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GdF Stays Firm On 1H Suez Merger, As Union Cries Foul

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PARIS (Dow Jones)--**Gaz de France** (1020848.FR), which plans to merge with fellow-utility Suez (SZE.FR), said Thursday that its calendar for concluding the tie-up in the first half of 2008 remains in place, despite tensions with union representatives.

GdF responded to heavy criticism Thursday from the CGT union, by saying, through a spokeswoman, that its management "gives priority to dialogue and wishes to pursue consultation with the workers' representatives."

The calendar for the merger remains unchanged, the **GdF** spokeswoman told Dow Jones Newswires.

Earlier Thursday, the CGT issued a statement criticizing what it described as management obstruction at a Wednesday meeting to discuss the planned merger.

GdF doesn't have a particular date on which it expects to get a definitive view from its works council, the spokeswoman said.

Workers' representatives at **GdF** have sought to delay the merger, which entails the privatization of the company.

GdF's French works council, composed of union delegates, hasn't yet filed its view on the merger. French rules require the works council to have expressed an opinion, be it negative or positive, before a tie-up can come to fruition.

The CGT, in its statement, accused **GdF** of seeking to avoid giving adequate time to an expert charged with analyzing documents related to the planned merger.

"This attitude of obstruction is linked to the fact that the management has nothing in mind but its merger schedule," the CGT said.

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