Respected Comrades in the presidium, leaders of the mighty Ceylon Bank Employees Union, Comrade CH. Venkatachalam / General Secretary of the All India Bank Employees Association and also the Chairman of the Finance Committee of WFTU and the Delegates who have come from different parts of Sri Lanka and also the International fraternal Delegates I take this opportunity on behalf of the mother Trade Union of India AITUC and also the World Federation of Trade Unions to congratulate all the Delegates and participants and convey my revolutionary greetings for the success of the 14th National Delegates Conference of Ceylon Bank Employees Union.

Dear Comrades, your conference is taking place at a time when the entire working people of the World are under attack. The greed of monopolies and corporate houses for more and more
profit increases, so does the attack against the right to organize, collective bargaining and strike. The current global situation is facing the deepening of the capitalist crisis and the dramatic widening of social inequalities. The working people are the victims of high cost of living and inflation is severely undermining the living standards of Workers, Farmers and Pensioners. As the Trade Unions are resisting and fighting against such attacks, the capitalist and their supportive Governments are attacking the Trade Union freedoms and democratic rights of the workers. They take all type of repressive measures by using the Police forces through trials and Courts or through political and economical attacks. Majority of the policies of the Governments all over the World are based on the dictates of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank through their Neoliberal Economic Policies and also in the name of Free Market etc.,

The WFTU which represents the working class of more than 130 Countries is very clear in its approach that we cannot separate the attack on Trade Union freedoms and workers democratic rights from the attack on the standard of living, wages, Pension, social security and in general anything that constitutes “a cost for the Employers and States and inevitably limits the profits and super profits of monopolies”. Contractual
employment, outsourcing, fixed term employment etc. are just some forms of attack of the harsh neo liberal policeis. The WFTU has given clarion call that only through our united struggles the workers can built a militant front capable of defending their rights and pave the way for a different course that needs to peace, social justice and the abolition exploitation. Solidarity and Internationalism are the weapons of the working class. In the 112th session of the ILO the WFTU General Secretary was critical about the role of International Labour Orgnization. He has stated that we have no illusions on ILO. Today’s ILO in the era of capitalist globalization and the dominants of harsh neo liberalizm cetainly does not meet the demands and expectations of workers. He has also pointed out that the labour relations are continuously deregulated, collective negotations are shrinking, collective agreements are violated, stable and permanent employment is replaced with flexible forms.

The right to organize is a fundamental right and the Trade Union movement cannot compramize to waive the right to strike under any circumstance. ILO Convention 87 is a historic triumph for workers and progressive movements after decades of struggle.

Dear Comrades, you are in the Banking Industry, Money in the Banks belongs to the people and it should be for the benefit of the people. However, the Banking Industry is the major financial
sector which is subjected to all types of attacks including Privatization and writing off the lons taken by the Corporates in the name of non performign assets. I am not going into the details about what is happening in the Banking Industry since Comrade CH. Venkatachalam one of the expert in the Banking Industry and veteran Trade Union leader of the Bank Employees of India, himself is present here to explain those issues.

India is your neighbor country and the working class of India under the banner of the joint platform of Central Trade Unions is in a war path against the anti working class policies being followed by the present NDA Government. The hard earned Labour Laws of the Country are abolished and reduced into 4 Labour Codes, which is nothing but pro-corporate Labour Codes. The Pension right of the Government Employees is taken away and a new contributory Pension is introduced against which the more than 6 crore Government employees both Central and States are fighting. For the past 10 years the annual mandatory meeting of the Indian Labour Conference is not being held by the present Government. Corporatization of the Government Sector like Defence Industry, Railways and Privatization of Public Sector has become the declared policy of the present Government in India. In the name of National Monetization Pipeline (NMP) National assets of Central Government Departments and Public Sector Enterprises are being sold to the Corporates at throwaway
price. No Sector is spared, whether it is Telecom, Energy, Oil, Heavy Industry, Coal and Mines, Steel etc. in all these strategic sectors Private Corporates are given a red carpet welcome by the Government. Public Health Services and Public Distribution System are also under attack. Trade Unions are relentlessly fighting against all these attacks.

Dear Comrades, the WFTU, the AITUC and all the left and democratic Trade Unions of India are with you in all your struggle to save the Banking Industry of Sri Lanka and also in your struggle for protecting the rights and benefits of the working class. I once again convey my warm greetings to all of you and I am confident that your Conference will discuss all the issues affecting the working class in general and the Bankmen in particular and take dynamic decisions for carrying forward your historical struggle. The WFTU will continue to fight for a World without wars and imperialistic interventions. The WFTU is already observing various International Action Day in support of the people of Cuba and also the people of Palestine. WFTU will not stop fighting and we will carry forward the battle for achieving our goals where the working class is liberated from all types of attacks and injustice.

Thank you Comrades.

(C.SRIKUMAR)
Deputy General Secretary / WFTU