available soon) Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpT_11Bd.FR.pdf

The TUAC paper to the G8 says the root causes of occupational illness and injury must be met with initiatives at the workplace level to link these to public health promotion and says that occupational factors are responsible for 13 percent of cancers. It argues that Governments should be encouraged to seek a double dividend by linking occupational and public health efforts with bans on certain chemicals, such as asbestos and a renewed commitment to eliminate Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and that they should build on the positive implementation of the EU REACH Directive.

Since 24 percent of the global burden of disease is attributable to environmental factors, TUAC says public health must be linked to the activities of the OECD and UNEP and to efforts that link public health to other serious threats, such as climate change, water stresses related to droughts or floods, waste contamination and population displacement or migrations.

Particular action, it says, is needed to build the capacity of health systems by increasing the employment of health workers and protecting their own health. Governments should strengthen the implementation of the WHO 'Global Plan of Action for Workers Health' and ratify OHS-related Conventions and programmes by the ILO.

Major emphasis on HIV/AIDS

The trade union paper to the G8 recognizes that for the last three years trade unions have called for a high level Working Group on HIV/AIDS and that last year substantial progress was made by the German Presidency issuing a first-report on meeting G8 targets for AIDS. It calls for a G8 mechanism, with technical assistance provided by UNAIDS and other agencies to be given the task of overseeing such a review

process and to provide recommendations to subsequent G8 summits for future action.

Trade unions also call on the G8 to encourage the monitoring and implementation and clear targets on access to health and disease issues involving trade unions and other stakeholders at the national level within government, industry, civil society and across the entire health community. The Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria should encourage the direct representation of trade unions in its Country Coordinating Mechanisms, it says. The paper calls on Governments to promote joint workplace initiatives on occupational health and AIDS.

Trade unions contend that over 100 million people fall into absolute poverty each year due to illness or disability. Therefore expanding access to health care and providing better prevention and treatment has to be a focus for the G8 in 2008. To achieve this there must be a commitment to strengthen health services world wide, especially in poor countries.

TUAC serves as the communication centre for 28 April

For the last several months trade unions and other bodies have received a continuous stream of communications about 28 Activities from all over the world. TUAC hosts the Sustainable Development Unit which manages the extensive information flow.

John Evans says the work is part of TUAC's commitment in working with the ITUC and Global Union Federations to strengthen trade union capacity in many areas of work, including occupational health and safety. "Our role to represent trade unions at the international level continues to be strengthened by being connected to concrete mobilization efforts in each country".

On this day the international candle for 28 April is let to burn for the entire day at the TUAC office in Paris to commemorate the workers who have died or have become ill throughout the world in the last year .