



TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION SYNDICALE CONSULTATIVE
AUPRÈS DE L'ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION
ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUES

Trade Union G8 Meetings
Niigata & Tokyo, 11 – 13 May 2008
Press Review

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Réunions syndicales du G8
Niigata & Tokyo, 11 – 13 mai 2008
Revue de Presse

◆ Workers in G-8 nations want reduced gaps, achieved stability

KYODO NEWS ON THE WEB

NIIGATA, Japan, May 11 KYODO



Labor ministerial-level officials from the Group of Eight countries gathered in the city of Niigata on Sunday for a three-day meeting in which representatives of labor and employers' groups urged the governments to act swiftly and properly to improve unstable labor markets and tackle growing inequalities.

In the tripartite talks, John Sweeney, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, called on the G-8 officials to "ensure coordinating government actions to reduce rising risks of unemployment and support decent work" and "effective action to reduce regional inequalities."

In the opening speech, Japanese Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Yoichi Masuzoe said, "Our society is becoming more and more complex against the background of globalization and increasing longevity, and a resilient and sustainable society cannot be realized without devotions from workers and employers."

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TRADE UNIONS DEMAND ACTION ON GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS & INCOMES, FINANCIAL REGULATION
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

ITUC OnLine 091/130508

Brussels, 13 May 2008 (ITUC OnLine): ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder joined leaders of the trade union centres from the G8 countries in a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in Tokyo today to demand urgent action on the global food crisis, climate change, the worsening jobs and incomes situation and financial regulation.

The union delegation which was led by John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO and the OECD Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and Tsuyoshi Takagi, President of the Japanese national trade union centre JTUC-RENGO, pressed the Japanese government as current Chair of the G8 to support the demands set out in a statement http://www.tuac.org/en/public/e-docs/00/00/02/3F/document_news.phtml

released earlier this month by the TUAC. Prime Minister Fukuda was accompanied at the meeting by Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura and Health, Labour and Welfare Minister Yoichi Masuzoe.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.
Website: www.ituc-csi.org <<http://www.ituc-csi.org>>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018.

Top Industrialized Countries Push For Environmentally Friendly Workplaces

TOKYO (AP) -- Copyright 2008 The Associated Press. Tuesday 13 May, 2008

The world's top industrialized countries should develop environmentally friendly workplaces and help workers move to nonpolluting industries, their labor ministers said Tuesday.

The ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations set environmental protection as a top priority after meeting with international trade union and business groups in Niigata on Japan's northwestern coast.

"Sustainable society is based on the three independent and mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection," the ministers said in a joint statement.

The countries -- the United States, Russia, Canada, France, Japan, Germany, Britain and Italy -- also pledged to address income disparities, strengthen labor markets and create conditions for economic growth.

On the environment, the statement called for helping workers from high-polluting industries make the transition to cleaner businesses, and encouraging skills that contribute to the development and use of environmentally friendly technology.

The ministers also suggested an assessment of the impact of anti-climate change policies on labor markets, and efforts to encourage environmental conservation at the workplace.

Many countries, including Japan, are struggling to meet targets set by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which requires that emissions by 37 industrialized countries of "greenhouse" gases blamed for global warming be reduced by an average of 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Japan is now considering setting a more aggressive emissions reduction target for 2050 -- raising the current goal of a 50 percent cut to between 60 percent and 80 percent -- to be announced in mid June, media reports say.

http://www.examiner.com/a-1388258~G_8_ministers_stress_environment_protection.html

G-8 SUPPORTS VULNERABLE WORKERS & ECO-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

Tuesday 13th May, 04:15 PM JST TOKYO -

The world's top industrialized countries should develop environmentally friendly workplaces and help workers move to nonpolluting industries, their labor ministers said Tuesday.

The ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations set environmental protection as a top priority after meeting with international trade union and business groups in Niigata on Japan's northwestern coast.

The G-8 officials issued a statement after the event, warning that globalization could "entail disparities and adjustment difficulties in labor markets" and called for introducing effective career consulting and skills development for the vulnerable who fail to benefit from globalization.

Vladimir Spidla, the European commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, told the press conference that the G-8 states should address the widening of the income gap by taking into account cultural backgrounds and industrial structures.

"Sustainable society is based on the three independent and mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection," the ministers said in a joint statement.

Thailand and Indonesia were invited to attend Tuesday's morning session. Uraivan Thienthong, Thai minister of labor, said, "The working poor must access proper social protection."

As steps to reinvigorate economies, the statement urged the member states to "promote local development and job creation by facilitating the effective use of local resources and policies," calling for active participation by local governments and nonprofit organizations.

The statement also incorporated the "Niigata Global-Balance Principle," which pushes for a balance between employment and environment policies.

Participants expressed hopes that the agreement will give impetus to consensus-building on the climate change issue, which is set to top the agenda during the G-8 summit in July in Hokkaido.

Specifically, the statement reaffirmed that the G-8 countries can help "displaced workers from climate change-affected industries make a transition to new jobs, and encourage skills development that responds to environmentally friendly innovations and industrial changes."

On the environment, the statement called for helping workers from high-polluting industries make the transition to cleaner businesses, and encouraging skills that contribute to the development and use of environmentally friendly technology.

Wire reports

<http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/g-8-agrees-on-support-for-vulnerable-workers-eco-friendly-workplaces> <<http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/g-8-agrees-on-support-for-vulnerable-workers-eco-friendly-workplaces>>

G-8 labor officials gather in Japan to seek environment-friendly working style

TOKYO (AP) -- Labor ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations met with international trade union and business groups Sunday to discuss the reduction of workplace emissions of "greenhouse" gases blamed for global warming, officials said.

The talks, in Niigata on Japan's north coast, are aimed at boosting support for global environmental initiatives before Japan hosts the G-8 summit in July.

The labor ministers, whose formal talks start Monday, are also expected to address concerns about growing income disparity, aging and uncertainty over financial markets, Japan's Health and Welfare Ministry said.

Participants at Sunday's session -- including representatives from the International Labor Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development -- issued a statement urging G-8 nations to promote sustainable labor markets and environmental protection at work places.

"The G-8 countries should foster a societal approach moving all industry sectors in more environmentally friendly and energy efficient directions," it said.

Japan hopes to lead the discussions with its experience from "Cool-Biz" -- a no-tie, no-jacket summer campaign it launched in 2005 to curb greenhouse gas emissions by limiting the use of office air conditioning, Kyodo News agency reported.

Many countries, including Japan, are struggling to meet targets set by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which requires that greenhouse gas emissions be reduced by an average of 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Japan is now considering setting a more aggressive emissions reduction target for 2050 -- raising the current goal of a 50 percent emissions cut to between 60 percent and 80 percent -- to be announced in mid June, public broadcaster NHK reported Sunday.

Japanese officials also plan to discuss how industries that are likely to be hurt by climate change can seek alternative income sources, such as ski resorts facing snow shortages pursuing other forms of tourism, Kyodo said.

The G-8 groups Britain, Italy, Canada, the United States, France, Russia, Germany and Japan. Thailand and Indonesia were invited to join some discussions.

(Mainichi Japan) May 12, 2008

G-8 labor meeting calls for work-life balance, split on working style

Monday 12th May, 02:50 PM JST

TOKYO —

Senior labor officials from the Group of Eight nations on Monday shared recognition on the need to support a better work-life balance and promote lifelong career development amid increased life spans.

But opinions were split in discussions over a flexible working style among the participants from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States, a Japanese Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry official told reporters after the morning session of the second day of their three-day meeting in Niigata.

Some addressed the importance of encouraging flexibility in ways of working in order to secure stable employment throughout life, while others said too much flexibility may give rise to a further increase in part-time employment among young people, the officials said.

In the morning session, Yoko Kamikawa, Japanese state minister for gender equality and social affairs, made a speech on Japan's child-support programs and other efforts in promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Japan is hoping to demonstrate leadership in crafting measures to help older people take up employment, as a nation experiencing graying of its society at a particularly rapid pace.

An OECD report has indicated that the average life spans for Japanese women and men were the longest among the G-8 nations in 2005—86 and 79 years respectively—while Japanese government data have shown that people aged 65 or older will likely account for over 40 percent of the nation's population in 2055.

On Monday afternoon, the participants are set to discuss the impact of globalization on their labor markets resulting in widening economic and regional disparities and measures to address those challenges.

Earlier in the day, Japanese labor minister Yoichi Masuzoe said in his opening speech, "Our societies are faced with negative aspects of globalization, and it's needless to say that we need to closely cooperate to ensure our labor market systems operate in a smooth and orderly manner." Masuzoe is chairing the meeting.

