

# LABOR

# *magazine*



## Third World Social Forum



**DOSSIER  
NEPAD**

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**Picture**  
**Africa and NEPAD**

# PORTRAIT

**Have you always been interested in trade unionism?**

As soon I started working at the NMBS/SNCB (Belgian Rail), I became a local activist, within the *Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond* (ACV-CSC). I even became president of a local ACV-CSC section at the inter-trade level. In 1980, the federation was looking for someone for the internal communication (the company bulletin "*Het Spoor*" (Rail) already existed. Willy Thijs, the current Secretary General of the WCL, believed that I could collaborate with the federation, acting as an intermediary between the members and the legal experts who had to deal with the then problems.



*Michel Bovy, youngest President of a federation!*

AS PRESIDENT OF FIOST (INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS OF TRANSPORT WORKERS), OF ACV-CSC TRANSCOM (TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION) AND OF WCL TRADE ACTION, MICHEL BOVY IS FOLLOWING WITH RESOLUTION AND DETERMINATION A TRADE UNION CAREER THAT STARTED TWENTY YEARS AGO. AN INTERVIEW WITH THIS LEADER, WHO HAS JUST CLOSED THE SUCCESSFUL 24th FIOST CONGRESS.

**Michel Bovy**

**The period of major changes?**

Indeed. The 1980s were rather turbulent. Companies underwent far-reaching policy changes. It was no doubt a decisive

time for all of us. In the late 1980s, the President of our trade federation decided to retire. He took his early retirement, actually. Nobody had expected him to leave us so soon. They proposed me as his successor. I thought this over for a long time and eventually decided to accept the proposal. I've held this office for many years now (since 1 August 1988) and I'm still not tired of it. I was at that moment the youngest president ever of an ACV-CSC federation. The situation has changed since... So, we started working with the team, or rather we went on working, because the arrival of a new leader does not alter the field of action. We continued the word until the late 1990s, when the organisation was restructured. We had to deal with many changes in the companies like, for instance, the emerging liberalisation of the public companies. But not only the companies changed. People and mentalities evolved as well. As compared with other Belgian trade unions, the ACV-CSC is in my opinion the most important trade union, the one carrying most weight.

*Continued on page 23*



# An important year!

*2003 has already started. This year will be crucial in more ways than one, for the World Confederation of Labour as well as for its regional organisations. They will all take decisions which will, no doubt, have an influence on their future actions.*

*Through the values they have set, WCL member organisations are essential social stakeholders in the current world context.*

*For the DOAWTU (Democratic Organisation of African Workers' Trade Unions), our youngest regional branch (it was established in 1995), this year is synonymous with change. In fact, it is in September that it will hold its Congress. Let us be assured that it will bring a new breath for all African workers. BATU (Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists), the WCT Asian regional branch, on its part held its Congress in 2001. It is as a result of decisions taken during this meeting that BATU will modify its statutes. The objective is better participation of member organisations of our regional branch and a greater impact on this continent which contains two thirds of humanity. This change will no doubt also be seen in the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). It is from 26 to 29 May, in Prague, that its 10th Statutory Congress will be held. At the WCL we hope that the internal pluralism of this unitary organisation will be strengthened. Finally, the CLAT (Central latinamericana de trabajadores) has just held its 27th Council Latin American meeting (in Lima, 14 to 18 January) where it requested among others, that the voice of the Venezuelan people be heard by respecting the constitution of the country and by supporting a peaceful and democratic political process through popular consultation. During this meeting, the CLAT fixed a date for its next Congress. It will be held in Brasilia in November 2004 with two important items on the agenda: reassessing the organisation and the election of a new team.*

*Considering these big meetings, these perspectives and through the development of Trade Action, the World Confederation of Labour is convinced that the trade union organisation will be strengthened effectively. It can then better defend workers, their rights, their dignity and their participation in taking decisions which concern them. Let us add that it is in unity of action that we will be able to improve the conditions of all and respect for social justice.*



Willy Thys  
General Secretary

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# The 3rd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, sign of hope!

IT WAS FROM 23 TO 28 JANUARY 2003, IN PORTO ALEGRE, THAT THE THIRD EDITION OF THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM (WSF) WAS HELD. THE LEAST THAT CAN BE SAID, IS THAT THIS EVENT WAS LARGELY PATRONISED: 100 000 PEOPLE GATHERED IN THE CAPITAL OF THE RIO GRANDE DO SUL PROVINCE TO SAY "NO" TO NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION.

The figures are impressive: 100 000 participants, more than 20 000 delegates from more than 5 700 organisations for a total of more than 150 countries represented. Trade union presence also increased, especially during initiatives like the World Social Forum. It is of course not obvious, with such diversity, to have a single message. But that is not the important thing. The World Social Forum is after all a process, an exchange of ideas which contributes to building real alternatives to globalisation under the neo-liberal model. "*The Social Forum is an instrument for bringing about change*" declared Eduardo Estevez, vice General Secretary of the World Confederation of Labour "*today, the thinking is no longer unique*".

The WCL understood it well, and this has been so from the beginning, since it is a member of the Inter-

national Committee (which set the stages for establishing the WSF) right from its first edition and participated in all preparatory meetings and evaluation linked to the Forum. More than one hundred organisations are today part of it. This year, it was a strong WCL delegation which went to Brazil with representatives of member organisations from all the continents, well-assisted by the action of CAT-Brazil (Central Autônoma de trabalhadores) and the CNPL (Confederação Nacional de Profissoes Liberais).

## WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE FORUM?

Next year will be synonymous with change. The International Council of the Forum has in fact decided that its next edition would be organised in India in 2004. It should, in all probability return to Brazil in 2005. According to Roberto Savio, Director of Inter Press Service and member of the International Council, "*this decision took into account, among others, the need to facilitate participation of Asian and African individuals and organisations, for whom access to Porto Alegre meetings is difficult due to financial reasons and because of the distance*".

## THE 2nd WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

It was just before the opening of the WSF, at the very site of the forum, that the second edition of the World Trade Union Forum was held, enhanced by the presence of Juan Somavia, Director General of the ILO. Organised jointly by the WCL, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Trade Union Forum, which had as theme, "*The trade union movement at the centre of civil society*", attracted tens of trade union organisations. "*Participants at this World Social Forum are many more today than in the past years*", stated Willy Thys, General Secretary of the WCL, "*this initiative responds to a process which opens itself up horizontally and which counts on the capacity to transform the current diver-*



Demonstration for peace



**DURING THIS TIME, IN DAVOS...**

The World Social Forum, let us recall, is for the time being, still held today on the same dates as the Davos World Economic Forum. It is in this mountain station, in Switzerland, that those in the economic and financial environment have gathered each year for 33 years now. The WCL, just like President Lula, of Brazil, was present to deliver the same message as in Porto Alegre. According to the WCL, *“the confidence of workers throughout the world will only be restored if their fundamental rights are respected, promoted and guaranteed. The ILO has a role to play in global governance at the same level as financial institutions like the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO”*.

*sity. We are there to enable to the end, progressive forces to be able to impose a more democratic, more just model, which gives more respect to women and men, cultures and nature”.*

**TWO SEMINARS...**

The economy must favour development. It serves man and constitutes a means and not an end in itself. The WCL is convinced, and organised a seminar where more that 20 trade union leaders from all the continents were able to discuss the form that globalisation is taking. The discussions also recalled the thrust of WCL policies drawn up during the Bucharest Congress.

