



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

Paris, 15 December 2008

President Lee Myung-Bak  
Republic of Korea

### **The Arrest of the President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions**

Dear President,

The Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), representing fifty-eight national trade union confederations of the industrialised countries, strongly protests at the arrest of Mr. **Lee Suk-haeng**, President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

Meeting at its 121<sup>st</sup> Plenary Session on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008, which was chaired by Mr John Sweeney, President of TUAC and the AFL-CIO, TUAC affiliates were informed that Bro. Lee Suk-haeng had been arrested on 5 December, in connection with his role in organising a strike on 2 July 2008 and a solidarity action in support of the E-land Retail Precarious Workers' strike in 2007. We understand that brother Lee Suk-haeng will be charged principally with the "obstruction of business" (Section 314 of the Penal Code), due to his role in these actions, and that he was to be brought before a judge on Monday 8 December 2008.

TUAC has also been informed that arrest warrants were issued against other leaders of the KCTU, some of whom have been imprisoned.

TUAC is gravely concerned that trade union leaders in Korea are being arrested and detained merely for exercising fundamental workers' rights, such as the right to strike. The right to strike encompasses both the right for workers to undertake demonstrations concerning social and economic policies affecting its members, as well as solidarity actions. We are very concerned about the severity of the repression, especially the deprivation of liberty. Such targeting of union leaders is blatant anti-union repression and TUAC is disappointed that your Government, like its predecessors, has failed to implement labour and industrial relations law reform, in line with the commitments made at Korea's accession to the OECD.

TUAC strongly urges your Government to order the immediate release of Mr. Lee Suk-haeng and all other imprisoned trade unionists and to ensure that all charges against them are dropped. It also urges you to ensure that the arrest warrants against all other labour leaders be withdrawn immediately.

In the meantime, I trust that you will pay prompt attention to this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

John Evans  
General Secretary