



**90TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA**

On Monday 3 June next, the International Conference of the ILO will hold its opening session. During three weeks the delegations will discuss the agenda items and proceed to the election of a new Governing Body for a three-year term (2002-2005).

This year the Committee on the Application of the Standards will have a special session on Myanmar to examine the evolution in the matter of forced labour.

The promotion of co-operatives will be the subject of a second discussion with a view to the adoption of a recommendation.

The issue of reporting industrial accidents and occupational diseases also figures on the agenda. In these matters there is a lack of reliable information, and prevention suffers under these gaps. Moreover, the international comparison of data requires harmonised reporting and recording systems. It would be proper, further, to revise the list of occupational diseases and to work out a mechanism that allows a periodic update.

A general discussion will be devoted to the informal economy.

The Conference will also declare itself on the withdrawal of twenty recommendations. These recommendations either have been replaced *de facto* by more modern instruments or have lost the reason for their existence because their aim was strictly limited in time.

Within the framework of the follow-up of the Declaration on the Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Conference will discuss the general report on the effective abolition of child labour, entitled *A Future Without Child Labour*, presented by the Director General.

The WCL affiliates will present draft resolutions on moral harassment at work, on the ILO and sustainable development, and on tripartism and social dialogue.

The UGTM introduced a draft resolution on the situation in Palestine.

**CHILE: CAT SOON LEGALLY
RECOGNISED**

The WCL affiliate CAT, created in 1995, is still not legally recognised. After a difficult start, the CAT has now imposed itself as a dynamic social actor. Only administrative obstacles and political pressure prevent its legal recognition. Willy Thys, present at the Congress of the Chilean affiliate, paid a visit to the Minister of Labour, asking him to accelerate the legalisation process. The Minister assured him that things were taking their normal course.

The CAT Congress re-elected Osvaldo Herbach President and Pedro Robles Secretary General.

During the Congress, the CONFEPACH, a 20,000 strong fishermen's federation, affiliated to the CAT.

ARGENTINA:

CRISIS IS GROWING WORSE

Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, and Eduardo Garcia, CLAT Secretary General, conducted a mission to Argentina in order to express the WCL's solidarity and to analyse the situation together with the brothers of the WCL affiliate *Consejo Coordinador Argentino Sindical* (CCAS). A meeting with the President of the Republic and the Minister of Labour was scheduled but called off because a new Minister of Labour had just been appointed. The crisis in Argentina is growing worse. The rate of inflation, officially 40%, is nearing 60% according to unofficial estimates. Unemployment and poverty are on the increase, and the buying power of the workers and their families is falling considerably. The political situation is chaotic, no clear political line is breaking through, and the struggle against corruption is ineffective. The employers are shirking their responsibilities, and the big capital has left the country. The trade union world for its part is divided, facing a considerable corruption.

The WCL delegation also visited the CTA, which is active in the most underprivileged sectors in particular.

In these particularly critical circumstances, the WCL and the CLAT express again their solidarity with the workers and the people of Argentina.

DOAWTU – ORAF MEETING

On 10 May, a delegation of the ORAF-ICFTU met a delegation of the DOAWTU-WCL in Nairobi. The delegations were led by Guillaume Attigbé, President, and Andrew Kailembo, Secretary-General, for the ORAF and by Basile Mahan Gahé, President of the WCL, Adrien Akouété, Secretary General of the DOAWTU, and Aloysius Yon, Vice President of the DOAWTU, for the DOAWTU.

The meeting, an initiative of the DOAWTU, was aimed to take stock of the trade union situation in the continent and of the relations between both regional organisations.

After an outspoken and open debate, both parties agreed to:

- promote independent, free, democratic and autonomous trade unions;
- discourage moral, material and financial support to dissident groups manipulated by

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- governments to weaken the trade unions;
 - avoid double affiliation, which creates confusion and conflicts in the African trade union movement and particularly between both organisations;
 - act together in a consistent struggle against HVI-AIDS;
 - take a single stand to the protection of human and trade union rights wherever they are violated and advance the ratification and application of the international labour standards;
 - take a joint stand to the African debt issue.
- Both organisations pledged to have mutual consultations on a regular basis.

4TH MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

The 4th meeting of the International Council of the World Social Forum (WSF) took place in Barcelona on 28-30 April. It assessed the strategy and role of the WSF and dealt with matters related to the Forum's political and organisational structure. The agenda also included the preparations for the 2003 edition of the Forum. The Council created two working parties, the first one to outline the programme of the Forum 2003, the second one to give concrete shape to its management and political orientation. The proposals of both working parties will be discussed at the Council's next meeting, in Bangkok on 12-15 August 2002.

The Council stuck to the concept of organising regional forums. Several projects of such forums are being prepared. The European and Asian forums are scheduled for the end of 2002.

The representatives of the international trade union confederations (WCL, ICFTU, ETUC) met in Barcelona to prepare and co-ordinate the trade unions positions and activities during the next Forum. New consultations will be continued in Geneva in the next few days. The current outcome is to organise a two-day Forum, completed with a seminar or a symposium on employment issues.

The aim must be a debate among trade unionists and personalities and organisations of the civil society.

ACTRAV MEETS WCL

On 7 May, Michael Sebastian and Sergeij Popello from the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) met in Brussels a delegation of the WCL. They presented the four strategic ILO programmes – standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue – and the ACTRAV social plan for 2002-2003. ACTRAV develops its activities in eleven specific pro-

grammes in the form of technical co-operation, publications or research.

The WCL, for its part, presented its action programme. It pointed out the importance of having its regional organisations recognised as separate entities so that they co-operate with ACTRAV. It also expressed the wish for a stronger participation of its international trade federations in the activities of the ILO in general and of ACTRAV in particular.

In order to outline the co-operation between ACTRAV and the WCL, a next meeting is scheduled for June in the presence of Mr Sebastian and Mr Popello for ACTRAV and Béatrice Fauchère, permanent WCL representative in Geneva, and Eduardo Estévez, WCL Deputy Secretary General.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UPDATE

Guatemala. On 29 April at 13:45, the *Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala* (CGTG), through its Human Rights Commission, informed us that brother GUILLERMO OVALLE DE LEON, 30, accountant at the Rigoberta Menchú Foundation, had been shot dead in a cafeteria in the Guatemalan capital. The murder of Guillermo Ovalle was not attributed to common law delinquency, even if other people were victims of the attack. Indeed, a few days earlier this brother had received anonymous and silent telephone calls, during which he heard only funeral music.

This murder, which plunged a whole family into mourning, cannot be tolerated, the more so as the authorities expressed the will to respect and protect the human rights.

The WCL has sent the President of the Republic a letter of protest, demanding inquiries leading to the arrest and conviction of the criminals.

Schedule of activities

16-22 May 2002 : UN/ESCAP: 58th session of the Economic and Social Committee for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

23-24 May 2002 : International symposium: the Convention of Cotonou, Brussels, Belgium

27 May-7 June 2002 : Committee on sustainable development set up in preparation for the World Summit for Sustainable Development, ministerial level, 4th session, Bali

5-6 June 2002 : ETUC Executive Committee, Brussels, Belgium