Another joint initiative of the WCL, ICFTU and the ETUC, two days of “debate” with other social organisations saw the light of day at the very centre of the Forum on 24 and 25 January. The discussions centred around four themes: How to create decent employment? Is it possible to ensure respect of labour standards with current laws such as codes of conduct? How to incorporate a social dimension into integration agreements? And what does the debate think about global governance? Representatives of the ILO including Jean-Claude Janvillier, Director of the Standards Department joined this debate, which insisted on the importance of a system, centred on justice. Aware of the importance of these days, Willy Thys, in his speech, stated, *“Here we are gathered*



*“It is in unity of action that we will be able to defend the rights of all”*

*today for a seminar where trade union organisations are debating with social organisations [...] the WCL is convinced that it is in unity of action that we will be able to defend the rights of all, including workers. This unity, this solidarity must be created with all social stakeholders [...]”.*

The conclusion is that the WCL totally supports the holding of a new World Social Forum and the organisation of regional fora, since it is important to create alternatives so that globalisation of social justice is possible.

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**IRAQ...**

From time immemorial, the WCL has been opposed to the solution of conflicts through violence.

This is why it has several times made known its position on the Iraqi crisis, particularly during the Davos summit, 27 January 2003: a war is not conceivable outside the UN framework; every nation has to respect UN resolutions, when it concerns Israel and Palestine as well. Security at the international level depends on this; the UN must continue to invest in seeking a negotiated solution.



## The ILO, its Office and its Governing Body

During the 285th ILO Governing Body session, Basile Mahan Gahé, Secretary General of the confederation Dignité (Ivory Coast), President of the World Confederation of Labour and member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office (ILO), took the floor on the situation in Ivory Coast. He pointed out that the current conflict was having disastrous effects on the lives of the workers. The spokesman for the workers' group conveyed his request for assistance to the plenary session of the Governing Body, which decided unanimously that the ILO would support the peace efforts in Ivory Coast and use every effort to arrive at a rapid solution for the conflict in this country.

According to declarations of the WCL, "*the International Labour Organisation should be on an equal footing with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the IMF and the World Bank*". Let us add that "*the WCL insists that the IFIs recognise expressly the precedence of the workers' rights and advance in the sense of a better world governance in cooperation with the ILO*". For a good understanding of the ILO's decisions and actions it is essential to know its structure and working method.

### EMPLOYERS, WORKERS AND GOVERNMENTS

The International Labour Organisation is a unique body, composed of 175 member states. The governments and social partners of these states can exchange views and experiences, and they can compare their national policies. Thanks to its tripartite structure the ILO offers not only governments, but also employer and worker representatives the opportunity to take part, on equal terms, in its policy-making and its programmes. We point out here that the ILO encourages tripartism in its member states "*through the advancement of a social dialogue associating trade unions and employers in the development and, if the occasion arises,*

*the implementation of the national policies, particularly in social and economic matters*".

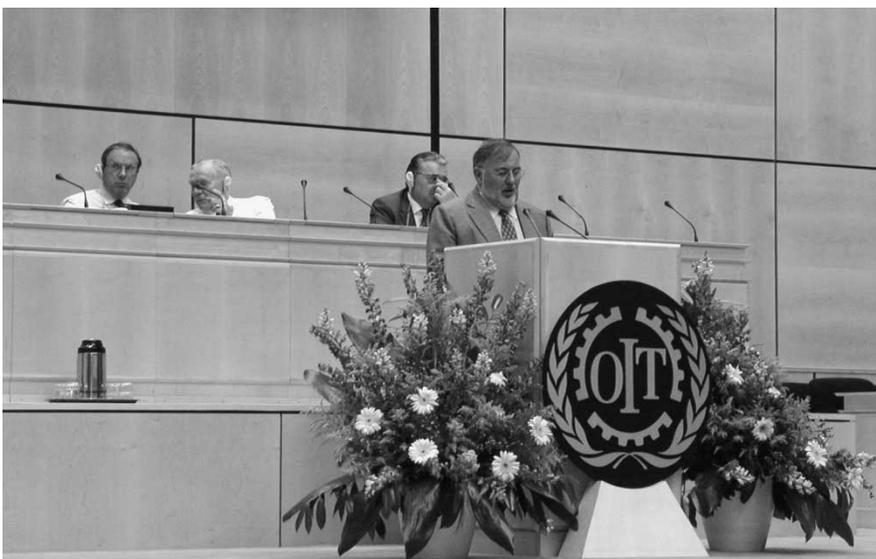
### INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC)

Every year in June, and this since 1919, the representatives of all member states assemble for the International Labour Conference in a joint effort to advance social protection and to improve the living and working conditions worldwide. Technically, each member state is represented by four delegates: two from the government, one from the employers and one from the workers. The workers' and the employers' delegates are completely independent, of course, and it happens that they disagree with their government or with each other. We remind here that last June the WCL declared itself in favour of a modern and stronger standard-setting system of the ILO. The international labour standards are today the only form of international social legislation. To be applied, however, legislation must be subject to controls that can even lead to sanctions. This is the reason for the existence of the Standards Committee.

### GOVERNING BODY AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

The Governing Body gives direction to the ILO's proceedings in the period between two conferences. It is composed of 28 government, 14 worker and 14 employer representatives. "*This executive body of the ILO assembles three times a year in Geneva. It takes the necessary measures for the implementation of the ILO policy, it draws up the programme and the budget, which it submits to the Conference for adoption, and it elects the Director General*". The WCL Executive Committee supports the reelection of Juan Somavia, the present Director General of the ILO, for a next term, on the basis of his accomplishments. Among other things, he has imparted more importance, a greater visibility and a stronger impact to the ILO at the international forums and institutions. The International Labour Office, established in Geneva, is the permanent secretariat of the ILO.

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*WCL in favour of a modern and stronger standard-setting system of the ILO*

Source: ILO



# Pakistan: Situation of Women

A difficult situation, one would say, going by the reports of Amnesty International (2002): tribal justice, murders of honour, no access to education, and this is just the top of a long list. Looking at all this, one wonders about the future of women in this region. This article will be about the situation of working women in particular.

First, tradition and culture determine the social value of gender, says Doulat Ahmed (Working Women Association/APTUC – All Pakistan Trade Union Congress) in his report on this subject. Unfortunately, they have brought a division between men and women. Women are easily forced into their role as housewives and mothers of the family, whereas men go out working to provide for their families. “*The Pakistani society is patriarchal*”, Doulat Ahmed adds. “*Men and women are separated and live in two completely different worlds, home and the outside world*”. Moreover, as the concept of honour is strongly developed in Pakistan, the sexual behaviour of women is viewed in many cases as a threat to the family honour. That is why the free movement of women is strongly curtailed through the system of “*Purdah*” (gender, segregation and violence against them).

## “A THREAT TO THE IDENTITY OF MEN”

The figures on education are alarming. Not only has the population grown, but also, since 1951, the total number of illiterates has doubled and the number of female illiterates even tripled. This is no real surprise as a large number of them are denied access to education. This fact has a direct impact on their position in the labour market. “*Besides, in the cultural context of Pakistan the salaries of working women are considered a threat to the ego and identity of men*”, says Doulat Ahmed; “*that’s why most of them (± 70%) stay at home to do the household chores*”. For working women life is far from easy. First, it has to be pointed out that most of them work in agriculture. The others, those working in urban circles, receive very low wages and are sub-

ject to in many cases awkward working conditions. Doulat Ahmed also reveals that three-quarters of the Pakistani women working in urban areas do so in the informal sector. “*Most of the job ‘opportunities’ offered to women are found in the informal sector, in which each social protection is lacking*”. The situation is obviously not easy. Trade union initiatives to integrate women’s concerns into their agendas and struggles are therefore essential. In the case of Pakistan, the WWA (Working Women Association) and the APTUC accomplish an important task (cf. box)

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Source: Doulat Ahmed, *Working Women in Pakistan – an Overview*.