The labor ministerial meeting is being held ahead of the G-8 summit in July in Hokkaido. Masuzoe noted that climate change will be a central theme of the summit and said, "I hope to show our determination to tackle climate change from a labor perspective from here in Niigata to the world."

Masuzoe is the only cabinet labor minister attending the meeting, with the other seven nations being represented by vice ministers and other senior officials.

Their talks on Tuesday will focus on links between labor and environment issues, the first time it is being attempted in the G-8 framework.

A chairman's statement will then be issued, in which the participants are expected to agree to ensure harmony between labor and environmental policies, according to a draft obtained by Kyodo News.

They are also expected to reconfirm the importance of accelerating job creation through the use of local resources and of promoting participation of local governments and nonprofit organizations to help redress disparities, the draft says.

The three-day meeting kicked off on Sunday. On the first day, the officials held tripartite talks with labor unions and business groups, and shared an understanding on the urgent need to tackle issues related to increasing inequality within the G-8 economies.

Also attending the meeting are labor officials from the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the International Labor Organization. Thailand and Indonesia have been invited to attend an outreach dialogue

G-8 labour officials seek environment-friendly working style

12 May, 2008, 0853 hrs IST, AGENCIES

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Japan hopes to lead the discussions with its experience from "Cool-Biz" - a no-tie, no-jacket summer campaign it launched in 2005 to curb greenhouse gas emissions by limiting the use of office air conditioning, Kyodo News agency reported.

Deutschlandfunk
Sonntag, 11. Mai 2008 12:00 Uhr

G8-Arbeitsminister beraten in Japan über Beschäftigungsfragen

Die Arbeitsminister der acht führenden Industriestaaten haben im japanischen Niigata dreitägige Beratungen über Beschäftigungsfragen aufgenommen. Dabei geht es insbesondere um die soziale Dimension der Globalisierung sowie den Klimawandel. Die Ergebnisse des Treffens sollen in die Arbeit des G8-Gipfels im Juli in Japan einfließen.

G8-Beschäftigungsgipfel in Japan berät über soziale Unterschiede

Niigata (dpa) Vertreter von Arbeitnehmern und Arbeitgebern der acht größten Volkswirtschaften der Welt (G8) haben ihre Regierungen zur Bekämpfung der wachsenden sozialen Unterschiede aufgefordert. Beim Auftakt dreitägiger Beratungen von Vertretern der Arbeitsministerien der G8-Länder in der japanischen Stadt Niigata sprachen sich teilnehmende Gewerkschaften am Sonntag zudem für "grüne Jobs" aus, einer Initiative der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) zur Förderung umwelt- und klimafreundlicher Industrien.

Nötig seien koordinierte und effektive Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung der zunehmenden Gefahr von Arbeitslosigkeit und regionaler Ungleichheiten, sagte John Sweeney, Präsident der AFL-CIO, einem Dachverband amerikanischer Gewerkschaften. Im Mittelpunkt des Sondergipfels in Niigata stehen der Abbau wachsender sozialer Unterschiede, die soziale Dimension der Globalisierung sowie ökologische Herausforderungen wie der Klimawandel. Die Ergebnisse des Treffens sollen in die Arbeit des G8-Gipfeltreffens der Staats- und Regierungschefs im Juli im nordjapanischen Toyako einfließen.

Es ist der erste Sondergipfel zu Beschäftigungsfragen im Rahmen der G8-Beratungen, der auch die Klimaschutzpolitik mit einbezieht. Die Schlussfolgerungen der Arbeitsminister sollen nach Darstellung der japanischen Gastgeber zur Konsensbildung beim Kampf gegen die globale Klimaerwärmung beitragen, der beim G8-Gipfel im Juli im Mittelpunkt der Beratungen stehen wird. Japans Regierungschef Yasuo Fukuda will zuvor im Juni ein konkretes CO₂-Reduktionsziel bis 2050 für sein Land bekanntgeben, kündigte ein Sprecher am Wochenende an.

Japan war das einzige G8-Land, das seinen Arbeitsminister nach Niigata schickte, die übrigen sieben Partnerländer werden durch Vize- Minister oder andere ranghohe Beamte vertreten. Grund seien besondere Umstände in den jeweiligen Ländern, hieß es von japanischer Seite. Neben Vertretern der G8-Staaten Japan, Deutschland, Großbritannien, Kanada, Frankreich, Italien, Russland und USA ist auch die EU vertreten. Bei dem Treffen sollen auch Herausforderungen der Schwellen- und Entwicklungsländer erörtert werden. Auch Indonesien und Thailand sowie die ILO wurden nach Niigata eingeladen.

