

PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AT CONGRESS OF CLAT

From 21 to 27 November, Brasilia was the venue of the 12th Congress of the *Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores* – CLAT, the Latin American regional organisation of WCL. The trade union seized this opportunity to



celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. CLAT represents 44 national organisations and twelve Latin American sectoral federations from 28 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Congress had been convened, *inter alia*, to develop an alternative to the international situation, based on social justice. In its resolutions the Congress clearly opposes the globalisation on neo-liberal lines and prefers a free globalisation aimed at democracy and social justice. With this end in view, CLAT deems it essential to develop alliances with the other actors of the civil society. The Congress also had a long debate on the debt issue. The Congress demands for the poorest countries the cancellation of the debt and for the other countries its conversion into a fund for employment, health and education. The Congress also launched an appeal for the democratisation and reform of the international institutions. It also approved of the position of the Confederal Board of WCL, which gave the Secretary General of WCL a mandate to negotiate with ICFTU on the creation of a new democratic international trade union organisation. We mention, further, that thanks to the work of CLAMT women, with seven regular and nine substitute members, made in large numbers their entry in the Executive Committee: this is a first-ever! Julio Roberto Gomez, Secretary General of CGT of Colombia, was elected President of CLAT, Eduardo García Moure Secretary General and Luis Eduardo Gauterio Gallo Treasurer. For further information: www.clat.org

ILO SENDS HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO MYANMAR
On 19 November, The Governing Body of ILO

closed its 291st session. The debates were centred on forced labour in Myanmar, which remains a terrible reality in that country. The executive body of ILO decided to send a high-level mission to that country in order to evaluate the attitude of the government and its will to efficiently struggle against forced labour. The problem is that part of the national authorities with which ILO negotiated in the past is not in power anymore. The Governing Body also discussed the difficult cases of Belarus and Colombia. Since its latest investigation into the situation in Colombia, in March 2004, ILO has

received allegations of 42 murders, seventeen death threats, three abductions and eleven arrests. Moreover, the Governing Body of ILO promised support for the technical cooperation programme in the Palestinian occupied territories. In 2004-2005, 3.48 million dollars have been made available to finance this programme, including a Fund for employment and social protection (in May 2003). Finally a lot of time was spent on the discussion of the Strategic Framework, which has been proposed for 2006-2009. The purpose of this Framework is to make decent employment a global aim and to help create the conditions under which women and men will have productive jobs in an environment of freedom, justice, safety and human dignity. "It will be ILO's contribution to a greater coherence of the national development policies and to international convergence and synergy in various fields: employment, social aspects, macro-economics, trade and investment", stated ILO. For further information: www.ilo.org

ERADICATION OF POVERTY CAN MAKE THE WORLD SAFER

"A safer world: a matter for us all" is the title of the latest United Nations report on the responses to the new and changing threats weighing on the world. Kofi Annan, the current Secretary General of the international organisation, seemed very pleased with the text, which advocates a worldwide collective security with a broader vocation. This security must make it possible to "tackle all the threats, old and new, and the security problems of all the states, rich and poor, weak and strong". The working group that

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drew up the report was composed of sixteen former heads of state and government, leaders of security services, officers, diplomats and leaders of development organisations. They advanced the idea that “*development has to be the cornerstone of the new collective security system. Moreover, the eradication of poverty and disease is an essential aspect of the action for a safer world*”. Still according to this idea they contend that the best way to ensure safety worldwide is to make all-out efforts to implement the Millennium



Development Goals. The World Confederation of Labour entirely agrees with this viewpoint and follows the Goals very closely. Kofi Annan mentioned a few themes that are dealt with in the report: the promotion of a strategy of struggle against terrorism that is efficient, is based on principles and respects the rule of law and the human rights, and the launch of a large-scale campaign to rebuild the public health system at all levels. Kofi Anna has presented the report to the United Nations General Assembly for examination and implementation. For further information: <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

PROMOTION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN CYPRUS

From 8 to 12 December, Cyprus was the venue of a seminar on “*Promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in the context of globalisation and enlargement of the EU – What challenges are the trade unions facing?*” The seminar was organised by the European Centre for Workers’ Questions (EZA) and the European Union; it could also count on the assistance of DEOK, our affiliate in Cyprus. According to Kattia Paredes, head of the Equality Department of WCL, this kind of seminars pursues various aims: capacity building of women, men and organisations on gender issues, strengthening of the women’s network within WCL and development of a plan of action to promote gender equality. One of the speakers was Jaap Wiene, Deputy Secretary General of WCL. He went into the world trade union movement of the future for the globalisation of solidarity, equality and democracy and for a governance at the service of social justice and human development. The seminar could also count on the presence of Juliette Kamper of the European Women’s Lobby, Fotini Sianou, chairwoman of the Women’s Committee of ETUC, Sandra Vercammen, European coordinator, and Johanna Pilavaki, Vice President of DEOK. Please contact Kattia Paredes for further information on the gender issue: kattia.paredes@cmt-wcl.org

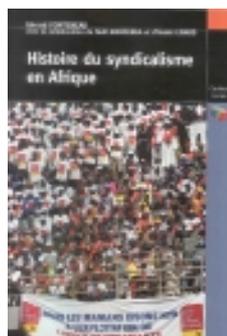
COMPLAINT:

JULIO ROLANDO ROQUEC SHOT IN GUATEMALA

Despite the release of several trade union leaders last summer, it is still dangerous to be a trade unionist in

Guatemala. CLADEHLT– the Latin American commission for the rights and freedoms of workers and peoples – has informed us that Julio Rolando Roquec was assassinated on 28 November last. He was Secretary General of the trade union federation of informal economy workers – FESTRI – and member of CGTG, our affiliate in Guatemala. According to our source, Julio Roquec was shot on his return home. Critically injured, he was transferred to the general hospital San Juan de Dios, where he succumbed almost immediately to his injuries. For several months already, Julio Roquec had received threats, also death threats, because he stood up for the workers. He had informed the authorities of this. Unfortunately, says CLADEHLT, the national police did not take up their responsibility and did not offer Julio Roquec any special protection. By a letter to the national authorities WCL Secretary General Willy Thys demanded an investigation that should lead to the arrest and conviction of the authors of this new crime against the trade union world. WCL hopes that soon measures will be taken that will allow trade unionists in Guatemala to play their role, the protection of the workers, in all safety!

PUBLICATION: HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



Was and is the African trade union movement, which contributed to the struggles for independence and has been a breeding ground for trained officials, an actor of development? Has it managed to free itself from sometimes ambiguous relations with the political authorities? Has it succeeded in getting out of the “unity – pluralism” dilemma? This book gives two kinds of answers to these questions: one in the form of

an approach to the history of the African trade union movement, the other through testimonies of actors or former actors who are or were fully committed to this movement. The book is an initiative of WCL, ACV (Belgium) and the NGO *Wereldsolidariteit / Solidarité mondiale*. It was written under the leadership of Gérard Fonteneau in cooperation with Noël Madounga and André Linard.

Schedule of activities

January

- 18-19: UNCTAD: World Summit on the Information Society, thematic meeting (Antigua / Guatemala);
- 25: World Trade Union Forum (Porto Alegre / Brazil);
- 26-31: World Social Forum (Porto Alegre / Brazil);
- 26-30: World Economic Forum (Davos / Switzerland).

February

- 04-05: Executive Committee of WCL (Brussels / Belgium).