In 2001 the Working Women Association (WWA) made efforts to ensure a better representation of women in the trade union decision-making bodies. The WWA also contributed to the education and training of women so that they are better prepared for the struggle against the acts of discrimination they fall prey to. It should be pointed out that the APTUC, at its 7th Congress, elected four women to its Executive Committee.



## THE COUNTRY

**Capital:** Islamabad

**Population:** 152.3 million inhabitants (expectation: 275 million in 2025)

**Population density:** 189.2 inh./km<sup>2</sup>

**Poverty index:** 84.7% of the population has to manage with less than two dollars a day

**Life expectancy:** 63 years

**Government leader:** Parvez Musharraf.



Representatives of Dignité — Ivory Coast — at the WCL in December last



Kattia Paredes and the participants in the seminar for women trade unionists in Morocco



Left: Governor of the Federal State of Rio Grando do Sul (Brazil) at the WCL

## ● EUROPE SSSS joins WCL

At its latest session, in October 2002, the WCL Executive Committee approved the application for affiliation submitted by the SSSS (Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia). This Serbian trade union, with its one million members the largest and strongest one in the Balkans, is now officially part of the World Confederation of Labour. The decision of the Executive Committee was inspired by the very favourable and encouraging report from the European Section of the WCL.

*“Both organisations (WCL and SSSS) have maintained contacts for several years already”,* explains Jaap Wienen, WCL Deputy Secretary General, *“we have observed with satisfaction the favourable changes and developments at the SSSS in the past two years”.*

The WCL could observe these changes from close by during the SSSS Congress, in April 2002. The Congress indeed made all its decisions openly and in transparency. *“We attended the Congress of an organisation that is fully independent of the state and protects the rights of its members and of the workers of Serbia”,* Jaap Wienen adds; *“we are convinced that the SSSS will work on the development of the Serbian society and use every effort to protect the weakest”.*

The international trade federations of the WCL have already established contacts with the various branches of the SSSS. They can help the Serbian confederation by means of specific development and training programmes.

## ● Globalisation: main theme of 48th CFTC Congress

The 48th CFTC Congress, assembled in Toulouse (France) in mid November, went into the globalisation issue. Grassroots trade unionists and experts could exchange experiences and analyses during a round table. Isabelle Hoferlin, head of the Labour Standards Department, addressed the Congress on behalf of the WCL, giving examples of poignant consequences of neo-liberal globalisation in the countries of the South. *“In Latin America trade union leaders keep being assassinated for having defended their social democratic principles, and in Sri Lanka women working in the free zones have no social protection whatsoever”,* Isabelle testified. *“For all these reasons the WCL regards the basic workers’*

*rights and the freedom of collective bargaining as priorities”.* For his part Bogdan Hossu, WCL Vice President for Eastern Europe and President of Cartel Alfa, revolted against the privatisation policy pursued by the World Bank. *“The European Union must fight this trend and restore the workers’ rights in the countries of the East”,* he stated. Bogdan Hossu also demanded the creation —jointly with the WTO and the ILO— of a World Economic Council to develop a reflection on world governance. Within this context Isabelle Hoferlin pointed out the fundamental role of the “standards”: *“The ILO conventions are essential to achieve respect for the basic workers’ rights”.*

## ● LATIN AMERICA Brazilian population welcomes President “Lula”, former trade union leader

On 1 January last, Luiz Inacio “Lula” da Silva —former trade union leader, head of the Labour Party and elected by the Brazilian people at the presidential elections of October 2002— became the new President of Brazil. For the first time, the country is getting ready for being governed by a radical left-wing leader who

turns down the neo-liberal globalisation. The WCL can only applaud the positive evolution and considers “Lula’s” election a new impetus for the activities of democratic organisations like the Central Autonomia de Trabalhadores (CAT), affiliated to the WCL.



*At the end of June 2002, the G8, the group of economically most powerful countries, adopted an aid programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The programme originates in a process heads of state from that continent had launched, under the name of New African Initiative.*

*NEPAD evokes a "Marshal Plan for Africa". This is far from*

*being the case, and anyway it would not be the first one since the 1960s that fails to yield concrete results. Will it be different this time? The qualification "partnership" implies that the actors trade on equal terms. So, is NEPAD more than the industrial world imposing again models that the so-called developing countries are to follow? In view of these stakes, NEPAD may*

*be aimed at Africa but concerns also the other countries from the South.*

*The trade union world is critical of some aspects of this partnership. The WCL's position (p. 16) is a «yes, but». Others (p. 12-13) have adopted a more negative attitude. The elements contained in the dossier should allow everybody to form an opinion.*

## SUMMARY

An African Initiative

Challenged in the African Civil Society

Dollars on conditions

The "yes, but" of the WCL

Dossier drawn up for WCL by Agence InfoSud – Belgium



# An African initiative

NEPAD IS INITIALLY AN AFRICAN INITIATIVE. THIS IS EVEN ITS MAIN DIFFERENCE FROM OTHER PROGRAMMES OF THE SAME KIND. ITS NOVELTY, HOWEVER, IS LIMITED.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development offers something different." (G8 Plan of Action for Africa, par 3).

The tone has been set right away: the initiative African heads of state launched in July 2001 and the economically most powerful countries have supported since June 2002, affirms the will to bring about a new order in the African development.

Why "different"? Because, the text goes on, "it is, first and foremost, a pledge by African Leaders to the people of Africa", the commitment to consolidate democracy and sound economic management, and to promote peace, security and people-centred development.

NEPAD is indeed originally an African creation. For some years, President Thabo MBEKI of South Africa, President Olusegun OBASANJO of Nigeria and President Abdel Aziz BOUTEFLIKA of Algeria, sometimes joined by their Zambian colleague, Chiluba, had drawn up the Millennium African Plan (MAP). President Abdoulaye WADE of Senegal, for his part, proposed his OMEGA plan.

Both plans were merged to constitute the New African Initiative (NAI), baptised later on New Partnership for Africa's Development. The merger was not inspired by the similarity of both plans, but by a sufficient proximity to present a united front to the outside world.

Thabo Mbeki "proposed an 'African Renaissance' through the promotion of education and the dawn of cultural values and African knowledge systems". Abdoulaye Wade, for this part, put forward "an 'Omega Plan' aimed at the creation of an African common market through a 'Marshall Plan' to finance large-scale infrastructural projects"<sup>1</sup>.

The South African Mbeki wanted trade and aid divided into two equal parts, whereas the Senegalese Wade, more liberal, retorted: "Let's first establish a fair trade. It isn't aid that's going to develop a country, it's competition, the habit of fighting with quality, quantity..."<sup>2</sup>. His perspective was to create an African common market founded on regional free trade.

## REGIONAL AND SECTORAL

A Summit of heads of state in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001, adopted the New African Initiative, another, held in Arusha (Tanzania), extended the political leadership to ten further heads of state, two per region. The initiative bears upon good governance, human rights, good economic management, access to the markets of the industrial countries... Nothing really new, thus the then commentators, except for the fact that, for once, the initiative was African, not imposed on this continent<sup>3</sup>.

All things considered, this is the aspect everybody insists on. The

Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, told the United Nations in September 2002 that "NEPAD could mark an international watershed in the relations among African states as well as between the industrial countries and Africa. NEPAD was conceived by Africans, for Africans. It proposes specific African solutions to problems that are profoundly rooted in the continent". And to contemplate for the near future "the end of generations of socio-economic decline".

