

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



Sue Longley, General Secretary, on behalf of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied

President, delegates, Sisters and Brothers from the Workers Group,

The IUF, as the global trade union representing workers in agriculture, welcomes the recognition in the DG's report on Least Developed Countries of the importance of the agricultural sector. It is a sector facing many challenges – it is one of the most dangerous industries to work in alongside mining and construction; it is the biggest user of child labour with 70% of all child labour taking place in agriculture alone.

The IUF therefore wholeheartedly supports the inclusion of occupational safety and health as a fundamental principle and right at work – this is important for all sectors of our membership. However, realizing this right for agricultural workers will be achieved quicker if governments ensure that agricultural workers can exercise their right to freedom of association so that they can come together to drive forward these much-needed improvements in safety and health.

The IUF also welcomes the recently adopted Call to Action from the Durban Global Conference on the elimination of child labour, and its recognition that commitments to end child labour in agriculture must be stepped up. However, we now need an urgent discussion on how to implement those commitments and action points from Durban. – otherwise global targets for achieving the elimination of child labour will not be reached. We call on the ILO to take the lead in convening this discussion.

The importance of the agricultural and food sectors are now being brought sharply into focus by the increasing pressure on world food supply and the severe food shortages already affecting some LDCs. Many of these shortages are caused by mankind. War, violence, repression and the climate crisis undermine the right to food.

The DG's in his opening speech reminded us "that lasting peace depends on social justice, and that the achievement of social justice depends upon peace. Those who resort to war deny social justice. And those who obstruct social justice endanger peace". We express our full solidarity for our sisters and brothers in Ukraine. Putin's war against Ukraine must be condemned globally and demands for peace strengthened.

Finally, while much of the world's attention is focused on Ukraine, we know that there are too many countries where there is no peace or democracy. It is right that for the second year running, the ILO has rejected the credentials of the Myanmar military government. Repression in Myanmar continues to escalate. We condemn the military regime's decision, announced on June 6, to carry out death sentences on four political prisoners. We must continue to maintain international pressure on the Myanmar military junta and ensure that there is peace and democracy in Myanmar.

Thank you.