

International Policy

1. Congress re-affirms the union movement's enduring commitment to promote the rights of workers in all countries.
2. Congress asserts the need for strong, independent, representative and democratic unions in all nations. We salute the courage of workers facing conflict, struggles for liberation and democracy, the fight against starvation, discrimination and exploitation in every quarter of the globe. We applaud the courage of the Fiji union movement and stand with them in their fight against the intimidation and tyranny of the Bainimarama military regime.
3. The long-standing priorities for action for Australian unions through the ACTU are:
 - a) to uphold the rights of workers everywhere and in particular in our immediate neighborhood in the Asia-Pacific region;
 - b) to work to eliminate discrimination and racism;
 - c) to secure a more effective aid program with higher levels of development assistance for the people of developing countries;
 - d) to promote democratic reform and the peaceful resolution of conflict;
 - e) to pursue reform of international institutions, including strong global regulation and governance that puts people first;
 - f) to support an independent Australian foreign policy; and
 - g) to secure urgent action to achieve a comprehensive global agreement on climate change, building on the outcomes from COP17 in Cancun and COP18 in Durban, including measures and financing for a just transition for workers in all nations.
4. Responding to the threats of climate change and the economic crises that are endemic under capitalism, the shape of a fair and sustainable globalisation will be influenced by our values, our activism and our unity through international unionism.

5. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Global Unions Council bring 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 organising, and will work with affiliates and their GUFs to co-ordinate action plans in strategic industries, along global manufacturing and transport/logistics supply chains and in regions.
6. Unity is essential in order to:
 - a) support rights at work and secure fair labour laws in other countries;
 - b) organise workers in global corporations and their supply chains through international collective bargaining and the use of our leverage with Australian companies;
 - c) organise in economic processing zones (EPZs);
 - d) hold governments to account in addressing global poverty and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
 - e) establish just globalisation based on full employment and decent work;
 - f) achieve reform of financial regulation and the international financial institutions (IFIs);
 - g) drive support for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; and
 - h) hold governments accountable for a sustainable planet.
7. The profound global challenges of the past decade 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 global governance and public policy.
8. The enduring global financial crisis that broke in the US private sector in 2008 with the collapse of Lehman Brothers, has become a sovereign debt crisis for nation states within the European Union. Decisive policy response from the Australian government averted the worst of the crisis in this country; and strong Asian demand for Australian resources has supported healthy growth here since 2010. But the crisis has delivered slow growth with chronically high unemployment across Europe and North America which threatens to undermine sustained growth in Asia and the south. This has coincided with a concerted attack on the fundamental rights of workers across many countries.
9. The victims of this crisis are working people, in developed and developing countries, who have lost their jobs, their livelihoods, their houses, their social security, and public services.

10. The Global Unions' "Washington Declaration" of November 2008 called on G20 leaders to initiate a major recovery plan that invested in infrastructure and 'green jobs' and protected low incomes; reregulate financial markets; and attack the explosion in inequality in income distribution that generated the US debt bubble and contributed to the global financial meltdown. Yet governments that bailed out major financial institutions have left unchecked the power relationships and corporate cultures that gave rise to the risky and irresponsible behaviour by financial institutions that led to the financial crisis.
11. Subsequent G20 leaders' summits have expressed support for coordinated economic stimulus measures that put jobs at the heart of the recovery, but too little has been done to translate these commitments into action. G20 Finance Ministers missed the opportunity presented by the Greece debt crisis to pursue job-centred growth initiatives, implement strong regulatory reforms targeted at preventing practices which led to the crisis and adopt new revenue raising measures such as a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT), choosing instead to embrace fiscal consolidation with public expenditure cuts and austerity measures in the hope of appeasing financial markets.
12. Since early 2010, G20 government policymaking has been driven by global financial markets rather than the other way round. This significantly undermines the prospect of achieving growth levels sufficient to create the number of new jobs – 21 million a year – needed in the G20 to bring unemployment down to 2008 levels in the medium term.
13. Meanwhile on the back of unprecedented guarantees of their liabilities provided by governments, the banks have returned to profits, paying massive bonuses to executives, lobbying against financial reform, and failing to resume lending to small and medium-sized businesses.
14. The ACTU supports the alternative policy package developed by Global Unions - ITUC, GUFs and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC). Building on the 2008 Washington Declaration this 'Plan B' puts jobs first and makes withdrawal of economic stimulus contingent on growth returning to above-trend rates. This four-point package would shape a post-crisis world that is economically, socially and environmentally just and sustainable. It calls for G20 governments to:
 - a) Put quality jobs at the heart of recovery by establishing differentiated but coordinated jobs targets for the G20 countries, including immediate measures for job-intensive infrastructure programmes, green jobs investment and labour market programs to raise skills;
 - b) Strengthen labour market institutions, social partnerships, collective bargaining, negotiated and legislated minimum wages, and income support for low-income groups to reduce income inequality; and commit to a jobs pact for youth;
 - c) Establish a sound and secure social protection floor that is supported by adequate funding according to national levels of development;