In the meantime the initiative had gained ground. In July 2001, it was presented to the heads of state of the G8, at the notorious meeting in Genoa (Italy). Then, one year later, the same G8 ratified it in Kananaskis (Canada). The economically most powerful countries pledged to support the initiative, stressing also its innovative nature. But in what respect innovative? The G8 said it was enthusiastic about NEPAD basing itself on the region and calling largely, for the first time, on the local private sector to fund an African plan.

The ultimate aim of NEPAD is to make up the arrears that separate Africa from the developed countries. This bridging gap concept is the very heart of the Partnership. So, it is not only a matter of funding projects at random. Africa wants the developed countries to invest massively on the basis of precise mechanisms and to contribute



that way to bridging the gap in priority fields at the regional level.

The African leaders defined ten priority sectors, and a list of concrete projects was already submitted to the governing body of NEPAD. According to these heads of state, it is necessary to reason per region and field of action: “*The development of our states has soon come up against the narrowness of our economic spaces, they said. NEPAD has chosen to work out its projects in the ten sectors, not at the level of each country anymore, but at the level of each of the African regions: West Africa, North Africa, Central Africa, East and southern Africa, and Madagascar*”.

#### INDUSTRY WAS FORGOTTEN

The sectors in question are good public governance, good governance of the private economy, infrastructures, education, health, the new information and communication technologies, agriculture, the environment, energy and access to the markets of the developed countries. The attentive reader has

noticed the absence of industry, which the initiators of NEPAD justify by the fact that “*the foundation of development is agriculture rather than industry without local basis, which can be relocated to any country in the world*”.

The NEPAD initiatives contain a few timid elements of protest against the world order. On the Senegalese site of the Partnership it is said that “*Africa considers that it is in the globalisation and not in the margin of the evolution of the world, but this world has marginalised it to the point that it accounts for a mere 1.7% of the world trade*”. And that the poverty of Africa is “*very largely the fruit of the exploitation of our continent’s raw materials and of the work of its populations through its export products*”.

But the substance of the initiative remains rather traditional: one needs funds for development. Africa asks the United States and Europe to raise its development aid and to reserve 50% of it for the black continent.

The G8 members decided to support this African initiative. The United States promised to raise their foreign aid by 5 billion dollars a year, the 15 of the European Union by 7 billion, but they specified that “*each of us will decide in accordance with its own priorities and procedures how to allocate these funds*” and that they are intended for “*the African nations that rule with soundness, invest in their people and promote economic freedom*”. Ultimately very ideologically pronounced choices.

<http://www.nepad.org>

- 1 Cf. A. Zacharie (ATTAC), *Le Soir*, Brussels, 4 July 2002.
- 2 *La Libre Belgique*, Brussels, 11 Octobre 2001.
- 3 For the debate on this opinion, see p. 14-15.



## VIEWPOINT

# Challenged in the African Civil Society

THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT, WHICH WILL SERVE AS ECONOMIC PROGRAMME FOR THE AFRICAN UNION, IS CRITICISED BY THE AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISTS AND NGOS.

Political ambiguity, subjection to the rich countries, lack of transparency: these are the chief criticisms of NEPAD, which particularly the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has labelled as “*vague and ambiguous*”. “*It is a homemade structural adjustment programme*”, the South African NGOs say reproachfully. “*Serious reservations about the principles, the legitimacy, the process and the results of NEPAD*” were expressed by a forum of sixty African associations assembled during the recent summit of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU, currently African Union) in Durban, from 29 June to 11 July last... And it does not stop there. Assembled as a collective under the banner of the Civil Society *Indaba* (Conference), which organised late in August a “counter-Summit” of the Earth, South African associations marched on 31 August in the streets of Johannesburg. Their intention was to call on “*all the anti-imperialist organisations*” to denounce, right in the middle of the Summit of the Earth, the globalisation, the privatisation operations, the debt and, for the first time, the NEPAD.

It is indeed obvious that the New Partnership for Africa's Development does not meet with unanimous approval in Africa. Yet, this large-scale programme has no other declared aim than to get the African

economy off the ground. It rests on the continent's economic integration and on financial assistance on a new basis: foreign investments in exchange for respect for the principles of “good political governance” and of transparency in business.

## PERPLEXITY ON GOOD GOVERNANCE

“*It's always the same*”, the Zimbabwean journalist and trade unionist, Eunice Mafundikwa flares up in anger. “*Technocrats sitting at their desks draw up plans without taking the reality into account*”. Present in Durban during the 38th summit of the AU, this activist of the Zimbabwean NGO African Forum & Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) was part of a small group of representatives of the civil society, most of them trade unionists, who had come from all over the continent to rise up against NEPAD. “*On the pretext taking our destiny in hand, our leaders bow without any discussion to liberalism, to the debt, promising good governance without ever translating their words into action*”, rebelled Chachage Seithy Chachage, a Tanzanian university graduate.

The most recent example: the disputed reelection of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. “*The sanctions of Europe and the United States against Robert Mugabe and his ministers have made the OAU indignant, but nobody speaks any-*

*more of the disastrous consequences, for fourteen million people, of the policy pursued by his government*”, deplored Eunice Mafundikwa\*.

The declared aims of *good governance* leave the more perplex as NEPAD, unrecognised outside the circles of its main promoters — Abdoulaye Wade, Thabo Mbeki, the Nigerian Olusegun Obasanjo and the Algerian Abdelaziz Bouteflika— has an important political dimension. “*The main handicap of NEPAD is that it is a thing of the presidents, explains Mohau Pheko, a South African trade unionist. It is suspected of serving only the international publicity of one or the other*”. The frictions between the Senegalese and the South African president, visible in Durban in the matter of the recognition of the new Malagasy President, Marc Ravalomanana, risk at any moment hampering the implementation of NEPAD, some representatives of the civil society worry.

## CRUMBS

This new partnership irritates chiefly because it comes from above. The new African Union adopted it as an economic platform without any prior consultation, neither with the trade unions nor with the NGOs. This entity substitutes for the OAU with a system that is modelled on the European Union, including the creation, eventually,



*The African trade unions had the opportunity to express, under the aegis of the ILO, their views on the rôle of trade unions in NEPAD*

of a common market, a central bank and a single currency. And the Forum of African NGOs, assembled in the margin of the Durban summit, called on the NEPAD secretariat, based in South Africa, to “to organise a publicity campaign, to translate the documents on NEPAD into as many African languages as possible and to start a possibly large consultation process”.

The other criticism of the programme bears upon the response it sought during the latest G8 Summit, last June in Kananaskis (Canada). By asking the rich countries to give the green light, and obtaining just limited promises — aid worth sixty billion dollars—, the African heads of state conveyed the impression that Africa, instead of taking its destiny in hand, had held it out again.

“Several NGOs think that the G8 offered us just a few crumbs”, answered Durban Kwesi Amoako, Ghanaian economist and Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). “There is no reason to be discouraged or disappointed, however. Indeed, the first aim of NEPAD is to ensure that Africa appropriates its development, takes it in hand, accounts for it and is held responsible for it. Its aim is not to beg for more”.

The African trade unions had the opportunity to express their views at a conference held in Dakar under the aegis of the ILO on “the rôle of the African workers and trade unions in the face of NEPAD” (date). Their views indicate the appearance of trade union opposition in Africa because NEPAD promotes neo-liberal programmes that have already demonstrated their

limitations. In the opinion of the African trade unionists, NEPAD must define a new partnership, not damage Africa.

Anyway, an African Minister of Economy and Finance confided anonymously in Durban, “never before has NEPAD roused so much interest, including among its detractors, than since it is a concrete money issue”.

