

**THE WCL AND THE IIWE ORGANIZE  
A SEMINAR ON THE TRAINING OF  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION LEADERS**

In 2005, the Institute for International Workers' Education (IIWE - Belgium) will continue organizing training programs and seminars for trade unionists around the world. So, from February 17th to March 11th, the Institute will hold a seminar on the «Training of International Trade Union Leaders», in cooperation with the WCL. Some twenty participants from all over the world will identify the international challenges



to be met by trade union organizations and the strategies to be implemented within the framework of their international policy. Participants will also make an in-depth analysis of the functioning of different international institutions. A detailed presentation on the functioning and the importance of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, etc., will be made by Isabelle Hoferlin (Director of the WCL «Standards and Human Rights» Department). Participants will also make a three-day visit to Geneva, in order to discover the ILO, UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and the WTO. Other specific issues will be addressed during the training program, namely: International Labour Standards, international law and the enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights, trade union work at the international level, etc. The WCL Trade Action will also

be presented and a summary of the actions taken by the WCL regarding multinational companies will be made. A “must”: the conference on the «liberalization of the textile market», where participants will be able to listen to real cases in Honduras and Bangladesh.

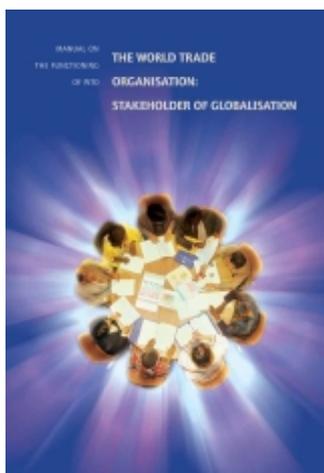
**COLOMBIAN WORKERS  
GET READY TO TAKE NEW ACTIONS**

On January 17th, the 'Comando Nacional Unitario' (CNU) gathered in Bogotá (Colombia). This council, composed of four national workers' organizations -including our affiliate, the CGT- has made a detailed analysis of the regrettable situation faced by Colombian workers. The government is trying to exert maximum control over illegal activities, such as drug and weapon smuggling, much to the detriment of the Colombian people, who are bearing the heavy consequences of such conflict. The number of refugees is enormous and governmental contribution in the field of social assistance and employment generation is scarce. In Colombia, violations of human and workers' rights are commonplace, and

trade union leaders are often threatened or killed. That is why the CNU has elaborated unequivocal plans of action. On the occasion of the 'Mesa de Donantes' to be held on February 2nd and 3rd – a meeting of financial backers for the implementation of the US and EU 'Colombia Plan'– workers' confederations will table their requirements, with a view to forging international cooperation links to promote a social rule of law, where human rights and freedom of association will be enforced. March 8th – the International Women's Day – has been proclaimed action day against the negative consequences of neoliberalism, especially on (working) women. May 1<sup>st</sup> has been proclaimed day of «national unity», and a national strike has been organized during the second half of 2005. In the meanwhile, in order to enter into negotiations with the government, the elaboration of the social agenda is in full swing.

**NEW WCL BROCHURE ON THE  
WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)**

The WCL is pleased to present its new manual on the functioning of the WTO, elaborated by the socio-economic department of the WCL in Geneva. In recent years, the World Trade Organization has become one of the most



**TELE-FLASH**

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

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controversial international institutions, given its very strong neoliberal policy, lack of transparency and the non-democratic character of its negotiations and decision-making. By publishing this manual, the WCL wants to shed light on the WTO structure and working methods. Reading this manual will make it possible for our brothers and sisters to understand the WTO policy and international trade-related documents, and will empower trade unions to face such policies. Hope you enjoy it!

To obtain the brochure, available in French, English and Spanish, please send an e-mail to [info@cmt-wcl.org](mailto:info@cmt-wcl.org)

