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**ILO DIRECTOR-GENERAL JUAN SOMAVIA ACCEPTS INVITATION TO MAKE
OFFICIAL VISIT TO EGYPT**

GENEVA (ILO News) – International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Juan Somavia will travel to Egypt on Friday 11 March 2011 at the invitation of the country's government to examine the labour and social situation there and the manner in which the ILO can best provide support and assistance during the transitional period and beyond.

“Following the courageous and inspiring events of late January that brought about a historical change, the Egyptian Government has indicated to the ILO its interest to address numerous pending challenges, among them high unemployment, especially among youth, wage issues, freedom of association, social dialogue and other labour market questions” said Mr. Somavia.

“The ILO stands ready to assist Egypt and its people with all the expertise available.” Mr. Somavia said. “I am certain this mission will mark the beginning of a new chapter of dialogue and cooperation between Egypt and the ILO”.

During his two-day trip to the Egyptian capital, Mr. Somavia is scheduled to hold talks with Prime Minister Essam Sharaf as well as the Ministers of Finance, Labour and Foreign Affairs. He will also meet with ILO constituents, in particular representatives of independent unions as well as youth leaders of the revolution and civil society actors.

In a statement on 2 February 2011, Director-General Somavia, together with highlighting his respect “for the massive and courageous expression of the will of the people of Egypt”, welcomed the creation of the Egyptian Independent Trade Union Federation. (http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_151208/lang--en/index.htm)

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