*Thandi Sam  
InfoSud-Syria*

\* On 25 November 2002, an interparliamentary meeting of the European Union and the ACP countries was cancelled at the last moment because of the presence, refused by Europe, of two members of the Zimbabwean delegation who figured on the black list of leaders of the Mugabe regime, unwanted in Europe.



## A CRITICAL LOOK

# Dollars on conditions

NEPAD IS ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE IT WILL GIVE ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT FUNDS. BUT, THE CRITICS CONTEND, IT IS THE RICH WORLD THAT IMPOSES THE RULES OF THE GAME.

At the end of June 2002, the countries of West and Central Africa decided to submit to the WTO disputes committee a file on the subventions the United States and Europe had granted their cotton producers. It is the result of a disastrous situation for the producers of white gold in these countries.

As early as in November 2001, the farmers' organisations<sup>1</sup> of the main three cotton producing countries in West Africa (Mali, Benin and Burkina Faso), joined by a Malagasy regional organisation, had raised the alarm. "We begin to wonder about the real will of the rich countries to reduce poverty in the poor countries", one could read in their public appeal, which the West African ministers of Agriculture took over. "These subventions", the African producers went on to say, "have perverse effects on the economies of our countries because they artificially boost the world production and cause an overproduction and therefore a drop in quotations on the world market".

What does this have to do with NEPAD? Maybe the contradiction between the "enthusiasm" of the G8 countries about contributing financially to the implementation of the African initiative and their reluctance to give products from the countries of the South free access to their markets. Whereas, in the prevailing logic of trade facili-

tation, this access is a prerequisite for sustainable development. It is true that the WTO Assembly in Doha approved in principle the abolition of the subventions, but it did so without specific commitment.

Now then, says for instance the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, "aid to agriculture in the rich countries remains a fundamental obstacle to the African development. The annual public development aid of the industrial countries totals around fifty billion dollars, whereas their aid to agriculture exceeds 350 billion dollars a year". At a seminar on the financing of NEPAD (Dakar, April 2002), the African participants too spoke of "unfair competition".

### SELF-PROCLAIMED STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

We have arrived here at one of NEPAD's ambiguities. Whereas in the 1970s the countries of the South demanded a new international economic order, they now demand more investments to fit in with the existing international order.

In its Report 2002 on the least advanced countries, the UNCTAD revealed that "there is a strong, currently underestimated possibility of reducing rapidly the extreme poverty in the LACs [...] provided [...] that a more favourable international environment is established". After

the support the G8 has lent NEPAD, such an environment is at a remote distance: the priorities mentioned by the richest countries are free, ie privatised economy; opening to foreign investments and to the market; good economic governance... All of them components of the structural adjustment plans the African trade unions blame today for raising the social gap between rich and poor.

The most radical critics argue that the approval of NEPAD by the G8 was "a structural adjustment plan for Africa", the easier to impose as the heads of state imposed it on themselves<sup>2</sup>. And it is compensated for by financial contributions according to the criteria that are convenient to the G8.

The G8 support for NEPAD will be intended "for the African nations that govern soundly, invest in their people and promote economic freedom". It is the principle of selectivity. Now then, affirms the British NGO CAFOD, "choosing to work only with countries that are judged to have the right conditions for economic growth is not a viable option in a continent where civil wars and political instability frequently result in large and destabilising refugee flows and increased small arms trade. Such an approach could lead to the creation of a 'two-tier' continent where donors respond only to 'the deserving' but not the 'underserving poor'"<sup>3</sup>.



*Critics confirm: it is the rich world that imposes the rules of the game*

By stating that “we are going to ask the G8 to help us attract capital” (Newsweek, 22 April 2002), the Senegalese President Wade has given substance to this criticism.

#### A MATTER FOR ELITES

The NGO is equally critical of the other working principle of NEPAD, the “peer review”. The principle implies that the African governments are going to assess the good political and economic governance of their counterparts. This is positive in that it can be viewed as a beginning of African autonomy, the continent itself operating a selection operated so far in the North. But, affirms CAFOD, “there is a serious crisis of the legitimacy of the state in many African countries. African governments have not established a good track record of passing critical judgements on poor economic or political performance by their peers”.

And to specify, like many others including trade union circles (see p. 16, position of the WCL), that “the government of a country is first and foremost responsible to its people. Building this accountability should be at the heart of NEPAD. So far, the wider participation of civil society groups, impoverished people or their representatives has been excluded from the NEPAD process”.

To this day, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development has been a matter for the political elites from

North and South. Peter da Costa, spokesman for the (United Nations) Economic Commission for Africa, stated at a meeting of the African ministers of Finance in Johannesburg, on 21 October 2002, that “for the first time NEPAD has moved from the high level of heads-of-state and foreign ministers to the level of the practitioners, finance ministers, who will implement the initiatives. They’re the ones on whom the success of NEPAD depends”. Who said something about participation of the civil society?

Are these elites themselves losing their illusions about the contributions of the programme? It is not

the first time that ambitious plans for development funding have been drawn up only to see eventually that they were nothing but empty words. The European Union, for instance, has pledged to fund NEPAD, but fails to agree on a significant rise of the part of the GDP it spends on development aid. Only few industrial countries reach the 0.7% of the GDP that have been promised for thirty years.

Is it because they feel the wind turn that the African ministers of Finance insisted that it was “time to move from vision to action”.

- 1 National Union of Cotton Producers of Burkina (UNPCB), Federation of Producers’ Unions of Benin (FUPRO) and Union of Cotton and Food Producers of Mali (SYCOV).
- 2 Badare Ndiaye, of the Senegalese Committee for the cancellation of the Third World debt.
- 3 [http://www.cafod.org.uk/policy/africa\\_nepad.shtml](http://www.cafod.org.uk/policy/africa_nepad.shtml)



# The «yes, but» of the WCL



*led— they have failed at the very first hurdle. The WCL is concerned by the lack of active involvement and participation of the organisations representing civil society and the masses of people in Africa”.*

Besides, “*our further concern is with the economic proposals in NEPAD*”. The WCL fears that such strategies could lead to African countries adopting neo-liberal economic policies —such policies “*which have failed to address our social and economic problems in the past*”. It believes that the NEPAD economic proposals should result in freeing up resources that will address issues of poverty, job creation and economic development. Henry Hendricks concludes that in a number of other areas relating to the economy “*there is a lack of clarity in the NEPAD proposals*”.

At the end of October 2002, on the occasion of a meeting between the WCL and Global Unions on the one hand and the World Bank and the IMF on the other, Henry Hendricks, Executive Director of the National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) \*, analysed NEPAD for the WCL. He first points out its basically positive nature as a “*bold new step to deal with Africa’s historical under-development —particularly regarding political, economic and social relations on our continent*”.

Its is only logical that the trade union world applauds the commitments towards good governance,

democracy and human rights, which contribute not only to trade union freedom, but also to the participation of the organisations in the country’s social life.

## LACK OF CLARITY

While applauding the existence of NEPAD, Henry Hendricks points out a few concerns, with regard to the civil society in the first place: “*Although there are claims by the African leaders that they have learned valuable lessons from the many failed initiatives of the past — and although they claim that the framework for action towards the sustainable development of Africa will be African-owned and African*

\* Naptosa is affiliated to the World Confederation of Teachers (WCT), one of the international trade federations of the WCL.



## 24TH CONGRESS OF FIOST

# Safety, health and security, major challenges for the transport sector!

On 2 and 3 December last, the International Federation of Trade Unions of Transport Workers (FIOST), one of the international trade federations of the WCL, held its 24th Congress in Casablanca, Morocco. The Congress, chaired by its President, Michel Bovy, had chosen the theme of “*Security and safety in transport*”. In the presence of top trade union leaders, of FIOST and other organisations, over one hundred delegates from the four continents discussed from various angles the overall and specific problems related to security, health and safety in the various transport modes.

