



12 JUNE: WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

On the occasion of the 90th session of the International Labour Conference, the ILO decided to proclaim the 12th of June "World Day Against Child Labour". The first Day was celebrated on Wednesday 12 June and marked by a series of cultural and artistic manifestations. "This first World Day Against Child Labour is aimed to remind all of us to what extent the situation remains dramatic and that we must therefore combat – more than ever – this scourge with unflinching energy and determination," explained Juan Somavia, ILO Director General.

The ILO has several instruments at its disposal to combat child labour: the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182). Furthermore, the Focal Programme on Child Labour, implemented by the IPEC, has initiated a series of activities throughout the world. But the task is huge, as Juan Somavia underscored during the celebration: "We must combine forces to build a world in which each child can live a normal youth, be in good health, go to school, without forgetting the parents who, for their part, must have decent jobs. Our aim is to arrive at a world in which child labour has no right to exist."

The WCL participated in this celebration, of course.

TRADE UNION LEADERS OF THE G8 MET IN CANADA

The G8 Summit was held in Kananaskis, Canada, on 25-27 June. The participants debated on three major themes: the strengthening of worldwide growth and sustainable development, the creation of a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the struggle against terrorism. In the margin of this Summit, the trade union leaders from the G8 countries met in Ottawa on 17-18 June. Willy Thys, WCL Secretary General, Mohammed Larbi Kabbaj, UGTM representative, and Ronald Janssen, WCL adviser at the TUAC, took part in this meeting. On the occasion of a meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, Willy Thys pointed out that "the struggle against terrorism must not lead to restriction in the field of democracy and consultation". According to the WCL, one of the priorities of the G8 and of the OECD ought to be neutralisation of the fiscal paradises, because "the existence of fiscal paradises handicaps the tax collection by the states and therefore the redistribution of wealth through social policies. Terrorism feeds both on social injustice and on dirty money". Mr Chrétien agreed with this.

About the NEPAD Willy Thys said: "Trade and the opening of the markets are insufficient to ensure social development. (...) Whereas economic decline finds expression almost automatically in a decline of social conditions, economic growth only finds expression in social development if there is a mechanism to redistribute the produced wealth. Without this redistribution, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small minority rises along with social injustice, which jeopardises our democratic systems."

Larbi Kabbaj pointed out that the NEPAD was placing an almost blind trust in foreign investments. The issue had to be considered in terms of quality of those investments, he said, and it had been suggested using the OECD code of conduct for multinationals as an identification mark for investors within the framework of the NEPAD.

NEPAD, HOPE FOR AFRICA?

The proposal was presented initially by a delegation of African leaders under the name of New African Initiative (NAI) at the Genoa Summit in 2001, but has since been refashioned and renamed: New Partnership for Africa's Development. In exchange for good governance on the part of the African governments, the G8 countries are invited to provide additional financial resources.

In the matter of the NEPAD, the WCL deplors that the authors have taken over word for word the discourse that is fashionable in the lobbies of the IMF and the World Bank. It is important that the African trade unions ensure the follow-up of this initiative, stressing two essential points: participation and the core labour standards. If the concept of the NEPAD finds acceptance, why not propose the creation of its own trade union advisory committee? As far as the labour standards are concerned, the African countries should subscribe to code of conduct for multinationals in order to achieve that the foreign investments benefit the whole population.

DEATH OF A BROTHER IN THE TRADE UNION STRUGGLE

First underground, under the dictatorship, then within the CNT, Efigenio Fernandez struggled to defend the democratic process and to protect the interests both of the rural and the urban workers in Paraguay. The WCL was profoundly saddened at the news of his decease. We will remember him as a great defender of independent trade unionism based on the Christian principles and values. The WCL and

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all its affiliates express to their brothers and sisters in Paraguay their sincerest condolences and fraternal solidarity .

MAURITIUS: THE NTUC IS THE COUNTRY'S MOST REPRESENTATIVE TRADE UNION

On 29 June, the NTUC assembled its Statutory Congress. On that occasion the Federation of Progressive Unions, the *Fédération des Travailleurs Unis* and the General Workers Federations reaffiliated to the NTUC. The NTUC now has six member organisation, which makes it the most representative confederation in Mauritius. A new Board was composed: Toolsyraj Benyudin, former Confederal Secretary of the WCL, was elected President of the organisation.

EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS PREPARE FOR THE NEXT EARTH SUMMIT

On the occasion of the Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the ETUC Executive Committee, assembled on 5-6 June, passed a resolution in which the ETUC specifies the goals it wants the European Union to pursue. In this resolution, which was addressed to the Seville European Council, the ETUC stresses the following goals: rapid rise in the direct development aid to the aim of 0.7% of the GNP as fixed by the United Nations; implementation of chapter 29 of the Agenda 21 adopted in Rio, which underscores the role of the workers and their participation in the effective and equitable implementation of a sustainable development strategy at all levels; the advancement of the ILO programme on Decent Work & Safe Work by the European Union; the universal application of the core labour standards; the observation of the ILO report entitled Global Agenda for Employment; a meaningful rise in the resources and policies to reduce the debt; the recognition of the essential role of public services in the access to collective goods.

Still from the perspective of the Earth Summit, the ETUC organised in Seville, on 16-18 June, a conference on a "European Strategy for Quality of Employment and Protection of the Environment". At this seminar the WCL, represented by Mathieu Debroux, Head of the Information Department, reaffirmed the importance of the social pillar in sustainable development and the prominent part the ILO has to play in this respect.

CLADEHLT: REPORT ON THE LATIN AMERICAN PRISON SYSTEM

CLADEHLT, the Latin American committee on the rights and freedoms of workers and peoples, has published a report on the Latin American prison system, providing piles of data, figures, descriptions of situations, developments and trends. It is pointed out that in Latin America and the Caribbean over 600,000 people are in prison, held in detention or in a situation of precariousness or legal. Overpopulation, dysfunction of the legal systems and the judiciary, violence, corruption and all kinds of problems related to health care, food, education and leisure are some of the situa-

tions facing the prisoners.

MISSION TO BULGARIA

In May, Bogdan Hossu, Vice President, and Camelia Dascalescu, member of the Bucharest Liaison Office, conducted a WCL mission to Bulgaria. Our Bulgarian affiliate, NTY Promyana, has 52,000 members spread over several trade federations. Today, only two organisations, the CITUB and Podkrepa, are recognised as being representative. Since the latest social elections, in 1998, our affiliate has been struggling to assert its representatives: it has filed a complaint for non-observance of the trade union freedom. A positive point was the fact that Bulgarian Telecom signed, on 14 May, a collective labour agreement with three trade unions: the CITUB, Podkrepa and also the NTU Promyana. The challenges for the Bulgarian trade union world are the sharing of the trade union assets, the improvement of the employer-trade union relations, the relations with the media and the revision of the Labour Code.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UPDATE

Ivory Coast. Our affiliate, *Dignité*, has informed us of problems its members have to contend with at FILTISAC, a company of the IPS group, which is owned by Prince Aga Khan. The trade unions activists are either dismissed or transferred against their will. The trade union dues, deducted directly from the paychecks, are not returned equitably according to the membership figures of the trade unions. The WCL has requested the President of the Republic, to intervene in favour of trade union freedom at this company and to stop the unlawful dismissals and other acts of intimidation.

India. Our Indian affiliate, the CFTUI, has informed us of the alarming situation at the PHED, the public water-supply company in the province of Bihar. This company employs over 7,000 people. Since April 2001, 3,000 workers have received no wages, and several hundreds have been fired without any consideration for their more than ten years of seniority. In view of this state of affairs, the workers have taken several protest actions and filed a complaint with the High Court. The WCL has sent a letter of protest to the government of Bihar.

Schedule of activities

16-18 August 2002: NWC : Regional summit on the migration of domestic workers, Colombo, Sri Lanka
13-15 August 2002: International Council of the WSF, Bangkok, Thailand
12-16 August 2002: NAPFE Convention, Atlantic City
26 August -4 September: World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa
26-30 August: FLACTUR Congress, Dominican Republic