

Geneva, 12 December 2013

To IndustriALL Global Union Affiliates in South Africa

IndustriALL Global Unions' Tribute to Nelson Mandela

Dear Comrades,

Our sympathies go out to all of you in deeply mourning the passing of Nelson Mandela. We mourn his death but at the same time we also celebrate his life, his legacy and the enormous contribution he made to bring to an end the universally reviled system of apartheid, to fight for social justice and to give birth to a multiracial democracy in South Africa.

For us in the labour movement, Nelson Mandela was also a strong ally of the working class. He fully recognized the essential role played by organized labour in dismantling the heinous system of racial discrimination. He fought relentlessly to bring about a new society that would honor the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He believed fervently that the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

Nelson Mandela's unparalleled struggle has taught a very important lesson to labour and social movements from around the world. In order to consolidate our victories, we need to enact laws and create institutions that advance our vision to live in far more equal and fair societies.

We equally celebrate Nelson Mandela's exceptional ability to forgive the cruelties of his captors and the oppressive regime of apartheid, and to move far beyond the sick oppressor-oppressed relation to tread into the realm of freedom. As Barack Obama aptly put it, "It took a man like Madiba to free not just the prisoner, but the jailer as well."

We stand with you comrades, the whole people in South Africa and people from around the world, who also revered him, in mourning Madiba's passing. We will miss him deeply.

In solidarity,



Jyrki Raina
General Secretary