## A QUALITY OPENING SESSION

At the traditional opening session, enhanced by the presence of Karim Ghellab, Minister of Transport of Morocco, the Congress heard the address of Abderrazak Afilal, Secretary General of the *Union générale des Travailleurs marocains* (UGTM). First, he went back over the seminar that had preceded the Congress, which in his view had led to a better understanding of the problems in the transport sector as reported by the representatives from South Africa, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. Then the UGTM Secretary General went into “*the negative, destabilising and dangerous effects of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation, inspired by the pursuit of profitability and financial yield, on the social situation of the workers in general and the transport workers in particular, who by the very nature of their activities are in the front line of the disruptions caused by the globalised economy*”. Willy Thys, Secretary General of the WCL, demonstrated the importance of FIOST because it protects the workers. He recalled to mind that the globalisation started in the transport sector. “*The transport workers we bullied. Companies lowered their expenses at the cost of safety and the environment*”, he added. In conclusion he pointed out the openness of both Moroccan affiliates of the WCL: “*Beyond all tensions, the CDT (Confédération démocratique du Travail)*

and the UGTM practise solidarity and struggle for the same aim: respect for social justice”.

## CONCRETE RESOLUTIONS

In the matter of globalisation FIOST confirms the position the WCL adopted at its Bucharest Congress, ie that it is absolutely necessary to build a regional and international countervailing trade union power to cope with this phenomenon. As Michel Bovy put it: “*Thanks to international cooperation the trade union movement has strong structures to stand up against the neo-liberal globalisation*”. Because transport is undeniably an important instrument of the global economy, FIOST deems it important to place this instrument at the service of a fair distribution of the wealth and to



*FIOST induces its affiliates to conduct campaigns in favour of the ratification and application of the ILO conventions*



## FIOST AND WCL TRADE ACTION

One of the resolutions FIOST passed at its Casablanca Congress bears in particular on the WCL. Within the framework of Trade Action FIOST decided to provide its partners in the developing countries with a “toolbox”, with instruments to work out plans of action and to analyse the concrete problems in the field. It is very likely that it will also develop training programmes.

Jaap Wienen, former FIOST Secretary General and current WCL Deputy Secretary General for Trade Action, pointed out the difficulties facing the transport sector, particularly as a consequence of privatisation, terrorism and the growth of the informal sector. The activities of WCL Trade Action are focused on two specific fields related to the workers worldwide: the relations with multi- and transnational companies, and the informal sector, on which the WCL has to concentrate its action.

stop making transport an instrument of pursuit of the highest possible gain. In the document that was worked out during the Congress, it is also pointed out that a regulatory framework must ensure a balanced and loyal competition between the modes of transport. As regards the privatisation of essential public services, the Congress points out that we must not forget the important role and function of the state “*as supplier of such services in a just and fair society*”. FIOST seizes the opportunity to remind the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) that privatisation may be a short-term answer to financial problems, but does certainly not benefit the development of the peoples in the long run.

### SAFETY...

FIOST has taken the important initiative to induce its member organisations to conduct campaigns for the ratification and application of the ILO conventions. It indeed takes the view that ILO instruments such as the international labour standards are essential in the struggle for greater safety for the transport workers. Unbridled competition is one of the main causes of the exhaustion of transport workers and plays a role in the rise in the number of industrial accidents. Though it will not be easy, a campaign will be necessary in another field as well, namely on the relation between alcohol, drugs and industrial accidents. Moreover, FIOST insists on stricter controls of second-hand rolling stock, which can jeopardise the safety of the workers.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the Congress deems it important to impose new safety standards, particularly in civil aviation. Such measures, however,

must not result in more stress for the workers and the passengers. And in view of the pandemic size of the HIV/AIDS problem, FIOST finds it important to develop training and sensitisation strategies as well as regional programmes to trace this disease.

### TOPICAL RESOLUTIONS

Given its international nature, FIOST takes a keen interest in what is happening in the regions of its member organisations. This goes in particular for Latin America. In the matter of the tragic situation in Colombia, FIOST advocates a political solution that brings social justice, too often violated in this country. According to FIOST the public services and companies must be revalued and the international labour standards observed unconditionally. As far as actual transport is concerned, the Casablanca Congress pointed out the responsibility of the shipowners, after the disaster on the Spanish and Portuguese coast caused by the wreck of the Prestige. FIOST also expressed its solidarity with the Senegalese population after the wreck of the Joola. According to the Congress, further, the civil aviation policy as pursued by the Bulgarian government proved to be inadequate, the non-observance of the international safety standards of the ICAO resulting in the dismissal of more than 1200 skilled workers. In conclusion FIOST called on the Moroccan government to ratify Convention 87 on the freedom of association, which is apparently still not observed. FIOST is obviously active on each front. We wish it the very best to bring all its ambitious projects to a favourable conclusion. It has all the trump cards to succeed!

MD



## LABOUR MARKET FOR TRADE UNION MEMBERS

# A new policy for trade union work

**C**ampia Tiurzi, a small town in Transylvania, Romania, in the shadow of a big steelworks. Since the early 1990s, there has been tear and wear on the welfare and employment the steel giant brought to the town... The successive restructuring operations resulted in massive cuts in staff. The town is the field of action of "Asociatia Prometeu", our first example of an alternative employment service centre.

Giorgeta Giurgu, coordinator of the centre, explains what services they supply, and why: "In the first place we supply a job placement service. We have a large database of vacancies because we very frequently investigate the

local labour market for job opportunities. Moreover, we examine future job profiles and the skills the labour market will require. The unemployed come together here in 'job clubs' to seek jobs in a more systematic manner. They learn how to draw up a curriculum vitae, a letter of application... in brief, to present themselves properly to employers. But in most cases this is not enough to get people a new job. We find ourselves here in a (former) mono-industrial area where many of the unemployed have learned hardly more than what is necessary for working in a steelworks... We supply chiefly retraining services, free of charge for the unemployed. We also offer vocational guidance to working people, but they have to pay for these services".

IN JUNE 2001, THE NATIONAL LEONARDO AGENCY FROM ROMANIA GAVE THE GREEN LIGHT AND GRANTED CARTEL ALFA, CNV AND ACV THE THREE-YEAR PROJECT TO DEVELOP, IN THE FORM OF OPEN DISTANCE EDUCATION, A TRAINING PACKAGE FOR MANAGERS OF "ALTERNATIVE LABOUR MARKET SERVICES". WHAT ARE THESE ALTERNATIVE LABOUR MARKET SERVICES? HOW DOES ONE DEVELOP AN ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY? AND... HOW IS THIS RELATED TO INNOVATIVE TRADE UNION WORK AS IS SUGGESTED IN THE TITLE OF THIS ARTICLE? LET US TAKE YOU WITH US THROUGH BELGIUM, THE NETHERLANDS AND ROMANIA, IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OUR PROJECT. WE WILL START IN ROMANIA.





### TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS COMBINE FORCES FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

The employment services package of *Associatia Prometeu* also includes important professional services to companies. Managers can call on the centre for management services. *Associatia Prometeu* lays quite some emphasis on its services to companies because in Romania the climate is unfriendly to companies and the quality of the management is poor. *“That way we want to contribute to job creation while keeping a finger on the pulse of trade and industry”*. *Georgieta* stresses the difficult existence of *Associatia* *“in an environment in which the state does not support us and companies are just not ready for our services”*, but also their growing integration into the local community *“where we are known and can seek solutions for local labour market problems together with the local authorities, the trade unions and the employers”*.

