

A Fair Society

International Policy

1. Congress re-affirms the 2003 International Policy, and our commitment to support measures to promote the rights of workers in all countries.
2. The resolve of the ACTU to support strong, independent, inclusive and democratic unions is stronger than ever before. Congress salutes the courage of workers facing conflict, struggles for liberation and democracy, the fight against starvation, discrimination and exploitation in too many parts of the world.
3. The framework established in 2003 still stands for establishing the ACTU's priorities for action:
 - a) to uphold the rights of workers in the Asia-Pacific directly and in solidarity across the globe;
 - b) to work to eliminate discrimination and racism;
 - c) to secure higher levels of aid and development assistance for the people of developing countries;
 - d) to promote democratic reform and the peaceful resolution of conflict;
 - e) to see reform of international institutions and, in the face of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), strong global regulation and governance that puts people first;
 - f) to achieve an independent Australian foreign policy; and
 - g) in 2009 to support urgent action to secure a comprehensive global agreement on climate change including measures and financing for a just transition for workers in all nations.
4. The Global Financial Crisis and the threat of Climate Change brings unions closer as we recognise that the shape of a fair and sustainable globalisation must be influenced by our values, our activism and our unity through international unionism.

5. Congress recognises and supports the birth of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Global Unions Council. This brings together national councils and confederations with the Global Union Federations (GUFs) to tackle in unity agreed priorities for the global union movement. The ACTU is committed to regional and global organizing, and will work with affiliates and their GUFs to co-ordinate action plans in strategic industries.
6. Congress supports the development of international regional development strategies that focus on employment and income generation, promotes and respects labour standards and supports the decent work agenda for all, including in specific industries such as the maritime and oil and gas sectors. This needs to be linked to an integrated regional inter-governmental development and trade policy.
7. Unity is essential in order to:
 - a) support rights at work and labour laws in other countries;
 - b) organise global corporations and their supply chains through international collective bargaining;
 - c) develop communications, information sharing for mapping and database resources on the corporate behavior of multinational and transnational corporations;
 - d) organise in economic processing zones (EPZs);
 - e) hold governments to account in addressing global poverty and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
 - f) establish just globalisation based on full employment and decent work;
 - g) achieve reform of financial regulation and the international financial institutions (IFIs);
 - h) drive support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; and
 - i) hold governments accountable for a sustainable planet.
8. Congress recognises that since 2003 significant global changes have resulted in a world where the promotion of workers' rights is increasingly urgent, as inequity and exploitation has grown. Rights must be central to all union priorities and guaranteed in many new and emerging areas of global governance and public policy.
9. Congress acknowledges the work of our representatives at the ILO and the significance of the 2008 ILO Social Justice Declaration for a Fair Globalisation. This Declaration provides the framework for implementation of decent work at the heart of which sits the core labour standards, social protection and safety.

10. Congress calls for all International Financial Institutions, particularly the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to respect and integrate ILO core labour standards in all activities and contracts, while noting progress in achieving recognition of labour standards by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and in particular the International Finance Corporation (IFC). Congress calls on the Australian Government to continue its work with the Global Union Federations for the establishment of a Labour Desk within the ADB.
11. There is more work to be done to reduce the decent work deficits leading to a world that is growing increasingly unequal. This leads Congress to acknowledge and support the annual ITUC-led World Day for Decent Work (WDDW).
12. The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) has been caused by the greed of a financial sector leveraging profit from debt, spreading risk through unregulated products and leaving a legacy of toxic debt. The victims of this crisis are working people, in developed and developing countries, who are losing their jobs, their livelihoods, their houses, and their social security. Unions internationally must campaign for jobs, for social protection and for reforms that ensure this can never happen again.
13. The ACTU supports the Global Unions - ITUC, GUFs and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) platform for reform detailed in the 'Washington Declaration' and the more recent April 2009 'London Declaration'. This platform calls for the leaders of the G20 nations to:
 - a) promote a co-ordinated recovery plan, inclusive of the poorest nations, focused on public investment to protect jobs, implement active labour policies, improve social safety nets and 'green economy investments';
 - b) promote intervention to stabilise banks and lending immediately and the establishment of new regulation and mechanisms to control global finance inclusive of stakeholder involvement;
 - c) combat the risk of wage deflation and reverse the growth of inequity through the extension of collective bargaining and strengthen labour institutions to establish a decent floor in labour markets;
 - d) prepare the ground for a far reaching and ambitious international agreement for action on climate change, beginning in Copenhagen in December 2009;
 - e) establish a legal benchmark of norms and instruments for the international economic and social institutions - the ILO, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development bank (ADB), WTO and the OECD - that affects reform which builds effective, accountable global economic governance.
14. Congress supports the call for an end to tax havens and reiterates support for a 'Tobin Tax' to support development in the poorest of nations.

