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NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

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AZERBAIJAN UNIONS HOLD CONGRESS

The Second Congress of the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation, ATUC, which organises over 1.5 million workers, took place in Baku from 5–6 February 2003. Although not a member of the GCTU, the CTUA maintains with it friendly relations based on a co-operation agreement.

The 375 Congress delegates represented 24 industrial trade unions and the Trade Union Council of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic.

Trade union representatives from Belgium, Belarus, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan attended as guests. The GCTU delegation was led by Vice President Eugeny Lebedev.

In his report, ATUC President Sattar Mehbaliyev told Congress of the work the Confederation had done to enhance the trade union structure, implement its economic and social programme, and get several normative legal acts aimed at the protection of workers' interests developed and adopted.

He cited a specific case when efficient intervention by the Confederation helped protect the interests of over 700 workers of a tobacco processing plant in Baku by judicial settlement. The ATUC had been working towards the realisation of its own concept of pension security and social insurance. Together with its affiliates, the trade union centre had succeeded in building and restoring 5,383 trade union organisations at private enterprises with a total membership of 300 thousand.

The Confederation concentrates attention on improving workers' health. Over the last five years, 82,560 union members have been provided with accommodation in rest homes and health resorts, while 92,850 children from working families spent their summer in health-improvement camps.

The country has seen a rise in the nominal wages, as the average monthly pay has reached 410 thousand manats (or US\$ 82.6), with the subsistence minimum amounting to US\$68.5. In 2002, the average monthly pay increased by 3.6 times and the pensions by 3.4 times, as compared with 1994.

At the beginning of 2003, the number of officially registered unemployed was

50,300 persons, or 1.3 per cent of the economically active population. Women accounted for 57 per cent of them, which roughly equals the high rates of female unemployment in the previous years.

The Congress listened to a message from Azerbaijan President Aliyev that said the country's leader thought highly of the work done by trade unions to protect their members' rights and interests in the new economic conditions.

The Congress amended and supplemented the Constitution of the Confederation, and considered and approved the normative legal acts "On individual labour contracts" and "On collective agreements and accords".

Sattar Mehbalijev was unanimously elected ATUC President for a new term.

BELARUS: CHECK-OFF BACK

On the 27th of January 2003, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko signed a decree that finally settles the acute and much disputed issue of check-off. The decree rules that the automatically deducted union dues should be transferred to the trade union organisations simultaneously with the wage payments as a matter of first priority.

In spite of the pressure from workplace union organisations, both the industrial trade unions and the former leaders of the Belarussian Trade Union Federation had repeatedly failed to get the problem solved because of their protracted political friction with the state authorities.

Formerly, the unions would wait for long months before they could get their collected dues, if any at all, which handicapped gravely their organisational and financial

possibilities. Meanwhile, part of the trade union dues in Belarus is spent on material support of members, the organisation of various events, health improvement benefits, etc.

GEORGIA: GTUA 10 YEAR OLD

The Georgian Trade Union Amalgamation, GTUA, marked its 10th anniversary in Tbilisi 18 December 2002.

The festive event organised on the occasion gathered together leaders of the GTUA and its affiliates, trade union activists, and representatives of non-governmental organisations, the mass media, and the government.

Irakli Tugushi, who has led the national trade union centre through reform over the years, delivered a speech at the meeting. He said the decade of building and developing the GTUA had also been a hard decade of raising a sovereign Georgian state, forming civil society, and changing radically the whole system of social relations in the country.

It was in this context that the unions had to overcome many hardships, such as the overtly hostile actions by state authorities aiming to undermine the workers' organisations.

The past ten years have shown the GTUA to be a viable movement capable of making a realistic assessment of the workers' novel economic and social conditions, and, based on the analysis, formulating adequately its tasks and objectives. Symbolic of this successful struggle was the fact that the meeting took place at the Trade Union Palace of Culture that the GTUA had succeeded in regaining following a long legal dispute with the state authorities.

GEORGIA: HUNGRY UNION LEADERS WIN DISPUTE

Irakli Petriashvili, Vice President of the GTUA and leader of the trade union organisation at the transnational "AES-Telasi", and Akaki Gvalia, a member of the local trade union committee, emerged victorious from a hunger strike they had called in an attempt to make their "social partners" listen to their demands.

The nine-point claim that had been put forward by the union committee and approved by the collective's general meeting demanded that the company management:

- annul the fixed-term labour contracts that had fraudulently been imposed on the elder employees and replace them with open-end contracts;
- readjust the remuneration system to achieve equal pay for equal work and raise the salaries of the low-paid employees;
- introduce additional pensions for retiring employees;
- involve the unions in the process of employing new workers; and
- build additional services for accommodating the redundant employees.

The negotiations with the employer ended on the fourth day of the hunger strike. The parties concluded an agreement providing for the fulfilment of the demands put forward by the trade union committee. The arrangements made had also been integrated into the text of the collective agreement.

KYRGYZSTAN: SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINISED

The Kyrgyzstan Federation of Trade Unions, KTUF, has summed up the work

done by its affiliates in the year 2002 that was proclaimed a Year of Development and Social Partnership and spent under the slogan "Social Partnership: Wages, Employment, Stability"

The analysis showed that all trade union organisations had made active contributions towards developing dialogue and building social partnership both at regional and industrial levels.

A total of 34 industrial and 6 regional agreements concerning social and labour relations had been concluded, out of them 19 on a tripartite basis.

Industrial and regional tripartite commissions and councils have been set up to regulate social, economic and labour problems. The Year of Social Partnership has provided the unions with new experience in cooperation with the state authorities and employers' organisations. Throughout the country, 6,255 collective agreements have been signed, which is substantially more than in the previous year. The coverage of the collective agreements has become wider, while their contents and quality have improved. Over 60 per cent of the agreements stipulate higher wages. The number of labour law violations has decreased over the year, the number of conflict situations in work collectives has been minimized, and the information work carried out by local trade union organisations has become better.

MOLDOVA: NO PAY DEBTS NOW

"The pay arrears have been settled", said Petru Chiriac, President of the Union Confederation of the Republic of Moldova, UCRM, as he met with President of Moldova Vladimir Voronin. The UCRM leader also mentioned the normalised situation in the current payment of wages,

pensions and social benefits as another positive factor. He informed the country's President of how the accords reached with the Government on economic and social problems, including wage rises in the budgetary sector and increased minimum pay, were being implemented.

Petru Chiriac and GCTU President Vladimir Scherbakov who also participated in the meeting said they would promote reunification of the country's trade union movement. President Voronin confirmed he was prepared to contribute to the process provided the unions themselves are guided by the principles of free will and democracy.

President of Moldova asked the government to give proper consideration to the concrete economic and social questions raised by the UCRM leader, and said his Administration would take the interaction between the government and the unions under its control.

RUSSIA: WORKERS MUST KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

During his meeting with the FNPR leader Mikhail Shmakov in late December 2002, President of Russia Vladimir Putin expressed the wish that the unions should do more to make the country's workers aware of what the provisions of the new Labour Code meant to them. President explained that, as he was preparing for his televised address to the nation, he had received many questions from citizens about the new Labour Code.

"For instance, I have gathered from the questions that many people are not even aware that 15 days after wage non-payment the employer starts paying fines and penalty fees, and the worker, if unpaid, has the right to stay out of work", President said.

Mikhail Shmakov promised the unions would see to the problem. He complained that "some enterprise managers who fail to pay out wages believe that any worker dissatisfied with the fact must quit". "This is at full variance with our legislation", he pointed out.

He was also apprehensive that the switch-over to the new system of remuneration of budgetary workers based on an industrial principle might even further reduce the modest salaries Russian teachers and physicians were getting today.

RUSSIA: UNIONS REJECT GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

Some time ago the Kasyanov government shifted almost the entire burden of funding teachers' and physicians' salaries to the scarce local budgets. The move has produced new pay debts and caused massive protests.

Over the period from December 2002–February 2003, different Russian provinces, particularly Eastern Siberia, saw regular work stoppages and protest actions organised by teachers. From 26–28 February the unions of education, health and culture workers staged a nation-wide protest action.

Its participants protested against the intolerably low pay rates in the budgetary sector and rejected the concept of the pay system reform in the budgetary sector as proposed by the Ministry of Labour. The unions demand that the salaries be raised at least by 1.5 times as of 1 April 2003, and by two times as of 1 January 2004.

The main slogans included, among other things, raising the minimum student grants up to 500 roubles (or \$16) a month and

funding the students' dispensaries from the budget.

The action involved work stoppages, rallies, manifestations, and picketing the houses of district and regional authorities. Apart from that, telegrams with trade union demands were sent to the State Duma, national government and local authorities.

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, FNPR, supported the demands. Should the Government succeed in getting through its concept of reforming the pay system in the budgetary sector, "the extremely low salaries of those employed in the non-productive sphere that today make 37-40 per cent of industrial sector wages will become even lower", said FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov.

The result of the action was that the representatives of the Government and the unions agreed to jointly examine the draft law on the introduction of sectoral work remuneration systems in the budgetary sphere. The Government pledged it would increase the student grants by two times and allocate a sum of 350 million roubles from the budget for funding university dispensaries.

RUSSIA: UNIONS CAUTIOUS OF WTO

A sizeable part of Russian society is worried about the eventual negative consequences of the country's impending entry into the World Trade Organisation.

To study the imminent problems, a tripartite consultation "On the economic and social consequences of Russia's joining the WTO" was called from 21–22 February 2003 in St.Petersburg with the involvement of the ILO. FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov presented the union point of view which

differs substantially from the Government's position.

While accepting in principle the inevitability of Russia's affiliation with the WTO, the FNPR believes it must be done on the following conditions:

- guaranteed protection of the advanced and strategically important industries and sectors of the national economy;
- maximum possible retention of the system of state support to agriculture;
- establishment of a transition period (8-10 years) for structural readjustment of fixed capital in manufacturing industry.

The reason for insisting on such conditions is the WTO's demand that the state should abandon any support of the local producer and that the domestic and world prices of energy, fuel and transportation should be levelled off. If implemented, all this will entail sky-rocketing price rises in Russia. The hasty attempts to push Russia into the WTO, as instigated by the Government who is considering a deadline of 2002–2003, may have even worse consequences than the notorious "shock therapy" of the early 90-ies when the overwhelming majority of the country's population was overnight reduced to sheer poverty.

According to the Academy of Labour and Social Relations, the Russian Government does not even consider any package of eventual social consequences of the country's entrance into the WTO. And this in spite of the fact that the Ministry of Economic Development was instructed to do so by the Russian Tripartite Commission as far back as 2001.

The FNPR is of the opinion that Russia must prepare better for the WTO. The state must

work out a national policy of raising the incomes of the population, decide on the industrial policy, and formulate an efficient social policy.

RUSSIA: RURAL UNION WORRIED

The Russian Union of Workers in the Agro-Industrial Complex has issued an appeal to the country's federal and local authorities.

The message says that the measures taken by the Government to improve the situation in the agro-industrial complex have produced some positive results. Over the last two years, rural produce volumes have started increasing, while the grain crops have gone up considerably.

However, the situation in the rural sector has not stabilised completely. On the whole, agriculture remains in a grave systems crisis. With the permanent reorganisation and change of agricultural enterprise owners, many villages have lost any prospects for the future.

Most enterprises operate at a loss, lack floating funds, are in immense credit debts, and have no means for production development. The pay arrears have grown from 8 billion to 10.4 billion roubles, while the wage rates, the lowest in the country, are, according to an ILO assessment, hardly above the poverty line.

Such a state of affairs is the result of the growing price disparities between farm and industrial products. What makes the situation even worse, is that the chronic unprofitability and lack of money force farmers to sell their produce below cost, i.e. at a loss.

The unions are particularly worried about the growing imports of farm products, raw materials and foodstuffs that either are

being produced or can be produced in the near future in sufficient quantities by domestic farmers. Today, foodstuff imports account for 16–70 per cent of the national consumption volumes, which may undermine the country's food security. Russia spends annually \$12–13 billion on imported foodstuffs, whereas the state support of the home producer is badly insufficient.

The Union of Workers in the Agro-Industrial Complex demanded that the Government take urgent steps to restrain food imports, and expressed the hope that fellow unions would appreciate its position. The union said it would call for a boycott on certain kinds of imported agricultural goods, raw materials and foodstuffs unless its demands were met.

RUSSIA: UNIONS TO GROW YOUNGER

The Moscow Region Organisation of Trade Unions held a youth forum "The Unions' Future Belongs to the Young".

The organisers pursued a twofold aim, which was to enhance organising and union work among the younger generation, and get more young people involved in social, economic and political activities at the regional and national levels. The forum attracted young trade unionists from individual enterprises, whole industries, specialised secondary education institutions, and universities situated in the region.

Speakers told the assembly about their problems. Today, young people have little chance to get education or health care free of charge. The monthly scholarship is hardly sufficient to keep one afloat for a week. University graduates have no guarantees they will get a job they have been trained for. The choice they face is

far from rich: they can either accept the meagre wages offered by enterprises, or haunt the thresholds of employment offices for months. Housing for young people is also an issue that is difficult to settle. The meeting also discussed the problem of drug abuse that has engulfed whole regions. In a word, if urgent measures are not taken, the trend towards degradation of the younger generation in Russia will persist.

Participants agreed that the youth movements and the trade unions should pool their efforts to press for a radically different youth policy.

The forum resolution stresses the urgent need for regional trade union organisations to set up their own youth commissions and organise regular training for young union activists.

TAJIKISTAN UNIONS TAKING CARE OF KIDS

Despite the grave economic problems, the country continues take care of children's summer recreation. In 2002, 300 thousand teenagers spent their summer holidays in children camps, a number twice as big as in the previous year.

On the initiative of the Tajik Federation of Trade Unions (TFTU) that co-ordinates children's summer recreation, the Government issued a special Decree "On the measures to improve summer recreation of children and teenagers in 2003".

The decree obliges the local authorities to allocate the necessary resources for organising summer camps, recreation zones and health centres for children, and see to it that the privatised children's camps maintain their nature.

UKRAINE: UNIONS FOR WOMEN

The 4th Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine, FTUU, held late in 2002 in Kiev adopted a resolution on gender equality.

The document expresses alarm over the country's women being hardest hit by the economic crisis. They account for 67 per cent of the unemployed, and the number of temporary unemployed females is three times as high as that of males. Women get 27.6 per cent less in pay than men. The lowest pay rates have been recorded in the traditionally female industries, such as the light and food industries, education, health care, and culture and arts.

Motherhood is not motivated either with wages or with a level of social protection that would be sufficient for the families to have and support the number of children they want. Unions are also worried over the massive nature of family violence and sexual trafficking in women.

The Congress noted that women are much worse organised than would be expected. This can be explained by a number of reasons, and, in particular, by the fact that they do not believe the union can help them improve their working and living conditions. Besides, they are afraid of reprisals by the employer, and need more free time for their family responsibilities than men. The number of female trade union leaders at all levels is also glaringly disproportionate.

The FTUU 4th Congress called on its affiliated organisations to join the ICFTU-launched campaign "Unions for Women, Women for Unions"

The Congress recommended that the unions should do their best to ensure compliance with the ILO Convention No 156

concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities ratified by Ukraine in 2000, and work for ratification and implementation of other international labour standards that are crucial to working women.

The resolution supports the idea that workplace union organisations and higher trade union bodies should set up special structures dealing with women's issues, and that training should be organised for women workers as part of the trade union development projects.

The Congress demanded that the Government of Ukraine take efficient measures to implement the Beijing Platform on the improvement of women's status and comply with the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

A special division to deal with the issues has been set up by the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine.

DOCUMENTS

STATEMENT

by the General Confederation of Trade Unions concerning the threat of military aggression against Iraq

Moscow, 24 January 2003

The General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) affiliating trade union centres in CIS countries and industrial Trade Union Internationals of the region expresses its great alarm at the bellicose statements and active war preparations by the United States, Britain and some of their NATO

allies for aggression against the Republic of Iraq.

Realisation of this threat against a sovereign state, whatever the excuses and arguments, cannot be justified either from the moral or from the legal point of view. The ongoing preparations violate all rules of international law, and run counter to world public opinion and the position held by most of UN member states.

Without even waiting for the results of the UN commission of experts, the USA and Britain *a priori* accuse Iraq of evil intent and production of mass destruction weapons, while building up hastily their military presence in defiance of the mass protests that have swept actually across the world.

Unleashing a war on Iraq would result in unpredictable growth of tension in that explosive region, huge ecological damage, numerous victims among the civilian population and workers, destruction of houses and social objects, and heavy damage to the country's economy that has been suffering from economic sanction for many years.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions calls on the ICFTU, WFTU, WCL, ETUC, ICATU, OATUU, and all national trade union organisations to combine their efforts in order to stop the impending threat of a new war on Iraq. We particularly address our counterparts in the USA and Britain, first of all the AFL-CIO and the TUC, urging them to use their prestige and their influence on their respective governments to avert the unprovoked aggression against the Iraqi people.

The GCTU appeals to the United Nations to prevent the attack by the USA and its allies on Iraq, find the ways to a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and, eventually,

let the Iraqi people live and work in peace in their own country.

We call on our affiliates to express their support for and solidarity with the people and workers of Iraq, and join with the protests by the world public on the Day of World Solidarity to Oppose the War on Iraq to be observed 27 January 2003.