*Associatia Prometeu* in *Campia Tiurzi* is part of a network of five alternative employment services centres in various regions in Romania. The initiative to set up these NGOs originates with *METAROM*, the metal workers' federation of *Cartel Alfa*, and later on also with the chemical workers' federation. These federations want to create new job opportunities for members having lost their job in the wave of restructuring operations and factory closures since the mid 1990. They sit on the boards of the NGOs and busy themselves, jointly with *Associatia*, with creating jobs in the local community.

*Laurentiu Andronic*, of the *Suisse Agency for Development and Cooperation*, sponsor of *Associatia Prometeu*, stresses the path-breaking and innovative character of the work *METAROM* and the chemical workers' federation of *Cartel Alfa* undertake with their initiative: *“As far as I know, Cartel Alfa is the only trade union in Central and Eastern Europe that engages in employment services for job seekers. We are trying to make other trade unions in Romania and in other countries enthusiastic for this trade union commitment”*.

### PUBLIC AUTHORITIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN LABOUR MARKET SERVICES

Developing an active labour market policy is not only a matter for NGOs and trade unions, but also —and

even in the first place— for the public authorities. We visited the regional office of the National Agency for Employment in *Brasov*, a medium-sized town in *Transylvania*. There, too, the disindustrialisation persists, as a result of the expected dismantlement of the military industry among other things. The National Agency for Employment in *Brasov* accomplishes chiefly the classical tasks of a national employment agency: it registers the unemployed and, very important, it entitles to and pays unemployment benefits.

The Unemployment Act of March 2002 provided the National Agency for Employment with the legal framework to supply active labour market and employment services. The regional office offers the unemployed job placement, job clubs and vocational training, and it advises small and medium-sized companies. Together with the local authorities they have initiated a regional development plan to attract (foreign) investors. The role of the social partners in outlining a national and regional labour market policy seems to be far from clear. According to the Agency's human resources manager this role is of an advisory nature. *Petru Dandea*, Vice President of *Cartel Alfa*, stresses that the trade unions had to struggle hard for the tripartite participation in the Agency's Board of Directors.

### ACV & CNV: GUARDIANS OF THE INTERESTS OF JOB SEEKERS

Trade unions in the Netherlands and in Belgium, particularly *ACV* and *CNV*, have pioneered for quite some time in the protection of collective workers' interests in the matter of the right to employment and, more recently, the extended right to employability. *ACV* and *CNV* act as social partners in the advisory and governing bodies that define the national, regional and local labour market policy. From that position they want to supervise the role of the public authorities in the labour market policy.

The trade unions also line up as guardians of the interests of job seekers in the active labour market policy: equal treatment, free-of-charge employment services for the unemployed, quality of vocational training and experience for job seekers, participation of job seekers in their career planning.



## SUBREGIONAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE ANALYSES LABOUR MARKET AND SUGGESTS SOLUTIONS

In the Kempen, in the north of the Belgian Province of Antwerp, ACV constitutes with employers, NGOs, development companies and the local authorities the Subregional Employment Committee, established in the offices of the Flemish public bureau for employment exchange, VDAB. The Committee can, and must according to its mission, analyse labour market information, propose priorities and actions at the subregional level and make up a subregional planning. It can also start up projects. Patrick Govaert, representative of ACV-Kempen in the Committee, stresses that a confederation can do a lot for the collective protection of the interests of the members in the region. ACV-Kempen invests in its involvement in the Committee by analysing the socio-economic situation in the region, by critically examining official statistics, by pointing out employment problems and by taking the lead in employment-related initiatives. One example of an alternative labour market services centre is the “Coloriet” social economy project.

“Coloriet” supplies services —ironing, recycling, odd-job services— that satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of the village of Hamme, in the Province of East Flanders, and creates at the same time jobs for the unskilled unemployed. In such an alternative employment services centre the manager must guide job seekers very actively towards the labour market! Marc Duquet, ACV, says that the role of the trade union in this case is to set the ball rolling and, once the ball is rolling, to continue to support the services centre through the many contacts the trade union has established in the region, and through lobbying.

## TRAINING AND EDUCATION MUST LEAD TO LIFELONG EMPLOYABILITY

In the nation- and sectorwide bargaining with employers, CNV and ACV obtain the necessary education and training resources for all the workers. They guard the training policy in the sectors because they sit with the employers on the boards of the training funds established with these budgetary resources. J. Loosman, CNV-Industry Federation, takes the view that the

funds have to take the employability of the workers in the sector as the starting point of their activities. Employability replaces the former guide of “lifelong job security with one employer”. The economic reality has imposed this constant flexibility upon us, but also the workers themselves are more and more a moving party on the labour market. CNV-Industry Federation not only protects the collective interests of its members in the matter of employability, but also supplies relevant services to them. “Kompas” is an alternative centre for services in labour market guidance and it is part of CNV. The centre offers CNV members individual vocational guidance. Individual problems are passed on to the shop steward in the company and taken up as a collective problem of staff policy and human resources management. In some cases the employer is called upon to pay for the vocational guidance/outplacement of the trade union member.

## ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR AN ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY

Trade unions in Belgium, the Netherlands and Romania have made the active labour market policy a spearhead of their action. Innovative and path breaking is the fact that the trade unions are extending their services package by vocational guidance, both for working and for job-seeking members. They need to acquire the necessary skills for this. The last word is for Petru Dandea, project coordinator: “*Our Leonardo Project is an attempt to contribute to this capacity building. Our project is innovative not only in content and mission, but also in shape. Our mission is to develop an open distant training package via the Internet. It is the first time Cartel Alfa, the CNV and the ACV-CSC organise a course on the web. So, the project also seeks to contribute to capacity building in the field of e-learning. Please visit our website [www.leonardo-almas.ro](http://www.leonardo-almas.ro). You will always find an updated state of affairs of the project, and there is also room for interactivity. Do contact us!*”.

*Cartel Alfa, Petru Dandea, Cristian Paunica,  
Liliane Andromache, Gülbin Osman  
ACV, Karin Debroey  
CNV, Floor Nelissen and Cristine Maturbons*



## PRESS REVIEW



### HOPE FOR DISABLED UKRAINIAN WORKERS

The International Day of the Disabled, 3 December, was celebrated last year in Ukraine, one of the European countries with the highest rate of disabilities. The day of 3 December 2002 was also the day of the first anniversary of the vocational training centre for disabled workers in Lutizh, near Kiev. It is one of the most modern institutions in Europe and it gives new hopes to hundreds of Ukrainian families. The ILO has played an important role in its creation. According to ILO estimates, 14% of the Ukrainians, ie eight million people, are disabled (according to the official estimates they number 2.6 million).

This is nearly twice the overall average in the industrial countries. [...] Like everywhere else it is hard for the disabled workers to get a job in Ukraine, a country where poverty is incessantly on the rise [...]. Their prospects have become less gloomy since the creation of the Ukrainian vocational training centre for disabled workers in Lutizh [...], which can treat 130 physically disabled persons simultaneously. It teaches a variety of trades and professions: typewriting, secretary, social assistant, beekeeping, computer operator, etc [...]. The Ukrainian government has funded the largest part of the improvements to the centre and it covers the current working expenses. The ILO has made a substantial contribution in equipping two computer classes and in buying three adapted minibuses for the transport of the disabled persons as well as a car. [...]

Samuel Grumiau, ILO, Bureau for Workers' Activities.