15. Congress re-affirms support for fair trade which puts workers' rights and labour standards at the core of trade rules and provides policy space for nations to develop sustainable industries, as outlined in the Congress "Jobs, Industry and Trade" policy.
16. Congress acknowledges the United Nations' Business and Human Rights agenda, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's report that calls for corporate responsibility to respect human rights and be held accountable to them. Congress calls on the ITUC to campaign for the full inclusion of workers' rights.
17. Congress acknowledges the work of the ITUC 'Workers' Capital Committee' and supports capital strategies in countries such as Burma, where workers' capital can be effective in providing practical interventions of international solidarity. Congress also acknowledges that the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) framework provides an important vehicle to advance environmental, social, and governance objectives internationally.
18. Congress calls on the Australian Government to promote multilateralism by supporting the United Nations and the ILO, and ratify the following priority conventions:
 - a) UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
 - b) ILO Maritime Labour Convention 186;
 - c) ILO Maternity Protection Convention 183;
 - d) ILO Protocol to the Occupational Health and Safety Convention (Protocol 155), Asbestos Convention 162 and other priority occupational health and safety conventions;
 - e) Nuclear Disarmament and non-proliferation.
19. Congress urges the Australian Government: to focus on development in our region; to work with other governments and social partners to effectively meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to offset the impact of the Global Financial Crisis on employment, trade, investment, food security and development; and, to realise peace and democracy in countries in conflict. As part of these efforts the ACTU will pursue government recognition of unions as key civil society and development partners.
20. Congress urges the Australian Government to prioritise AusAID funding for projects and programs for capacity building for governments and social partners (unions and employer organisations) to develop and implement integrated policies and laws that realise Decent Work and ILO Conventions, and the MDGs.

21. Congress notes that working people continue to organise and create free, independent and democratic unions in countries where workers lack rights and face suppression for voicing their demands for workplace change. Congress applauds the efforts to create new unions and reform existing state-controlled unions in these countries. Australian unions have supported the development of free and independent unions in many parts of the world and will continue to assist to strengthen these efforts. The ACTU International Committee continues to monitor and seek to influence democratic, peaceful outcomes to support the workers and people, especially those, of:
 - a) Fiji and the Pacific;
 - b) Burma;
 - c) Zimbabwe;
 - d) the Middle East with a focus on the impact of Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the rights of all workers in the region and their families - Palestinians, Israelis and other communities.
22. Congress proudly acknowledges that 2009 is the 25th anniversary of Union-Aid-Abroad APHEDA. Congress congratulates all the staff, volunteers, supporters and partners who have contributed to the substantial achievements of the organisation over those years. The ACTU and unions recommit to grow APHEDA as a central part of our union work. In particular, ACTU and unions will promote individual member contributions to assist the future work of APHEDA in supporting development and social justice internationally.
23. The ACTU supports the work of the ITUC and the GUFs in coordination of and campaigning for action on Climate Change. The blue-green alliance demonstrates the strength of a united movement. Promoting sectoral agreements and other measures to support green jobs in emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries (EITEs), it is able to advocate for and organise workers in emerging green product industries.
24. Congress supports the ITUC's call for a 'just transition' for all workers and for the funds to support development and adaptation in vulnerable countries. Through the ACTU Environment Group and the International Committee, the ACTU and unions will continue to liaise with the ITUC Task Force on Climate Change and Green Jobs in their critical work in global negotiations on climate change.