Sonntag, 11. Mai 2008 (16:34)



G-8 labor officials begin 3-day meeting in Japan

5/11/2008, 2:03 p.m. EDT

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

The Associated Press

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Japanese officials also plan to discuss how industries that are likely to be hurt by climate change can seek alternative income sources, such as ski resorts facing snow shortages pursuing other forms of tourism, Kyodo said.

The G-8 comprises Britain, Italy, Canada, the United States, France, Russia, Germany and Japan. Thailand and Indonesia were invited to join some discussions.

Rengo chief calls on gov't to take up labor issues at G-8 summit+

Apr 28 02:46 AM US/Eastern

TOKYO, April 28 (AP) - (Kyodo)—The leader of Japan's largest trade union group called on the government Monday to discuss labor-related issues at the Group of Eight summit in Japan in July.

Tsuyoshi Takagi, chairman of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), handed a petition to Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura asking the government to talk about adverse effects on employment stemming from the U.S. subprime loan crisis during the G-8 summit to be held in Hokkaido.

The petition also demanded that the government discuss the spread of poverty and starvation due to rising prices of food and called on each government to cooperate in such issues as fighting global warming, abolishing nuclear weapons and supporting developing countries.

Japan will host this year's G-8 summit, which groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

G8 : les syndicats dénoncent l'accroissement des inégalités et de la précarité

FO fait partie de la délégation syndicale internationale qui prend part actuellement à Niigata (Japon) aux consultations avec les ministres du travail dans le cadre du G8 sous présidence japonaise.

A cette occasion, le TUAC (Commission syndicale au sein de l'OCDE) a présenté une déclaration mettant l'accent sur «la baisse de la part du revenu national des pays du G8 revenant aux salaires» et sur «le creusement des disparités salariales » parallèlement à « l'accroissement spectaculaire du travail précaire».

Le TUAC met en avant le décrochage entre croissance de la productivité et des revenus particulièrement marqué dans les marchés du travail flexibles. Ainsi aux Etats-Unis la productivité des salariés a augmenté de 16,6% entre 2000 et 2005 tandis que leur rémunération médiane n'a progressé que de 7,2%, augmentation dépassée par l'inflation au cours des trois dernières années.

FO a indiqué que les politiques dites de l'emploi ne devraient pas se réduire à une variable d'ajustement soumise aux contraintes des politiques économiques, constatant qu'elles consistent trop souvent à demander aux salariés de s'adapter aux aléas et à la précarité d'économies gouvernées par la spéculation financière.

Ainsi FO a contesté les politiques – à l'image des projets de « réformes » en France - tendant à renvoyer la négociation des conditions de travail, temps de travail et salaires au niveau de l'entreprise voire au niveau individuel, au détriment des garanties de convention collectives nationales. De même FO a contesté les orientations calquées par l'OCDE sur celles du Livre vert de la commission européenne consistant à préconiser la flexibilité des contrats de travail standard, à durée indéterminée, pour les aligner sur la flexibilité des contrats à durée déterminée, des contrats d'intérim et à temps partiel, appelant au contraire à restreindre l'utilisation des contrats précaires en les rendant plus coûteux pour les entreprises.

Avec le TUAC, FO a contesté les réformes des systèmes d'emploi et d'assurance chômage visant à contraindre les travailleurs au chômage à accepter des salaires à la baisse ou des emplois précaires assortis d'une obligation de mobilité géographique.

.S'adressant avec détermination aux ministres de l'emploi, le TUAC, position là encore soutenue par FO, a mis en avant la nécessaire évaluation des politiques économiques et sociales quant à leur incidence sur la répartition des revenus et la précarité de l'emploi, constatant que celles-ci ont conduit le plus souvent à accroître le dumping social.

FO a également interpellé le Directeur Général de l'OCDE concernant la baisse de l'aide publique au développement en 2007 qui met en cause le crédit que l'on peut accorder aux engagements des chefs d'Etat tant dans le cadre du G8, de l'OCDE que de l'ONU, alors que les populations des pays en développement sont confrontées à une nouvelle crise alimentaire.