

Pittsburgh Declaration - 2015

The steel producing unions from across the world meeting in Pittsburgh today call for urgent action to protect our jobs and communities from the current wave of industrial destruction that is wiping out industrial jobs on a global scale and systematically eroding workers' rights and working conditions.

As trade unions, we defend the rights of all workers across the globe and the right of development for every country. But with this right comes the responsibility to pursue development that is economically and environmentally sustainable.

We believe that if our societies are to be truly sustainable then so must be the way we trade with each other and how we develop our own markets. We believe that the strongest sign of a fair society is the way in which workers and their unions are treated.

Steel is the world's second largest industry with a turnover of \$900 billion. It has been the foundation for the last 100 years of industrial progress, driving industrial and environmental innovations and technologies and supporting economic growth in many other industrial sectors. Global steel use is projected to increase by 50% by 2050.

Yet the current conditions faced by the industry are the worst in a generation. Despite an increase in average steel use over the last decade, overcapacity is now a serious threat to the long-term future of our industry. China's annual production, driven by state-owned and controlled enterprises, has increased five-fold in the past 15 years and now exceeds 800 million tons. This unchecked expansion combined with a long-term slowdown of China's economic growth is now dumping 90 million tons of steel into global markets, with devastating effects on steelmaking communities and the environment.

We believe it is not acceptable to threaten the jobs, families and communities of hundreds of thousands of workers across the world due to these unfair and illegal trade practices. Ignoring the impact of these decisions on workers and their industries while claiming to be a responsible global partner is unacceptable behaviour from any nation. It is also unacceptable to ignore the continued state-sponsored financing of new steelmaking capacity with no commitment to long-term sustainability.

We also believe that global institutions and our governments must do more to highlight where market distortions occur and develop strategies to prevent them. National governments must aggressively enforce WTO anti-dumping rules, strengthen laws against unfair competition, and recognize the right of affected workers and communities to seek relief through those laws. Governments must also recognize the value of collective bargaining and workers' right to freedom of association.

Our governments must also proactively coordinate efforts to prevent unfair steel dumping. In particular the Organisation Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) High Level Steel Committee must continue to pursue a fair and just global framework for steel producers, free of market distortions.

We strongly oppose any effort by the European Commission to grant market economy status to China, which would open the floodgates to further unfair competition at a time of economic vulnerability.

In place of a downward spiral of unfair competition, we call on our governments to adopt active industrial policies including massive investment in sorely-needed infrastructure and training, with a focus on joint apprenticeship programs. Governments must also make targeted interventions to rescue steelmaking communities threatened with extinction by plant shutdowns. Governments and global institutions must consider the climactic consequences of shutting down steel-making capacity that meets the strictest environmental and quality standards while allowing unfettered growth where such standards are ignored.

As unions we commit to coordinated action to save the global steel industry and the millions of family- and community-sustaining jobs it creates. We will continue to mobilize union members, their families and communities, and the public to fight back against destruction of industrial jobs and raise awareness with our public policy makers over the important contribution that the steel industry makes to our economies and to society as a whole. With this in mind we will aim to develop an environment that enables the global steel industry to flourish and steelworkers along with it.