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Dear Colleagues:

We are writing you concerning the OECD expansion process, which includes new states, Israel amongst these.

Indeed, on December 3 2007, Mr Gurría, OECD Secretary General, sent Israel a "road map" for accession.

We would like to point out that article 17, in referring to how to become a member of OECD ("a general procedure for future accessions"), and also articles 4 and 5 of the specific "road map" for accession that Mr Gurría sent to the Israeli authorities in Jerusalem (an occupied territory according to international laws and UN resolutions) require "the commitment to pluralist democracy based on the rule of law and the respect of human rights":

*"4. The Council reaffirms that OECD Membership is committed to fundamental values, which candidate countries are expected to share. These fundamental values serve as the foundation of the like-mindedness of OECD Members and have been expressed in various OECD Ministerial Communiqués.*

*Accepting these values, along with the established body of OECD instruments, standards and benchmarks, is a requirement for membership.*

*5. These fundamental values include a commitment to pluralist democracy based on the rule of law and the respect of human rights, adherence to open and transparent market economy principles and a shared goal of sustainable development. "*

Israel nowadays keeps on increasing the occupation, as it has done in the past. Settlements grow as does land confiscation. The Wall grows, dividing, destroying and choking communities and local economies. These actions are against UN Resolutions, Geneva Conventions and the Hague International Court of Justice Dictum. Of course, this does mean that Israel has not complied with the Road Map and the Annapolis Agreement, which established, amongst other issues, an end to land confiscation and to new settlements. Water is appropriated by Israel and then a small amount of it is sold to Palestinians, who have to pay a higher price than Israelis. Israel places "made in Israel" labels to products made in the Occupied Territories, Jerusalem included. Near 700 checkpoints deny freedom of movement to the sick, students, workers and their produce, so Palestinian economic and social life becomes impossible. Palestinian people survive thanks to international aid and many times this means buying Israeli products, which entrenches colonisation.

The siege against Gaza and the collective punishment have been described as criminal actions by many jurists and humanitarian organizations. Indiscriminate bombardments

have killed hundreds of people and, amongst other damages, have destroyed the Palestinian Union headquarters.

In these circumstances, because of Israel's lack of interest in a just peace, the idea of increasing OECD relations with it lacks any meaning. Upholding international law becomes more relevant and the protection of besieged Palestinian people in their Wall-made Bantustans, in the checkpoints and in Gaza is more urgent. Palestinian workers' current situation will only improve when the occupation ends and when the international community makes sure Israel's policies of *faits accomplis* is not rewarded with prizes like free access to the OECD.

Because of this, USO, together with other organizations, believes that TUAC has to make OECD governments aware of our support to a just peace process between Israelis and Palestinians and that this process is incompatible with the occupation.

Consequently, negotiations in order to make Israel an OECD member should be cancelled until Israel takes clear steps to end the occupation.

We ask you to include this issue in the next December 11 TUAC meeting, and to demand the cancellation of negotiations on Israel entry in the OECD.

Yours,

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