GCTU MESSAGE

to participants in the Second World Trade Union Forum: "Trade Unions at the Heart of Civil Society" (Porto Alegre, January 2003)

Moscow, January 2003

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) affiliating national trade union centres in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and 38 industrial trade union internationals of the region extends its heartfelt greetings to all participants in the Forum and wishes them successful work.

In today's world, economic globalisation has become a major process affecting the course of world development. It has a tremendous direct impact not only on the labour relations and workers' social conditions, but also on the way of life of the Earth's population in general. Therefore, it is urgent that the public, and primarily the trade unions as a powerful force in civil society, determine their attitude towards this phenomenon.

The GCTU believes that the CIS countries should respond to the globalisation challenges by promoting regional integration and working out a common strategy centred on such values as decent work, human

rights, social dialogue, and adequate social security schemes. Particular attention should be devoted to the issues of employment and labour migration, and to the quality of workforce, all of which have been aggravated by globalisation.

As the problems arising from the accession of CIS countries to the World Trade Organisation are increasingly topical today, the GCTU is of the opinion that they should be solved based on economic and social expediency rather than on political considerations. It is also essential that forestalling regional programmes are adopted in the social sphere.

The GCTU brought its point of view on these problems to the notice of CIS Parliaments and Heads of State and Government, as it summed up the outcome of a major international conference "Economic Globalisation and Regional Integration: Their Impact on the Workers' Conditions in the CIS Countries" held by our Confederation last February. The Conference approved our approach to these issues.

The GCTU demands that all transnational companies and finance-industrial groups operative in the CIS countries should both respect national legislation, and comply with the provisions of the international legal instruments regulating their conduct. The latter include, among other things, the Agreement on Regulating the Social and Labour Relations in TNCs Operative on the Territories of CIS States signed by six CIS countries in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, in 1997. This act was prepared and adopted on the initiative of the GCTU, and it contains a paragraph prescribing such TNCs to consult with the workers' representatives, namely "with the council of trade union committees of the enterprises or organisations affiliated to the corporation,

or with the joint trade union committee if any”.

Particularly important in the present-day conditions is the problem of strengthening the United Nations system, and strict observance of the social and labour standards it or its specialised agencies have elaborated, first of all the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. As an organisation enjoying special status with the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (IPA), the GCTU addressed the IPA in 1996 urging it to call on the national parliaments in the Commonwealth countries to ratify a number of ILO conventions we consider crucial for the workers in our region. The result was that the ILO had since then received 83 new ratifications from CIS countries.

We intend to proceed with such activities. Measures for their realisation have been included in the Guidelines for GCTU Activity in 2002–2007, the main document adopted by the GCTU 4th Congress held last September in Moscow.

The GCTU is convinced that, at the current stage of globalisation, urgent and immediate measures must be taken to secure workers' rights and interests and attach a maximum priority to the social aspects of world development. It is particularly important for the international trade union movement to rally for the attainment of this worthy goal. We have consistently supported the idea that economic globalisation should be met with trade union globalisation. The GCTU reiterates its willingness to contribute towards a united world trade union movement based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and united action of all its components.

We are positive that the efforts being taken by trade unions to this effect could be more

fruitful if combined with the efforts by other NGOs in the social sphere. We hope that both the 2nd World Trade Union Forum and the 3rd World Social Forum involving broad participation of union representatives from all over the world will be conducive to achieving this aim.

We wish you a successful and fruitful Forum.

STATEMENT

by the General Confederation of Trade Unions on the International Women's Day

Moscow, March 2003

The International Women's Day is marked on 8 March by the decision of the United Nations as a day of struggle for women's legal and socio-economic equality.

Today the CIS countries are carrying out programmes aiming to promote the status of women in the political and economic spheres. Measures are being taken to prevent sex discrimination in employment. Dismissal of pregnant women has been banned. Other steps are also being undertaken to secure gender equality in line with relevant UN and ILO documents.

Women participate actively in strengthening the trade union movement. By joining the union ranks and getting involved in the life of their work collectives, they make an outstanding contribution to the struggles for their legal, social and economic interests, and thus enhance their status and role in their societies.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions is proud of the effective work being done by women's committees, councils and other bodies set up by trade unions in CIS

countries. Their direct participation in collective bargaining helps conclude collective agreements that provide for better working conditions and higher material standards for women. In close cooperation with various government agencies and non-governmental women's organisations, these committees arrange forums and seminars, organise retraining courses for unemployed women, assist them in getting new jobs, and revive the tradition of holding trade skill contests.