### TIMBER DISPUTE

[...] Several voices —among them the one of the *Centrale des Syndicats Démocratiques (CSD)* from Canada— have denounced the cavalier attitude of the American government, which imposes [...] compensatory duties up to more than 27% on Canadian timber exports to the United States. [...] The confederation has stepped up its initiatives to achieve that the Quebec workers stop paying the piper for this trade war, while contributing to a long-term solution for the industry. [...] At a meeting of the main Quebec industrial actors, the CSD helped work out a consensus on the need for supportive and accompanying measures for the workers, the companies and the communities in which they are established. This consensus was also aimed at taking medium —and long-term structuring measures to secure the future of the Quebec forest industry. That way the Quebec companies would be no prisoners anymore of the only outlet —export— but they would even gain additional markets. [...]

*Le Fureteur CSD*, October 2002.

### A NEW NETWORK OF VERY DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS

Three years after the demonstrations in Seattle, and on the eve of the third World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, the success, method and prospects of the world opposition movement to liberalism keep throwing out the observers. The very nature of this mobilisation —a new network of very different organisations (NGOs, trade unions, peaceful consumers...)— partly explains this perplexity. Traditionally “*social movements are divided into sectors: ecologists, feminists, public sector trade unions...*”, reminds Chico Whitaker, Executive Secretary of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference, one of the founding organisations of the WSF. Now, “*the new configuration of capitalism, in a planetary network, precludes sectoral responses*” and only “*international and multithematic alliances*” can “*respond to this evolution*”, adds Christophe Aguiton, in charge of the international relations at ATTAC. [...]

Béatrice Dehais, *Le Monde Initiatives*, December 2002.

## BOOKS AND DEBATES



### L'HISTOIRE (HISTORY)

Globalisation is in the heart of our society, the centre of all the debates. But do we really know its origins? Where does this phenomenon come from? “*L'Histoire*” (History) tries to answer these questions in a special dossier on this topic in its November 2002 number.

The word globalisation appeared for the first time in the 1980s, explains the French monthly, but the phenomenon has existed for centuries. “[...] *it refers to an age-old of rapprochement between peoples and between continents, to the discontinuous but ineluctable progress of trade and cultural relations* [...]”. You will have understood that this is not the version of an economist or a legal expert, but of a historian who tries to enlighten us about the situation.

*L'histoire*, no. 270, November 2002.



# PORTRAIT

**Can you tell something about your international career?**

My international career took about the same course. In 1990 I became President of FIOST. Shortly afterwards, in 1993 (the year of the WCL's Mauritius Congress), I became president of WCL Trade Action. Carlos Custer was Secretary General of the WCL at that moment. From 1997 to 2001, I was on "leave" for this office. At the Bucharest Congress, in October 2001, they asked me again to take charge of Trade Action. A decisive element of my decision was no doubt the fact that Jaap Wienen became WCL Deputy Secretary General for Trade Action.

**Safety and security in transport were the centre of the debates at the 24th FIOST Congress?**

Indeed. The theme encompasses not only the safety and health of the workers at the workplace, but also their job security or, in many cases, insecurity. As regards safety, it's true that by and large the number of industrial accidents in transport has decreased, but obviously new hazards have arisen: cabin crew exposed to radiation and to bad air on board, railway staff exposed to asbestos... It's a long list. Moreover, the acts of

violence and aggression against transport workers have strongly increased, and there is, of course, the terrorism issue, particularly in civil aviation. And what with the general increase in the number of seropositive people? HIV and AIDS constitute serious threats to the employment and to economic development. Their effects on the social rights of the workers must not be underestimated. Research workers of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisations have found that 2.3 million African have died of AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. Diseases and accidents, these are the aspects to be taken into account when dealing with the safety of the workers. But also security is important. I'm convinced that an important role is reserved for the trade unions in this respect.

**Do they also have a role to play within the context of globalisation?**

Of course! Globalisation is not only just an ideology. It produces concrete effects on the workers worldwide. We have to be realistic. The global economy is omnipresent. It isn't easy to struggle against it. Just look at the so-called consensus of Washington: it rests on three pillars: stabilisation, liberalisa-

tion and privatisation. Where is the social pillar? For all these reasons the trade union movement is important. As an international trade union the WCL took a clear stand to this at its Bucharest Congress. To FIOST it is obvious that a constantly growing flexibility of the workers requires another form of trade union work.

We have to practise recurrent education. We have to build a real countervailing power that is supported by a democratic trade union base. Trade unions are no doubt the only organisations that are equipped with strong structures thanks to their international cooperation and therefore able to assume this role. Within WCL Trade Action FIOST will make all-out efforts to help its partners in the developing and transition countries, particularly by means of training.

*Interview by MD*

# trade union activities

## ACP-EU negotiations, trade union viewpoint

*The trade negotiations between the European Union and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific), provided for in the Cotonou Agreement, started in September 2002. They are scheduled to end in 2007. In November 2002, the trade union movement (ETUC, ICFTU and WCL) published its point of view in a joint declaration.*

First, the trade union movement calls to mind that the situation remains difficult in quite a lot of ACP countries. Basic social and economic indicators go to show this. The current negotiations between the European Union and the ACP countries on the Economic Partnership Agreements (APEs) constitute a real opportunity for the ACP countries, provided that they are properly drawn up to have a real impact on the economic and social development of these countries. For this reason among others, the trade union movement judges it essential that the negotiations establish compulsory criteria like a sound integration into the global economy, social development, poverty reduction and respect for the workers' rights.

The trade union movement has also observed that the talks have started in circumstances of *"serious and growing inequality between both parties, as regards the level of development, the quality of life and the terms of trade"*. These circumstances are certainly a matter of serious concern for the trade unions from Europe and the ACP countries. In their opinion *"trade and economic integration must make it possible to raise the quality of work and life, not to reduce it"*. It is also specified in the document that the Cotonou agreement and the APEs must guarantee the primacy of human rights over each commercial or financial aspect.

As far as the follow-up of the Cotonou Agreement and the negotiations, the trade union movement is very determined in a number of points. It demands a perfect transparency of the negotiations, of course. Then, it proposes organising a permanent structure for the follow-up to the negotiations as well as, in 2004 when these negotiations are midway, a large public debate both in the EU and in the ACP countries. Finally, the negotiations between the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the EU and the ACP countries seem to be essential to develop a cooperation on several aims such as a *"firm commitment to achieve that the basic needs of the populations (education, health...) and respect for the basic social rights take precedence over the commercial interests and the aspects of intellectual property"*.

### A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Still according to the trade union movement, the negotiation period, which runs until 2007, *"must be used to implement an ambitious social development programme, taking over the development aims of the Cotonou Agreement"*. This programme would provide for measures such as a cancellation/reduction of the debt along with its conversion into negotiated social and economic activities in favour of the populations, a really participatory approach to the civil society or the production of goods and services that are accessible to the populations and necessary for their needs.

A large-scale programme. In any case, the trade union movement will use every effort to make the result come up to expectations.



*Precedence of the workers essential for the trade union movement*

The 23rd meeting of representatives of economic and social ACP-EU circles was held in Brussels. *"From a commercial point of view, the ACP countries remain largely excluded from the effects of a rise in trade; [...] the liberalisation of the markets of the South reduces the tax receipts of the countries and increases their vulnerability [...]"*, stated the WCL during the debates. The World Confederation of Labour cannot omit to mention the necessary coherence between human rights, workers' rights, the Cotonou Agreement and the agreements negotiated at the WTO. The Cotonou Agreement can make the difference, but then it must put into practice *"the spirit that had to inspire it"*. The Economic Partnership Agreements (APEs) must serve *"as means to social development ends"*.