N° 137-139 / 15 October - 15 November 2001
WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR

25TH CONGRESS SPECIAL

Executive Committee elected during the 25th Congress:
President: Basile Mahan Gahé
Secretary-general: Willy Thys
Deputy secretaries-general: Jaap Wienen, Eduardo Estévez

Vice-presidents :
Africa: Adrien Akouete
Asia: Muchtar Pakpahan
Latin America: Eduardo Garcia
North America: James McGee
Europe: Luc Cortebeeck, Bogdan Hossu
Trade Action: Michel Bovy

Treasurer: Doekle Terpstra

The Congress also appointed deputy vice-presidents. Their names can be found on the WCL Internet site, together with the complete composition of the new Confederal Board, on which from now on sit six women.

New affiliations....
The Congress sanctioned the affiliation of four new organisations: one from Latin America: the *Confederación de Sindicatos Autónomos de Venezuela* - CODESA; two from Africa: the *Congress of Malawi Trade Unions* - COMATU (Malawi) and the *Confédération Démocratique du Travail* - CDT (Morocco); and one from Asia: the *Indian Confederation of Labour* - ICL.

Thematic and topical resolutions
- Following the events on 11 September, the WCL took a stand on the military intervention in Afghanistan; this resolution is the one closeliest related to current events;
- situation of women in Afghanistan;
- migrant workers;
- solidarity with the Palestinian workers;
- political situation in Cyprus;
- International Labour Organisation;
- involvement of women workers in the WCL's activities and working;
- representation of Trade Action in the WCL;
- situation of the workers and organisation of trade union action in the separate continents: Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe.

The texts of these resolutions are available in English, French and Spanish on the WCL's site; and in German and Dutch at the secretariat.

Policy resolution
This resolution is a basic document aimed to define the WCL's aims and action priorities in the next four years. The text is available in English, French and Spanish on the WCL's site and in German and Dutch at the secretariat.
The document underlines the following action priorities:
1. The importance of trade unionism at the grassroots level and, consequently, the priority effort to create representative, autonomous, democratic and efficient national organisations capable of playing their role in the national, regional and international contexts.
2. The importance of building a regional and international countervailing trade union power to face up to the globalisation. The WCL will set up a « Global Economy and Human Development » action programme to enable its national affiliates to equip themselves with an appropriate capacity for analysis, proposal and action.
3. Pursuit of the necessary co-operation with the other forces of change: with the other trade unions and the ICFTU in the first place as well as with other social organisations (NGOs) in society struggling against neo-liberalism.
4. Consolidate and give depth to the acquirements
a) in the field of training;
b) the programme on the international labour standards and the human rights;
c) in the field of information;
d) to strengthen its action to respond concretely to the strategies of the multinational companies which now escape each control.
5. Advance a new framework for world governance: a) rehabilitate multilateralism; b) restore the balance of power between multilateral organisations; the ILO must be considered a partner on an equal footing with the

TELE-FLASH is a two-weekly information bulletin containing brief trade union messages, edited by the information department of the WCL.

Responsible editor : Willy Thys
Information officer : Mathieu Debroux.

Reproduction authorised under acknowledgement of source

WCL
Trierstraat 33
B-1040 Brussels
Tel : 02/285.47.00
Fax : 02/230.87.22
E-mail: info@cmt-wcl.org
Internet: www.cmt-wcl.org

Bretton Woods organisations; c) reform these organisations in the sense of democracy and transparency; d) establish a new framework for world governance to democratise the globalisation and to direct it towards human dignity. An operational framework to do so would be the establishment of an Economic and Social Security Council (ESSC) within the framework of the United Nations, with a mandate limited to economic and social issues.
All these priorities, around which forms of inter-union co-operation should be developed and implemented, must be a constructive, effective and innovative response to the capitalist globalisation.

Modifications to the Statutes
The WCL's Statutes were modified in two directions:
- restructuring of the organisation's general secretariat: from now on, the secretary-general will be assisted by two deputies instead of five confederal and executive secretaries;
- in a proactive manner, the new Statutes wish to privilege female participation in giving a larger representation to affiliates that appoint women to responsible offices in the WCL.

This modification was presented to the Congress with the support of the World Women's Committee and was aimed to favour an effective participation of women in the Confederal Board. The WCL Congress adopted the modifications to the Statutes, which now provide the participation of at least one woman per regional delegation. As a consequence, women currently occupy six seats in the new Confederal Board. In doing so, the WCL has taken an important step towards gender equality in the trade union world. In quantitative terms, however, one cannot yet speak of a proportional representation of women. This remains a goal to be pursued. Beyond the figures, the great challenge for these women consists, of course, in playing their role by integrating the gender perspective, which will make it further progress possible.
The modified articles are available on the Site.

A PLAN OF ACTION ON THE WORKERS' RIGHTS

The programme entitled "Human Rights and International Labour Standards", has been one of the WCL's main activities so far, much appreciated within the International Labour Organisation. It consists in capacity building focused on the international labour conventions, in campaigns to have the convention against child labour ratified, and in complaints and denunciations with the ILO.
The new plan of action as approved by the WCL Norm Committee goes a step further. It intends to complete an approach in terms of rights to be protected with one in terms of socio-economic policy.
The three aims of the new programme are:
- protection and advancement of the workers' rights;
- multinational companies and workers' rights, particularly in the matter of controlling the application of the codes of conduct;
- social and sustainable development, to which the trade unions must be able to propose alternatives.

FIFTH WORLD WOMEN'S CONFERENCE OF THE WCL

The 5th Conference took place on 21 October 2001 and assembled around one hundred people, mostly women trade unionists from all the world regions in which the WCL is present. The main Conference theme was Advancement of Women Workers' Rights in the 21st Century. The Conference benefited from contributions of experts giving the trade union movement the opportunity to reflect more thoroughly upon labour issues from a gender perspective. The themes tackled by the experts were centred on the social dialogue and its role in the advancement of women workers' rights and in the participation and representation of women in trade unions. During the second part, the Conference assessed the previous plan of action and discussed proposals for the new plan (2002-2005). The results of the Conference were presented in the form of a resolution to the WCL Congress, which adopted it. The resolution contains a number of observations and elements for the assessment of the progress made with the position of women on the labour market and in trade unions, a few adjustments to the internal working of specific structures in favour of women and the priority activities to be developed at all levels (national, regional and international) in the next four years. The priorities focus on training, the continuation of the pilot projects to organise women workers (free zones, informal sector and migration), the improvement of the working conditions in education, the promotion of social insurance (health), the intensification of the campaign for the ratification of the Maternity Protection Convention (no. 183), the participation of women in the International Labour Conference and the follow-up on the policies of the international financial institutions and their impact on the situation of the women workers.