

Preparatory Process for the Doha Review Conference

Review Session on Chapter VI of the Monterrey Consensus:
“ Addressing Systemic Issues – enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development”

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The International Trade Union Confederation represents workers organized in national trade union centers in 155 countries, with a total membership of 168 million workers. We associate ourselves with the comments made during this review session which contend that the Systemic Issues chapter of the Monterrey Consensus has advanced least in terms of implementation. We believe that the current global economic context, with crisis in financial markets and an impending economic slowdown, provides an opportunity to place this important chapter front and center of the review process, with a view to decisive implementation.

Within the international trade union movement, we are particularly concerned about the social costs borne in the real economy by workers that find their prospects for sustainable livelihoods totally eroded, and their chances for escaping poverty considerably diminished. For this reason, we believe that achieving policy coherence is critical to addressing systemic issues, and that it should be clearly defined. Policy coherence should not mean convergence around trade and financial liberalization, but rather convergence around the social policy and normative framework of the United Nations system, including the human rights treaties, as well as women’s rights provisions in keeping with CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the recently adopted “Agreed Conclusions” of the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on “Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.”

Convergence must further be strengthened by adherence to environmental standards, and respect for core labour standards, in line with the ILO’s policy conclusions on the social dimensions of globalization linked to decent work, as well as the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration, and the 2008 Resolution of the Commission on Social Development, on achieving full and productive employment and decent work.

As a key vehicle for promoting coherence between the financial and trade systems in the interest of development, the ECOSOC High Level Meeting with the BWIs, the WTO and UNCTAD should be given a strengthened mandate to ensure that the policies, rules and activities in the financial and trade arenas do not undermine development policies, including decent work strategies, and measures for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this regard, we express particular concern with the

[World Bank's Annual Doing Business Publication](#) which ranks countries according to the presence of alleged obstacles to doing business. Labour market regulations feature among these obstacles, and an Employing Workers Indicator (EWI) has been established. The EWI ranks countries according to whether there are rules concerning limits on working time, minimum wages, dismissal notice requirements, recourse against unjust dismissals, and other worker protection provisions. The best ratings are given to countries that have no or minimal labour regulations. Countries that have been successful in increasing formal employment and improving social protection often get worse EWI ratings than those that have not. Countries with low EWI rankings typically comprise those which have quite satisfactory labour provisions, such as: Brazil, Argentina, Slovenia, Estonia, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries.

The EWI indicator is being used to pressure developing countries into weakening their labour market legislation and workers' protections, thereby undermining the decent work agenda just adopted by the UN as an important policy framework for development. It is a flagrant example of policy incoherence. This should be taken up as an area for dialogue within the systemic issues review process so that a sustainable solution could be found. Indeed, the ITUC has called upon the World Bank to remove labour issues from the mandate of the Doing Business Publication, and to cooperate with the ILO to develop appropriate policies that would encourage countries to create decent jobs, provide adequate social protection, and apply the core labour standards.