- d) Implement rapidly the reforms to the financial sector that were agreed at the London G20 summit but never effectively enacted, to check the insidious power relationships and toxic corporate cultures that were the genesis of the risky and irresponsible conduct of financial institutions and the root cause of the financial crisis via effective regulation; ensure financial groups that are 'too big to fail' are effectively restructured; and establish a financial transactions tax.
15. Congress calls on all international financial and development institutions to honour and respect the 2008 ILO Social Justice Declaration for a Fair Globalisation, which provides the framework for implementation of decent work built on core labour standards, social protection and safety.
 16. Congress re-affirms support for fair trade which puts workers' rights, labour standards and equity at the core of trade rules and provides policy space for nations to develop sustainable industries. Congress calls on the Australian Government to support the inclusion of a strong labour rights chapter in all bilateral and regional trade agreements negotiated. Australian trade unions will work with trade union centres in trading partners to gain support strong labour rights protections in trade agreements from their respective governments, in particular with reference to the current Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement negotiations.
 17. Congress notes the work being progressed within Government on development of a White Paper on *Australia in the Asian Century* and commits the ACTU to participate in the development of the White Paper and subsequent outcomes. Congress notes that a feature of Australian workers' income and job security rests on the quality and nature of the Australian economic, political and social relationship with Asia generally and with China, India and Japan in particular.
 18. In that context Congress urges the Australian Government, through the web of bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships and institutions that guide Australia's engagement with Asia, to ensure that economic, trade and industry development frameworks that underpin those relationships support further diversification of Australian industry aimed at providing decent and secure employment into the future and support the growth of democratic institutions in those partner nations, including independent trade unions.
 19. Congress urges the Australian Government to take more positive steps to ensure Australian industry and working people, both now and in the future, achieve better outcomes from Asia's dependency on Australian contributions to energy, raw material and food security in Asia.
 20. 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 for companies to be held accountable.
 21. Congress acknowledges the work of the ITUC Committee for Workers' Capital and supports the use of capital strategies where workers' capital can be effective in providing practical interventions of international solidarity.

Congress calls on the Australian Government to promote multilateralism by supporting the United Nations and the ILO. Congress welcomes Australia's ratification of the ILO

Maritime Labour Convention, Asbestos Convention, Part Time Work Convention and the OHS Protocol, and the government's support for the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention, and calls on the government to 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 Convention 183 on Maternity Protection Convention;
 - c) ILO Convention 97 on Migration for Employment (Revised);
 - d) ILO Convention 143 on Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions);
 - e) ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies Convention;
 - f) ILO Convention 94 on Labour Clauses (Public Contracts);
 - g) ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers
 - h) ILO Convention 177 concerning Home Work
 - i) ILO Convention 176 on Safety and Health in Mines, and to use that ratification to lobby for ratification more broadly in the Asia Pacific Region.
22. Furthermore, we call on the Australian Government to support the UN Secretary-General's proposal for a Convention to prohibit the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons and provide for their elimination in a verifiable, irreversible, transparent and time-bound manner.
23. Congress applauds the Australian government's commitment to funding the Australia – ILO Partnership Agreement 2010-2015 including the Pacific Growth and Employment Plan, and urges the Australian Government to focus on sustainable development in our region, working with other governments and social partners to effectively meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and realise peace and democracy in countries experiencing conflict. The ACTU calls on the Australian Government to build on and strengthen its commitments under the Partnership Agreement. The ACTU will also pursue recognition by governments in our region, of unions as key civil society and development partners.
24. Congress commits the ACTU to press the Australian Government to substantially refocus aspects of its international development assistance programs administered through AusAID so that:
- a) Recipient nations commit to internationally accepted labour standards as part of acceptance of Australian aid;
 - b) Programs involving employment contain a component requiring independent trade union participation;
 - c) Public sector programs assist recipient nations develop regulatory structures capable of ensuring those nations have the capability to ratify and comply with core ILO and IMO Conventions;

- d) A component of aid program funding is set aside to ensure that in all significant infrastructure and resource development projects the local population is trained in skills to enable them to be employed in these projects, to ensure these jobs respect workers' rights as espoused by the ILO's Core Conventions, and to ensure that the government of that country receives a fair share of the wealth being generated from their resources to provide public goods.
25. 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 fairness and justice at work. Congress applauds the efforts to create new democratic and independent unions and reform existing state-controlled unions in these countries. The ACTU and 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. Congress calls on the Australian government to support this work and integrate decent work and support for trade unions into the Australian aid program.
26. Through the International Committee the ACTU will continue to monitor and seek to influence democratic, peaceful outcomes to support workers and unions especially in countries of the Asia-Pacific region including Fiji, Burma, Vietnam, and Cambodia. We note the role of workers in the inspiring political struggle in Egypt, North Africa and the middle east as part of the 'Arab Spring' movement and send our solidarity to the new unions that have been created through this process. Similarly in Zimbabwe we salute the continuing struggle of unions for peaceful democratic change and we salute the struggle for self-determination and independence in Western Sahara.
27. The ACTU endorses ITUC policy and practical initiatives in monitoring and influencing democratic, peaceful outcomes in the interests of workers and unions globally, including Africa, the Americas, and in 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.
28. Congress congratulates all the staff, volunteers, supporters and partners of Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA who have contributed to the substantial achievements of the organisation since its establishment in 1984. 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. And, when relevant, APHEDA should apply the broad principles of international development assistance set out in clause 24 of this Policy.
29. The ACTU supports the work of the ITUC and the GUFs in coordination of and campaigning for action on Climate Change, promoting sectoral agreements, the promotion of decent jobs in the emerging clean energy sector, and measures to support jobs in emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries (EITEs). 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.