

Brian Campfield for Summer School 2015

Welcome to our 7th Annual ICTU Global Solidarity Summer School – the first in Cork and it is a pleasure to be here in UCC Devere Hall, Áras Na Mac Léinn, here on the main Campus.

The commitment to our role in the international community is very evident from proceedings at our recent BDC in Ennis:

<http://www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity/newsevents/keyissues/2015/07/13/global-solidarity-at-our-bdc-2015/> and

<http://www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity/newsevents/keyissues/2015/07/13/event-on-post-2015-development-agenda-at-bdc/>

Since then, events suggest we have long hard struggle to fight for the kind of world we wish to see as evidenced by:

- the rather disappointing outcome of the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July:

http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2015/07/world-conference-on-funding-development-much-ado-about-little/#.VawCbPp_oQM.twitter ;

- the agreement of “THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” – in your packs and of which we will hear more from Alison this morning. We can be proud of the efforts of the international trade union movement in ensuring a Goal for decent work is included and in the pivotal role of the Irish Government in co-chairing the process with Kenya.
- disappointing signals in relation to the upcoming climate change negotiations in Paris at end of year – specifically how the last version of the negotiation text deals with just transition and decent

work – relegated to a part of the document which gathers
“provisions which requires further clarity among parties”

All of these processes address the theme of our summer school in relation to corporate power and how best to harness for the common good. The need for such a focus is perhaps most exemplified by the ongoing negotiations of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the EU and the USA.

TTIP motion from BDC:

<http://www.ictu.ie/bdc15/motions/subject/transatlantic+trade+and+investment+partnership+%28ttip%29/>

And subsequent reaction to disappointing vote in European Parliament back in July: <https://www.etuc.org/press/ttip-one-step-forward-one-step-back-0#.VZ0tqfmqHw%C2%A0>

We will be hearing about this and other related matters such as taxation, business and human rights, framework agreements and the very first public showing of the film “**True Cost**” - a story about clothing. It’s about the clothes we wear, the people who make them, and the impact the industry is having on our world. The price of clothing has been decreasing for decades, while the human and environmental costs have grown dramatically. The True Cost is a ground-breaking documentary film that pulls back the curtain on the untold story and asks us to consider, who really pays the price for our clothing?

Special thanks to MANDATE for their sponsorship of the licence fee for showing the documentary.

I want also to thank **Irish Aid** for their funding towards our global solidarity work – in particular the support to our development education work and support for the development of the trade union movement in

Myanmar/Burma. Such support has been a great assistance in heightening the profile of international development issues within the movement on this island and for that we are grateful. It is our responsibility to ensure that focus into the future. Be assured that it is money well spent. With your assistance, the ITUC and the international trade union movement have walked through the darkest period in the history of Burma's independent labour movement with Maung Maung and many other brilliant leaders and organisers. At this historic moment of celebration on the occasion of the official recognition of the Confederation of Trade Unions in Myanmar, I want to pay tribute to the workers, activists and their families who had been arrested, or lost their freedom and lives in Burma and in exile since 1988. History will remember them, and it is their bravery that has sustained the struggle. We have in recent years witnessed the establishment of the CTUM which has more than 650 affiliated unions across different sectors. We believed and shared with you in one thing that there is no magic formula in building a strong independent trade union movement except through workers' education, persistent organising and the construction of democratic trade union structures. We will continue to support the CTUM and the independent trade unions in Myanmar on these fundamentals.

We believe that the working people and trade unions of Myanmar have the right and opportunity to choose a model of economic and social development that is fair, just and environmentally sustainable rather than the race to the bottom. The growing influx of foreign direct investment must be accompanied by the protection of fundamental labour standards, fair living wages and effective collective bargaining with independent trade unions.

The official registration of CTUM and the legislation on statutory minimum wages are the first steps. There are tough challenges ahead. The international trade union movement will continue to support the CTUM

and the independent trade unions in Myanmar for better legislation, decent jobs, sustainable living wages, and democracy at the workplace.”

Nepal

I want to finish by focussing on an issue that has not perhaps featured very highly on our agenda and that is the tragic situation facing the people of Nepal following the earthquake back on the morning of 25 April 2015. This has left a trail of destruction. According to estimates, it caused over 7,300 deaths and injured some 15,000 people in one of the poorest countries in Asia. Massive damage has been caused to the country's underdeveloped, poorly maintained infrastructure and property. Many buildings including those providing vital public services and private dwellings in the capital Kathmandu as well as in surrounding villages were reduced to rubble. Thousands have been made homeless and are in dire need of food, clothes, shelter and essential medicines. An outbreak of epidemics is feared due to the lack of potable water and poor sanitation. Internationally, Trade Unions have been to the fore of relief efforts and Congress has assisted unions who wished to make donations to that effort:

<http://www.ictu.ie/globalsolidarity/newsevents/keyissues/2015/05/06/responding-to-nepal-earthquake/>

In Nepal next Month, there is a Trade Union Solidarity meeting for Reconstruction and Job Creation on 3-4 Sep 2015. The ITUC will keep us informed of the discussion and perhaps further opportunities for us to support the program in the longer run.

It'd be very helpful to the affiliates in Nepal if messages of international solidarity can be sent to the meeting highlighting the need of trade union participation in the decision making of the reconstruction plan and distribution of funds, as well as the creation of jobs under decent working conditions for all. They will use such statements in the opening and press conference where the government authorities will be in attendance. I

propose that Congress sends such a message and keeps affiliates here abreast of the ongoing situation and how we can support the efforts of the Nepal Trade Union Congress.