



**8 MARCH:
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE :
THE CAUSE OF WOMEN MUST BE
PART OF IT**

On this International Women's Day we call on those committed to the globalisation of social justice to link up their struggles and demands with those of half the world population: women. In recent years the cause of women has made considerable headway, particularly in the matter of access to the labour market and of education. Yet, a lot remains to be done with regard to equal access to resources, rights and power.

If the labour market is open to women, it generally is so to offer them wages that are lower and jobs that are more precarious than those of men. The rise in poverty and in acts of violence against women clearly proves it: the neo-liberal policies are not gender neutral! Today, these economic policies and cultural models, discriminatory towards women, strengthen each other to oppress women.

The World March of Women has created a network of solidarity between women worldwide, adding strength to a world women's movement that is now playing an important part in the creation of a social countervailing power facing the wild neo-liberalism. Women, present in Porto Alegre, has continued to denounce the socio-economic mechanisms causing the states to derail and the flinching of the democratic institutions from economic diktat that worsen the acts of discrimination and the situations of poverty throughout the world.

Since the World March of Women, the women's movement has set an unprecedented evolution going in the civil society and in the trade unions. But the other social movements have not yet sufficiently integrated this movement, whereas the neo-liberal globalisation constitutes a formidable challenge to women and girls. So as to revitalise the democratic processes too much inclined to forget their situation, their analyses and their demands, women want to affirm their will to take part in the organisation of society. Realising this participation at all levels is a matter of urgency to pull society out of ruts of social inequality and social and economic injustice.

We are certain that another world is possible. To build it, men and women trade unionists must redouble their vigilance and strengthen their mobilisation for and commitment to the advent of a society that is genuinely just, equal, democratic and respectful of the human rights.

ILO REGIONAL DIRECTOR AT THE WCL

On 11 February Mrs Regina Amadi-Njoku, ILO regional director for Africa, met a delegation of the WCL. Mrs Amadi-Njoku insisted on the training of trade unions in tripartism and the social dialogue. She called the struggle against the AIDS epidemic a major challenge for Africa. In this context the ILO is developing a programme intended for actors from the world of work.

**COMPLAINT AGAINST THE
GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN**

On 15 February a delegation of the Japanese trade union confederation Rengo met the WCL. Kenzo Maruyama, president of Rengo-PSLC (public sector), and Shigeru Nakajima, executive director of the Rengo International Relations Department, sought the WCL's advice and support in their steps against the Japanese government. Indeed, within the framework of its public sector reform the Japanese government has adopted regulations that infringe the ILO conventions 87 and 98 on the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the freedom of collective bargaining. Rengo has filed an official complaint with the ILO against Japan for non-observance of both conventions, which this state ratified. The ICFTU and the WCL will effectively support the Japanese confederation.

**FOLLOW-UP OF DAHO: MEETING WITH
PASCAL LAMY**

On 11 February Willy Thys, WCL secretary-general, and Claude Akpokavie, head of the WCL Human Rights and International Labour Standards Department, met Pascal Lamy, European Trade commissioner.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the Doha Ministerial Conference from a trade union point of view. Besides the headway made in the matter of intellectual property and the environment, the WCL delegation pointed out a number of fields in which very little progress was made, such as the link between commerce and labour standards. According to the WCL it is indispensable to establish a relation between the ILO and the World Trade Organisation - WTO in order the guarantee the latter's legitimacy in the eyes of the workers. Commissioner Lamy shares this trade union viewpoint, but how to convince the totality of the WTO member states? This constitutes a major challenge, particularly in view of China's entry into the WTO. The WCL expressed its fear as regards the ability of the poorest countries to face up to

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the complexity of the world trade system from the perspective of a new negotiation round. Pascal Lamy pointed out that the technical assistance would be raised and that the European Union had just opened, in Geneva, a centre to raise the capacity of the ACP countries. Moreover, he said, a transitional stage was provided for to help the poorest countries gain a better understanding of the WTO's working method. In the matter of investments, the WCL expressed its concern about the risk of seeing turn up again, through the WTO, the agreements the OECD had rejected within the framework of the negotiation on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. According to the European commissioner, it is just a matter of coming to an agreement on a few basic principles in connection with investments.

The meeting ended on a positive note with the promise of a more intensive exchange of information with the WCL on the positions of the European Union.

ASSESSMENT OF THE WSM PROGRAMME IN SUPPORT OF THE DOAWTU

On 4-8 February Lomé was the venue of a regional seminar at which the activities to implement the plan of action for 2001 were assessed and a draft five-year programme for 2003-2007 was presented.

Faustina Van Aperen, director of the International Solidarity Foundation, took part in the proceedings, which were marked by a climate of trust and by frank and constructive discussions. The DOAWTU member organisations now master the assessment and planning techniques and have made them an integral part of their development initiatives.

The five-year plan for the year 2003 to 2007, which WSM will support, is cast in a completely new mould. It is aimed to strengthen the DOAWTU as a regional co-ordinator. Our regional organisation will support its affiliates in the activities to advance decent work.

MISSION TO RUSSIA

On 7 February Jaap Wiene, WCL deputy secretary-general, was invited to attend the international conference organised by the General Trade Union Confederation – GTUC on economic globalisation, regional integration and their effects on the living and working conditions in the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The WCL seized this opportunity to establish contacts with this trade union from the former Soviet Union. Alive to its deficiencies and in search of a new model of trade union organisation that is better up to the current challenges, the GTUC showed interest in exchanging information with the WCL. These exchanges may well lead to the establishment of some forms of co-operation between the GTUC and the WCL.

COMBINE FORCES IN SOLIDARITY

Sotermun, the development NGO of the USO, convened its 6th Governing Body on 15-16 February. On this occasion it organised a round table on international co-operation and development, to which the International Solidarity Foundation was invited. In her address Faustina Van Aperen pointed out the essential role of trade unions as vectors of development in strengthening the civil society. She insisted on the absolute necessity of inter-union solidarity and went on to say that the financial and technical support from the foundations remained indispensable.

Faustina Van Aperen reminded of Manuel Zaguire's election as chairman of the Foundation which, she said, would give even more strength to the excellent co-operation between Sotermun and the Foundation.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UPDATE

El Salvador. On 13 February José Vicente Ramírez, secretary-general of ANTRAPECOS, and fourteen other leaders were arrested. In a letter of protest to the president of the Republic the WCL condemned these trade union freedom violations, demanding the release of the confined trade unionists.

Colombia. On 29 January sister Carmen Helena García was assassinated when she left work; she had four young children, who had already lost their father in the same circumstances. Sister Carmen Helena García was secretary of the Cesar departmental union of health workers, SIDESC (UTRADEC-CGTG).

On 25 February armed outlaws assassinated sister Cecilia Gallego in the Town of Macarena. She held the office of secretary in charge of women's issues in the Executive Committee of the *Acción Campesina Colombiana* - ACC, affiliated to the CGTD and the WFAFW. The WCL strongly condemned these human rights violations and demanded investigations in order to bring the murderers before the court.

Schedule of activities

8 Mar 2002:	European Section meeting, Brussels
9-11 Mar 2002:	WCL/EZA seminar on "Social Dialogue as Basis for a Social Europe under Construction", Brussels
11-12 Mar 2002:	ETUC Executive Committee, Brussels
18-22 Mar 2002:	International Conference on the Financing of Development, Monterrey, Mexico