

Resolution No. 4

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS

The 8th ITUC-AP Regional General Council Meeting held in Amman, Jordan, on 2 - 3 November 2012:

EXPRESSES its deep concern at the massive human suffering caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It commits the ITUC to work for strong and effective action to prevent, control and ultimately eradicate HIV and AIDS.

NOTED that today, almost 34 million people live with HIV worldwide and more than 7,000 new infections occur every day. About 64% of people eligible for ARV treatment (meaning that they are already in a severe stage of AIDS) in low- and middle-income countries continue to have no access to life saving treatment. Young people (aged 15-24) account for 42% of the new HIV infections among adults. In most parts of the world human rights violations that increase the risk of HIV infection, and those that follow after HIV infection, are getting worse. Since the infection rate is highest among people in the prime of their working life the economic and social impact of the epidemic is disastrous. Yet the devastation from AIDS is not spread equally around the world. 90% of people with HIV are living under circumstances of economic and social disadvantage and the same proportion of new HIV infections occur in low income countries. The countries heavily affected by infectious disease are often those least able to fight back.

RECOGNISES that the consequences of HIV/AIDS have profound implications for the exercise of human rights and are symptomatic of the deeper crisis, poverty, inequality and social injustice faced by poor people around the world. General Council recognises that the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic reflects and reinforces other sources of disadvantage and inequality in society, including that experienced by women, youth, migrants, the unemployed, refugees, gays and lesbians. The particular vulnerability of women makes it essential to strengthen gender perspectives in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

REAFFIRMS the importance of the International Labour Organisation's role in addressing workplace aspects of HIV/AIDS and welcomes the adoption of the ILO Recommendation on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work no. 200 (2010). In that regard, General Council emphasises:

- the absolute need to protect those infected with HIV/AIDS from all forms of discrimination at work and to extend to them the protections offered by ILO Convention 111;
- the guarantees of privacy and confidentiality that are essential for any successful workplace HIV/AIDS programme. It reiterates that any workplace surveillance, including monitoring and managing of HIV/AIDS must take place without compromising personal data privacy and confidentiality rights;

- the need for workplace HIV/AIDS programmes to be designed and implemented in consultation with the workers and their representatives; and
- the need for workplace health programmes to be linked to public health services.

CALLS ON

Governments to commit to full implementation of the ILO Recommendation No. 200, underlines that all countries, whatever their infection rate, can benefit from a legal framework that brings HIV-related workplace problems into the open, protects against discrimination, respects privacy and confidentiality rights, prevents workplace infection risks and ensures the participation of stakeholders in relevant mechanisms and institutions. General Council equally welcomes the adoption of the Political Declaration “Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV/AIDS” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly’s High Level Meeting on AIDS in June 2011 in which all Member States committed themselves to: “mitigate the impact of the epidemic on workers, their families, their dependants, workplaces and economies, including by taking into account all relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation, as well as the guidance provided by the relevant International Labour Organisation recommendations, including Recommendation No. 200” and called on “employers, trade and labour unions, employees and volunteers to eliminate stigma and discrimination, protect human rights and facilitate access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support” (Paragraph 85 of the 2011 UNGA Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS). General Council believes that this commitment could play a game-changing role for achieving universal access, finding new models of cooperation, reviewing the role of trade unions in the partnership landscape for HIV/AIDS and considering synergies for delivering on multiple development outcomes.

EXPRESSES

its deep concern about the impact of the global crisis on the funding of the fight against HIV/AIDS and calls on all Governments to keep their promises to deliver resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals on HIV/AIDS to halt and begin to reverse the spread of the pandemic by 2015. The crisis has already put HIV prevention and treatment programs in jeopardy. General Council insists that the fight against HIV/AIDS must not become one more victim of the crisis.

RECOGNISES

that equitable and full access to health care, and in particular medicines for HIV, is a human right and that promoting effective action against HIV/AIDS in all countries is a moral responsibility of the international community and must be a priority of international development assistance policy and programmes. General Council equally insists on the imperative need to build effective and universally accessible public systems of health care in all countries so that each state discharges its responsibility to realise the right to health of its citizens.

CALLS UPON

affiliates to take necessary action to work out a “**National policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work**” in line with the ITUC-AP Guide Line, specifically focusing on:

- Raising HIV/AIDS to greater prominence on the trade union agenda worldwide;

- Supporting affiliates' activities to educate, promote and develop understanding and commitment among workers on HIV/AIDS and workplace, rights-based approaches to HIV/AIDS;
- Promoting campaigns for appropriate legislation on HIV/AIDS in line with the terms of this resolution and providing speedy and effective remedies;
- Promoting the fullest and most effective implementation of the new ILO instrument on HIV/AIDS and the world of work both at the national and international level;
- Engaging employers' organisations in joint efforts to combat HIV/AIDS discrimination in the workplace;
- Strengthening partnerships with the ILO, UNAIDS, the World Health Organisation, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and other concerned international organisations, including facilitating trade union access to Global Fund financing;
- Promoting an effective global and regional trade union network on HIV/AIDS; and
- Integrating the gender dimension of HIV/AIDS in all activities.