



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Athens October 3, 2007

**On October 17 - International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**  
**WFTU demands cancellation of debt for the poor countries**  
**of Africa-Asia-Latin America**



The world's workers live in an era of capitalist globalisation. The basic characteristic of this era is huge economic inequality; huge poverty for most people and huge accumulation of wealth for the few.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 800 million people still suffer from starvation; every 3.6 seconds one person dies from starvation and usually it is a child under the age of 5; every day starvation claims the lives of 60.000 children around the world; only one child in three goes to school on a regular basis and 250 million children are compelled to work in the worst of working conditions.

This is the real picture of the globalisation experience on all continents.

Poverty continues its spread throughout the whole capitalist world; not only among the people of Africa, Asia and South America, long-time victims of colonialism and capital exploitation, but also in the USA and in Europe where a significant percentage of citizens in the member-states of the European Union live in conditions of extreme poverty and face intense and direct social exclusion.

To grasp the full picture we must take into account that 1,37 billion of the world's people have some kind of work but they are trapped in poverty because they earn less than a dollar per day. The world-wide unemployment rate has now reached 6.3% of available human resources and the number of unemployed is at a record of 195,2 billion, slightly higher of that in 1996.

Meanwhile in the world's richest country, the United States, 50 million people aged less than 65 years are without social security while the profits of the few are getting bigger. Four hundred American citizens have annual income higher than the income of 33 million workers in the same country.

In the view of the WFTU, all the above facts demand that the world trade union movement galvanize into action all workers independent of their national background, gender, colour or religion. It is imperative to consolidate and organize the struggle of all workers and to resist the chosen directions of capital. In order to succeed in these aims, we need unity and action.

The WFTU calls for common action among all the workers' bodies and trade unions of the world; action at central and regional levels; action for the rights and needs of workers in today's times. Trade union action against the anti-worker plans of multinationals, against the dictatorship of monopolies, provides opportunities for change for all workers.

The WFTU understands and accepts that the modern working class has a lot of new characteristics. It is more educated. It has more needs. It develops new technologies. A lot more information is available. However, it has not stopped being the class that is being exploited by the capitalists. Our society has not stopped being separated into two basic classes.

On the basis of this evaluation, the WFTU believes in the need to build trade unions with class orientation; trade unions not simply part of the system's mechanism, but useful tools for basic change for the world's workers; trade unions completely independent in their approach to globalisation from monopoly capital; trade unions ready to fight for social alliances with the poor peasantry, the progressive intelligentsia and the self-employed; trade Unions that will unite all workers on the basis of their class interests.

For the WFTU, the eradication of poverty is an immediate and common objective for action by all the world's workers and trade unions. This common action can begin with the imperative that all trade unions demand that all debts of all poor countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America be cancelled *now!*

The WFTU calls upon trade unions of the world to make this demand for the cancellation of debt.

The WFTU calls upon trade unions of the world to globalise our struggles at a national and international level and to fight for a world without exploitation of man by man, a world without wars, without unemployment and poverty and where the wealth of the planet is shared by *all* the people of the world!

The Secretariat