

**MAY DAY:
SOLIDARITY MORE THAN EVER**

In its May Day message, the World Confederation of Labour reminds of the fact that the right to work is a basic right. Work must be decent and dignified. That is why it must go hand in hand with a living wage and why it must be possible to work with due respect for the rights and dignity of the workers, as defined in the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (WCL). To the WCL, this is the best way to eradicate poverty.

The WCL also reminds of the fact that it is important to make all-out efforts to globalise social justice and therefore to strengthen the bonds of solidarity with the other social actors. It appears to be essential to create a genuine world governance, with the ILO as the social pillar.

The WCL reaffirms that international unity and solidarity have always been associated with the workers' movement. Facing the decline of democracy, the WCL reaffirms that an autonomous and democratic trade union movement is a decisive factor in the achievement of social justice. Democracy is just impossible without it.

**CONCRETE ACTIONS WITH
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

At its latest session, assembled in Brussels on 22-26 April, the WCL Confederal Board adopted, in line with the resolutions of the 25th WCL Congress, in Bucharest, a programme of concrete actions with the international institutions.

To the WCL, the ILO is an institution of major importance. Besides its action at the International Labour Conference, in June, and the Governing Body, the WCL will apply itself to making its Trade Action better known in the ACTRAV department. Moreover, it will optimise the involvement of its international trade federations in the sectoral actions.

The UN conferences are platforms at which the workers can and must make their voice heard. The WCL will demand that ILO be systematically invited to them. The WCL will also continue its policy of presence at these conferences and at the United Nations head office. It will co-ordinate this presence with the regional organisations in the continents hosting the respective conferences.

As regards the WTO, the WCL will co-ordinate its action with the international trade federations and follow up in particular the investments issue.

As far as the IMF and the World Bank are concerned, the WCL will endeavour to set up an internal network to keep an eye on the actions

of the financial institutions in the field and to ensure a better follow-up of these actions in the countries involved.

Lastly, the WCL's participation in various international initiatives involving the trade unions (Global Unions, Global Compact, World Economic Forum) will be specified and clarified. The WCL will continue its commitment at the level of the World Social Forum and take an active part in this Forum's International Council meetings.

SITUATION IN PALESTINE

The Confederal Board, assembled on 22-26 April, passed a resolution on the brutal military escalation manifested by the Israeli government.

The Confederal Board:

- 1) condemns strongly and without reservations all forms of violence, terrorism and warlike aggression;
- 2) demands the immediate and permanent withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces and the restitution of sovereignty to the legitimate authorities in the occupied Arab territories;
- 3) confirms its endorsement of the resolution the Security Council recently adopted, recognising expressly the right of existence of a Palestinian state;
- 4) demands that the international community guarantee, under cover of the United Nations, the strict observance of the United Nations resolutions;
- 5) reiterates its solidarity with the Palestinian workers and people and particularly with the General Federation of Palestine Trade Unions;
- 6) requests the ILO to step up its action in the region in order to see to the full exercise of the rights of the Palestinian workers.

**WORLD WOMEN'S COMMITTEE: FIRST
MEETING OF THE NEW TEAM**

On 21 April, the new team of the WCL World Women's Committee (WWC) assembled in Brussels for the first time since its election, by the Bucharest Congress, for a four-year term of office. The WWC members distributed the Committee's responsibilities. In the next two years, Mrs Rabiadou Sera Diallo (CNTG, Guinea) will hold the office of WWC President, whereas Mrs Laura Gonzales de Txabbarri (ELASTV, Spain) and Mrs Myriam Luz Triana (CGTD, Colombia) will be Vice President and Secretary respectively.

A large part of the debates was devoted to the finalisation of the Plan of Action for 2002-2005, the main lines of which are:

- social dialogue and gender relations;

TELE-FLASH

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Responsible editor :
Willy Thys
Information officer :
Mathieu Debroux.

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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

- social protection (including in the informal sector), with health insurance as the minimum basis;
- continuation of the pilot projects to organise women workers in the informal sector, free export zones and migration;
- campaign for the ratification of the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183);
- capacity building of trade unions in the matter of gender relations.

The Plan of Action was presented to and adopted by the Confederal Board.

During the meeting, there was also a training session on "Gender: instructions for use" to provide the participants with the necessary instruments for a new approach to the struggle for gender equality. In the trade union action like in all actions for more social peace, taking account of the gender relations is a factor of success.

TWELFTH CONGRESS OF THE SERBIAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

On 18-19 April, the Serbian trade union confederation SSS organised its 12th Congress in Belgrade. Since the fall of the Milosevic regime, in October 2000, SSS President Milenko Smiljanic started a transitional process to turn his confederation into a democratic trade union independent from each political party. Mr Milenko Smiljanic was re-elected President of the Serbian confederation for a four-year term of office. This 12th Congress was the occasion to clearly renounce the past and to go on with the process of transition. In his programme, the re-elected President stresses stronger and better procedures to conclude collective labour agreements, the strengthening of Trade Action, the struggle against the negative aspects of privatisation, the ways to deal with the unemployment issue, the development of international co-operation, the independence from the political parties and the Confederation's financial autonomy (particularly by creating a strike fund).

The SSS will soon decide on its international affiliation and has clearly expressed the will to join the WCL family.

AGRICULTURE, ESSENTIAL SECTOR IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

On 22-26 April, the FAO organised in Havana, Cuba, its 27th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. It was Rodolfo Romero, Deputy Secretary General of the CLAT, who represented the WFAFW. In his message to the Conference, the WFAFW representative reminded of some essential elements: agriculture remains the strategic basis for an integral and sustainable rural development and for genu-

ine human and social development; food security is the basis for a sound agricultural development; biodiversity is an essential aspect of agricultural development; a link must be established between agriculture and social development; and rural and urban development must be brought in harmony.

In conclusion, Rodolfo Romero pointed out the following challenges:

§ lay the foundations of an equitable trade in agricultural produce;

§ implement the necessary policies strengthen the food security (over 200 million Latin Americans are currently starving);

§ relaunch the solidarity of a genuine international co-operation by implementing the United Nations agreement to earmark 0.7% of the GDP of the developed countries for co-operation with the developing countries;

§ commit oneself to respecting the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and to guaranteeing the women's rights.

In the trade union field, he stressed the importance of a stronger unity of action between the workers' and social organisations active in the agriculture and food sectors. In this respect, the co-operation between the ICFTU, the WCL, the ETUC and the ORIT and CLAT affiliates is exemplary.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UPDATE

Ivory Coast – The WCL has protested with the President of the Republic of Ivory Coast against the flagrant trade union freedom and right to strike violations. The strike movement broke out at the *Holz Ivoire* company, established in Abengourou. Six hundred strikers were fired, and eight others arrested. The WCL demands the release of the arrested brothers and the re-employment of the dismissed workers in order not to compromise the right to strike and the social dialogue.

Schedule of activities

12-15 May 2002: BITS Congress, Mexico

12-16 May 2002: FIOST seminar, Bangkok, Thailand

16-18 May 2002: Constitutive Congress Asian Transport Federation, Bangkok, Thailand

13-14 May 2002: 108th plenary session of TUAC, Paris, France

13-17 May 2002: Tripartite meeting on employability and equal opportunities in the post and telecommunication services, Geneva, Switzerland