### **GENDER EQUALITY: FAR FROM BEING A COMMONLY ACKNOWLEDGED RIGHT ...**

For years, March 8th has been the women's day. On the occasion of the "International Women's Day", social organizations carry out a great variety of activities to promote equality between men and women. Gender equality is a right that must be enforced not only in the daily or family life, but also in the workplace, where women often face a glass ceiling. In order to bring home the bacon, women depend on their jobs, and employers usually take advantage of this situation. It is worth noting that discrimination against women is not exclusive to developing countries. Not so long ago, in France, many laws aimed at eliminating discrimination against women were passed, namely: one law and one inter-professional national agreement on gender equality in the



workplace, as well as a law on moral and sexual harassment. The WCL Women's Department will continue, thanks to the support of its affiliates, fighting for the adoption of this kind of laws and their effective implementation. March 8th has been proclaimed international solidarity day. But other initiatives have also been promoted, such as the «World March of Women», which was highly successful in 2000 and therefore, will be renewed in 2005. On December 10th, the members of the World March of Women adopted a «Women's Global Charter for Humanity» in Kigali (Rwanda), which is a «proposal to build a world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected». The World March will start on March 8th in Brazil and will end on October 17th in an African country. In Europe, the March will be organized on May 28th and 29th, in Marseille (France).

## **COMPLAINTS** **Guatemala**

CLADEHLT and the CGTG standards commission –our affiliate in Guatemala– have informed us about the assassination attempt against trade union leader Leonel García Acuña. On January 7th 2005, the Secretary General of the trade union of San Miguel Pochuta's workers was attacked by four armed individuals. Leonel and some of his colleagues were able to hide in the town, where the criminals were kept back by the inhabitants.



Shortly before, the trade union leader, together with other founders of the trade union, had been dismissed and described by their employer as *his greatest sworn enemies*. Consequently, Leonel García Acuña and his colleagues lodged a claim before the labor inspectorate. However, the director of the community (the former employer of the trade union leader) showed little willingness to cooperate with the inspectors. In a letter addressed to the President of Guatemala, the WCL demands the protection of Leonel García, so that he can continue fighting for freedom of association in Guatemala.

## **Colombia**

Being a journalist in Colombia is a dangerous task. That is the conclusion of a CLADEHLT's statement on the murder of a radio reporter, Julio Hernando Palacios Sánchez. On January 10th, Julio Hernando Palacios Sánchez, 52, was going to a radio studio in Cúcuta (North of Santander) in order to present a very controversial radio program: 'El Viento'. The journalist was then attacked by two armed individuals and died at the hospital. Palacios was known in Colombia thanks to his critical views on the social situation of his country, and had been threatened with death over the past eight years. Through a letter addressed to the Colombian President, the WCL asks for an investigation to be opened and for the perpetrators of this crime to be immediately arrested and punished. In its letter, the WCL also demands the implementation of efficient measures promoting freedom of speech, so that journalists can freely exercise their profession.

### **Schedule of activities**

#### **February 2005**

- 12-18: ILO– European Conference (Budapest);
- 14: World Federation of Clerical Workers (WFCW) – Meeting of the European Board (France);
- 14-18: DOAWTU – Meeting of the Executive Committee (Lomé / Togo).

#### **March 2005**

- 10: TUAC – Conference on the work of the G8 (London);
- 15-16: ETUC – Meeting of the Executive Committee (Brussels);
- 17: WCL – European Section (Brussels);
- 18-19: WCL – European Seminar (Brussels).



# Trade Action

## INFORMAL ECONOMY WORKERS DESERVE FULLY-FLEDGED PARTICIPATION WITHIN TRADE UNIONS

The last seminars on legal-related issues, held within the framework of the VERBA program in Brazil, Senegal and Manila, mainly dealt with the unionization of informal workers. In order to provide these workers with a decent status, a transparent structure is of the utmost importance. Trade unions having such a structure increasingly take initiatives to offer a place to informal workers within their organizations. Therefore, on the occasion of collective bargaining sessions or sectoral or national meetings, the interests and needs of informal economy workers are best represented. Finally, the participants to the seminars concluded that *“Promoting the fully-fledged participation of informal economy workers is a sine qua non to improve their living and working conditions and renew the trade union’s organization”*.



Members of the international informal economy network visit Ghanaian informal workers from the traditional fishing sector.

## PARAGUAY: TRAINING PROGRAM ON «SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING» IMPROVES THE WORKERS’ SITUATION

The Paraguayan trade union Sintecoss – affiliated to the WCL through Fetracos trade federation – has organized a successful additional activity. From November 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 2004, Julio César Ojeda and Pedro Machado, two out of the three newly-trained trainers of the *Capacity Building* program in Paraguay, organized a two-day training program on safety, health and well-being at the workplace. Male and female unionists working in the waste recycling sector attended the seminar. At the workplace, these workers never talk about well-being, safety or sanitary regulations. During the seminar, the participants learnt how to improve their work and how to contribute to this improvement. Besides the theoretical part of the seminar, practical advice was given for workers to protect themselves. It is worth noting that the financial resources allocated within the framework of the informal economy project were insufficient to allow 100 waste recyclers to receive protective equipment (safety gloves, bibs, safety footwear, etc.).