However, the General Confederation of Trade Unions notes, once again, that most of the CIS countries do not adhere strictly to the principle of gender equality proclaimed by their national legislation. Female unemployment is still high, and the level of women's work remuneration is much lower than that of men's. The specific health and safety standards for women are not always observed. Hardly any CIS country can boast of a minimum wage matching the national subsistence minimum, which means that the number of poor and low-income families is large. The closing down of many enterprises employing predominantly female labour forces women into the informal sector, with its super-exploitation, unreasonably low wages, poorly organised workforce, and, consequently, weak social protection. National plans and programmes to improve women's situation are under-funded.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions is worried over the violations of human rights of migrant workers in the Commonwealth territory. The reforms have produced a new social tragedy, i.e. traffic in human beings that primarily involves women and children. According to some estimates, about 600 thousand "slaves" in the world are former USSR citizens. Thousands of women and girls from CIS countries are sold and transported to Western Europe and North

America where they are forced to work, held in debt bondage, deprived of the freedom of movement, and subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse in most perverted forms. According to the UN, human trafficking alone brings the organised criminal groups a profit of more than US\$ 3.5 billion annually. Turning women into a commodity not only ruins their lives, but also aggravates the demographic crisis in many Commonwealth States.

While voicing its alarm at all the problems of discrimination against women, the General Confederation of Trade Unions and its member organisations reiterate they intend to carry on their fight for the implementation of all the international instruments aiming to improve the situation of women. We call upon the national trade union centres in the Commonwealth countries, the industrial trade union internationals, and women's organisations to enhance public control over the fulfilment of the Beijing Platform of Action, step up their struggles for the liquidation of any forms of discrimination against women, and concentrate their efforts on preventing traffic in women and children.

In conformity with the decisions of the GCTU 4th Congress, we will make a more active use of trade union media for gender education of workers and for disseminating comprehensive information about the activity of women's committees and councils to protect the legal and socio-economic interests of women and their families.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions extends its greetings to all women in the CIS countries on the occasion of the International Women's Day, and urges all workers and trade unions to press more vigorously for real gender equality. We wish women every success in their deeds and initiatives, and may all their hopes come true!

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THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS, GCTU, IS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION THAT WAS FOUNDED AT ITS FIRST CONGRESS ON 16 APRIL 1992.

ITS CONSTITUTION, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE FIRST CONGRESS, WAS AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTED BY THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE GCTU ON 22 SEPTEMBER 1993, AND THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE GCTU ON 18 SEPTEMBER 1997

THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE GCTU ARE:

- CO-ORDINATION OF ITS AFFILIATES' ACTIVITIES ON THE PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS, STUDENTS AND PENSIONERS;*
- ASSISTANCE IN THEIR PROTECTION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES;*
- AND*
- ORGANISING TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY AND CO-ORDINATION OF ITS AFFILIATES' INTERNATIONAL POLICIES.*

THE GCTU BUILDS ITS ACTIVITIES IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNIVERSALLY RECOGNISED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, WITH FULL RESPECT FOR ITS AFFILIATES' COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AND THE EQUALITY OF THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

THE GCTU AFFILIATES NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTRES OF ARMENIA, BELARUS, GEORGIA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGHYZSTAN, MOLDOVA, RUSSIA, TAJIKISTAN, UZBEKISTAN, AND UKRAINE, AS WELL AS 37 BRANCH TRADE UNION INTERNATIONALS. BESIDES BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON CO-OPERATION WAS SIGNED WITH THE TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION OF AZERBAIJAN .

THE GCTU IS READY TO CO-OPERATE WITH ANY OTHER NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR BEING MEMBERS OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEIR PARTICIPATION IN GCTU ACTIVITIES DOES NOT IN ANY WAY RESTRICT THE INDEPENDENCE OF ITS AFFILIATES.

THE CONFEDERATION ENJOYS OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE CIS INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, THE CIS COUNCIL OF HEADS OF STATE, THE CIS COUNCIL OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, THE CIS INTERSTATE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, ETC.

INTERNATIONALLY, IT IS IN CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE ILO , UN DPI AND ECOSOC.

THE GCTU SUPREME BODIES ARE THE CONGRESS, CONVENED ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS, AND, IN THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THE CONGRESSES, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES IS EXERCISED BY THE GCTU AUDITING COMMISSION.

PRESIDENT OF THE GCTU IS VLADIMIR SCHERBAKOV

DEAR READERS

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