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HTUR/JK/sdr

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Dear Sirs,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the 168 million working men and women who it represents through its 305 national affiliates in 153 countries and territories, including the Hong Kong SAR, I am writing to you to express my deep concern at the current failure to undertake proper negotiations and effective responses to the strike of bar bending construction workers.

The ITUC understands that the strike began on 8 August 2007, as a direct response to the stagnation of wage levels in the industry and the fact that wages – currently set at 800 HKD a day – have not yet reached anywhere near the level awarded some ten years ago in 1997. The workers are also calling for a working day of eight hours.

We further understand that the Hong Kong Bar Bending Contractors Association has been reported as stating that it will not enter into negotiations with the HKCTU, which is an organisation affiliated to the ITUC. We know that the HKCTU has been supporting the workers for the past two weeks. The ITUC urges both the Contractors association and the Hong Kong SAR Government to undertake any steps necessary to enter into full negotiations in good faith with the HKCTU and representatives of the striking workers. We believe that the workers demands are fair and deserving.

While the strike continues, we have expressed our full support to the workers in their struggle and will continue to offer any assistance and support that is deemed necessary by those involved.

Yours truly,

General Secretary