Thanks to Sintecoss’ specific services, an increasing number of informal workers can be targeted and

persuaded of the importance and need of being unionized. The seminar resulted in the affiliation of new members. Buenaventura Silvero, one of the media managers of Paraguay and who participated in the press and advertising program, wrote a press release in order to grab the attention of the local media. Finally, this project constitutes a perfect example of the links to be created among the different training programs of the WCL Trade Action.

## TRAINING PROGRAM ON NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUES, CAMEROON

On November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 2004, two Cameroonian trainers, Philippe Njifon and Jean Didier Afanda, organized an additional activity on negotiation techniques, within the framework of the *Capacity Building* program. The theoretical aspects of negotiations were immediately put into practice, thanks to the different work groups created. The 22 participants of the program also dealt with the working methods and tasks of trade unions, and will pass the knowledge acquired during this seminar on to their colleagues.



## CSC-TRANSCOM: A MODERN TRADE UNION AND A COMMUNITY VISION

On December 11<sup>th</sup> 2004, CSC-Transcom held its Congress in Brussels. The main guidelines of the CSC confederation’s functioning for the transport,



telecommunications, diamond and cultural sectors were set. Participants adopted clear-cut standpoints about Europe and its role: the European Union must work harder to protect workers. The increasing competition that exists within the telecommunications, railways, postal services and port sectors – including road transport – and which results from their liberalization must not lead to the deterioration of working conditions. According to CSC-Transcom, trade unions must act as a counterbalance, at the European level and even



worldwide. The European Union enlargement represents a challenge to be met by trade unions. That is why, just before its Congress, CSC-Transcom organized a seminar with the members of the European federations, so as to find out a way to make Europe more social. CSC-Transcom is planning on fostering such debate at the national level, and dealing with social-related issues. Trade unions are well placed to deal with these issues and therefore, they should be given the opportunity to express their views more often. Therefore, a proposal was made to create a 'Mobility Forum'. Great attention was granted to the Communications Plan, which is aimed at hastening, smoothing and fostering a more efficient information exchange process between the trade union federation and its members and workers, by means of newsletters and SMS. **For more information, go to [www.acv-transcom.be](http://www.acv-transcom.be)**

### **THE WFIW SUBSCRIBES A WORLD AGREEMENT ON RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH EDF**

Within the framework of the market opening and its international expansion, the 'Electricité de France' group (EDF) wanted to make a social commitment worldwide. However, the French trade union demanded

to enter into negotiations with the trade unions of other countries and international organizations, including the World Federation of Industry Workers (WFIW).

As a result of the negotiations, EDF committed itself to respecting sustainable development guidelines, human rights, children's rights, the ILO Conventions on workers' fundamental rights, as well as the Global Compact principles ([www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)). The most innovating point of the agreement is the inclusion of the «internal» social responsibility notion vis-à-vis workers (social dialogue, social protection on a non-discriminatory basis, safety and health, training, etc.). Trade unions succeeded in making it possible for all EDF employees to benefit from social protection in case of accident or illness, as well as from a pension program. EDF also agreed to meet a diversity objective within the company, so as to foster a staff composition that reflects the broader composition of society.

External responsibility vis-à-vis sub-contractors, employees of subsidiaries and customers, for instance, is also an innovating point. So, EDF commits itself to supplying electricity to its customers, something that is important for economic and social development, and the struggle against poverty. Together with the State and/or NGO's, EDF will find structural alternatives for its economically-disadvantaged customers, for instance, under the form of essential services. EDF sub-contractors shall prove that they respect fundamental occupational safety and health regulations, have a moral behavior vis-à-vis their customers and carry out environmentally-friendly activities. Otherwise, they will no longer work for the group.

In order to prevent promises from becoming dead letter, trade unions participated in the creation of a 'Committee for dialogue on socially responsible enterprises', which will be composed of delegations coming from different countries and international trade union organizations. This Committee will be entrusted with the task of making sure that all the commitments made are honored, and will support and strengthen local trade unions as well.

This comprehensive and detailed agreement was subscribed on January 24th by Bart Bruggeman, the WFIW President, and Pierre-Jean Coulon, from the CFTC French trade union.