

### **ETUC DAY OF ACTION FOR A MORE SOCIAL AND A MORE DEMOCRATIC EUROPE**

On 21 March, during the meeting of the European Council of Heads of State and Government in Brussels, the European Trade Union Confederation invited its members and all the social organisations to take action for a



more democratic and a more social Europe. The WCL – jointly with representatives of member organisations such as the ACV-CSC (Belgium) and the CFTC (France), and with thousands of other demonstrators – took to the streets of Brussels to demand job creation, better working conditions, quality employment and a society without social exclusion, all united for a sustainable development. A lot of European member organisations of the WCL turned up in support of the action. In Ukraine, the members of the All-Ukrainian Union of Workers' Solidarity (VOST) went to the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs in protest against the bad economic and social situation of the Ukrainian workers; they also stood up for independent and democratic trade unions in the country.

### **GABRIEL MATAYABO SET FREE IN GOMA**

An intense international campaign of the World Confederation of Labour resulted late in February in the release of Gabriel Matayabo Musafiri, Provincial Inter-Branch Secretary of the *Confédération syndicale du Congo* (Congo). In January, he had travelled to Kinshasa to attend a meeting of the organisation's Executive Committee and had been locked away by the authorities. According to what he says, he was not ill-treated. They did confiscate a number of documents, however, among which the labour code.

### **CONSAWU: A NEW AFRICAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION IS BORN**

The Confederation of South African Workers' Unions (CONSAWU), a South African group of workers' organisations, saw the light of day on 8 March. Four hundred delegates of 27

confederations came from all the South African regions to attend the Constitutive Congress in Johannesburg. Our Deputy Secretary General, Jaap Wiene, represented the WCL. First, the delegates approved the organisation's Constitution and action programme. The political independence of CONSAWU is no doubt the key to its future. Its main short-term aims are: recognition nationwide, guaranteed bargaining position and strengthening of the internal structure. It is urgent and important, further, for CONSAWU to do everything possible to offer its member organisations the best possible services and to organise activities. The ACV-CSC (Belgium) and the CNV (the Netherlands) will lend CONSAWU moral and financial support for its development. The speech of Jaap Wiene goes to show that CONSAWU is more than welcome at the WCL:

*«The creation of CONSAWU is an excellent thing for the South African society. An organisation of such a scope, democratic and independent, can only strengthen the solidarity among the workers and with the other trade unions. The WCL invites the South African public authorities and social partners to integrate CONSAWU into their consultative structures».* The Congress gave evidence of a very positive attitude towards future affiliation to the WCL and the DOAWTU, our regional organisation in Africa.

### **EU/AFRICA SEMINAR FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Europe-Africa summit, scheduled for April, cannot take place for the time being. That is why a seminar on the relations between Africa and the European Union was organised in Brussels on 25 March. The initiative was taken by International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), supported by Pax Christi International, Caritas Europe and Trocaire, an Irish organisation that supports sustainable development projects. Faustina Van Aperen followed the debates on behalf of the WCL. Joaquin Miranda, member of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the ACP-EU Agreement, was pessimistic about the current relations between the EU and Africa: *«On account of the enlargement of the EU, Africa is no longer a priority and sustainable development, a complex issue, is in too many cases limited to poverty reduction»*, he said. Claire Mandouze, representative of the European Commission, presented the priorities of the EU: favour the formation of an African Union, support the New Partnership for Africa's

### **TELE-FLASH**

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

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Development (NEPAD) and create a body enabling a genuine dialogue with the EU. Pax Christi presented a policy document for Peace in Africa. Caritas tackled the migration issue, and Trocaire went into the role of the WTO. The actions of the NGOs reveal points in common with the WCL's priorities. A closer cooperation would therefore be possible in future, so to achieve together a tangible improvement of the welfare of the workers and their families.

#### **TUAC MEETING ON NEPAD**

On 24 March, the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (TUAC/OECD) organised in Paris a meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Besides John Evans, Chairman of the TUAC, and several experts, a large number of trade union leaders took part in the debates. Basile Mahan Gahe (President) and Ramon Vivanco (economic adviser) were present for the WCL, which was also represented by two of its affiliates, the UGTM (Morocco) and the CSTT (Togo). The meeting was basically an exchange of information and views on NEPAD. It became clear that a proper functioning of the New Partnership required first that a whole series of political, economic and social problems in the continent had to be addressed. According to the WCL, it is of paramount importance that the civil society – and the trade unions in particular – can cooperate actively on this process.

#### **MEETING OF THE ACP-EU INTER-UNION GROUP**

In line with the Cotonou agreements (June 2000), talks were entered upon last September to work out trade agreements between the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) and the European Union. In order to keep a close watch on these talks and to verify if the trade union demands are complied with, the WCL is part of the ETUC inter-union committee, whose latest meeting took place in Brussels on 5 March. Faustina Van Aperen represented the WCL. «*The partnership agreements can have a real impact on the social and economic development of the ACP countries. The debates must be transparent so to enable the trade unions to contribute effectively to the drawing up of the agreements*», she said. «*The agreements must contribute to social development. The essential needs of the populations and the basic workers' rights must take precedence over commercial interests. Misery can only be overcome by a sustainable and socially just development*».

#### **BATU SEMINAR ON THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS**

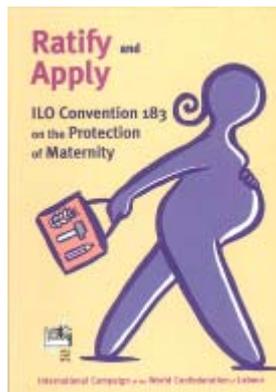
On 19-21 March, our Asian regional organisation BATU organised a seminar on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the 'Bretton Woods institutions'. Trade union representatives from Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India and Indonesia took part in the

proceedings and stated their opinion on the creation of an international trade union network to supervise the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions. Willy Thys, Secretary General, and Ramon Vivanco and Ronald Jansen, economic advisers, represented the WCL. «*National, regional as well as international trade unions have to appoint experts in charge of keeping a close watch on the policies of the Fund and the Bank*», said Willy Thys. It is from this perspective that seminars will be organised on a regular basis in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

#### **CD-ROM: WORLD CONGRESS OF THE WCT**

The World Confederation of Teachers (WCT), one of the WCL's international trade federations, has edited a multimedia CD-ROM on its 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress, which took place in Bulgaria in July 2002. The CD-ROM contains the integral text of the report in PDF as well as interesting documents and links related to this theme. Pleasant and easy to consult!

**You can order this CD-ROM by sending an e-mail to [jpg@cmt-wcl.org](mailto:jpg@cmt-wcl.org)**



*You can order a copy of the special edition of our Teleflash on the occasion of International Women's Day by sending an e-mail to [info@cmt-wcl.org](mailto:info@cmt-wcl.org)*

#### **Schedule of activities**

- 24 April - 09 May: Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGO) / UN Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, United States;
- 25-29 April: SBSI Congress, Jakarta – Indonesia;
- 28 April - 09 May: UN Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, United States;
- 05-23 May: WCL / International Institute for Workers' Education (Belgium): seminar on women workers, Belgium;

**The latest updates of our schedule are available on our Internet site: [www.cmt-wcl.org](http://www.cmt-wcl.org)**