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SHARAN BURROW
GENERAL SECRETARY
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Haider Al Abadi
Prime Minister
Republic of Iraq
Baghdad,
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LEX/MS/sdr

29 March 2015

Payment of wages

Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation which represents more than 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories in order to express my serious concern over the non-payment of wages in the public sector.

We have been informed that tens of thousands of workers in self-financed companies under Iraq's Ministry of Industry were not paid for several months. Some workers received one month's pay in February after your government made loans available to affected companies. However, the fact that the 2015 budget does not include stable funding for workers in those companies is extremely worrisome. In fact, we understand that the budget law will make it more difficult for struggling companies to secure loans to pay workers' salaries, thereby compounding the problem of unpaid wages, corporate bankruptcy and rising unemployment. Therefore, we strongly urge you to develop budgetary policies that promote economic growth through investment in public-sector companies, instead of victimising workers and deepening economic misery.

Furthermore, we would like to highlight that socio-economic policies with a significant impact on working people and their families must be adopted in consultation with representative trade unions. Iraqi labour laws continue to deny public sector workers the right to organise and to bargain collectively. Despite repeated calls from the ILO and ITUC requesting your government to abide by its obligations under ILO Convention 98, which applies to private as well as public sector workers, your government has systematically failed to bring its legislation in line with international labour standards. Once more, we request you to amend your legislation and to ensure that public sector workers effectively enjoy their right to organise and to bargain collectively.

Workers are integral to any successful efforts to rebuild the Iraqi economy and to preventing or reducing the impact of economic shocks. The government of Iraq has the responsibility to create and implement policies that protect jobs and strengthen workers' rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B. ...', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary