

**210TH CONFEDERAL BOARD
OF THE WCL: NEGOTIATIONS ARE
PROGRESSING POSITIVELY**

The Confederal Board of the WCL held an extraordinary session last May from 27 to 28, at Geneva. This session, the highest authority



between two Congresses, was the 210th that the WCL had held. Discussions were mainly focused on the subject of the creation of a new international trade union regrouping the WCL, the ICFTU and other independent and democratic trade union organisations that do not have international affiliations. The on-going negotiation process between the WCL and the ICFTU has been assessed in a positive way. Discussions will therefore continue between the two international organisations. To this end, the elections of the ILO Governing Body, GB, was considered as a test of pluralism. The outcome was extremely positive and the WCL is happy about it. Julio Roberto Gomez of the CGT, Colombia and Rabiadou Diallo of the CNTG, Guinea were elected as full members, Bogdan Hossu of Cartel Alfa and Rekson Silaban of SBSI as deputies whilst Viviane Goergen of the LGCB, Pedro Parra of the CNT and Thomasj Wocjic of Solidarnosc were elected as alternates. It is the first time in the history of the ILO that the WCL has obtained such a high level of representation within the ILO Governing Body. For Willy Thys, Secretary

General of the WCL, this fact will help the current unification process. We note that during the International Labour Conference, a contact meeting was held between the WCL, the ICFTU and democratic and independent organisations that do not yet have affiliation with a view to involving them in the process. Finally, the Confederal Board has given notice of convening the 26th Congress of the World Confederation of Labour. It will be held from 21-23 November 2005 at Houffalize, Belgium. The theme of the Congress will of course be almost exclusively linked to the creation of the new international organisation. Let us take note that the Confederal Board has accepted the affiliation of

the SDS, Brazil, the CGT Venezuela, Decont Nepal and NCPE from Thailand, as ordinary members. CNTS/FC from Senegal has moved from the status of an extraordinary member to an ordinary member. The Confederal Board has also expressed its concern in the face of current labour reforms in Panama. **For further information contact:** www.cmt-wcl.org

**THE CFTC COMMUNICATES
ON THE TOUR DE FRANCE**

The next Tour de France cycle race will take place from 2-24 June. Why this sports news in Téléflash? Simply because the CFTC, *Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens*, our affiliated organisation in France, will be present in the publicity caravan of the Tour. An initiative in partnership with the ACV-CSC SPORTA. It is the eighth consecutive year that the trade union organisation is taking part in this high profile sporting event. Attention, the aim is obviously not to pedal in search of sporting exploits! As the CFTC explained, it is a real opportunity to communicate, it is the occasion to make themselves visible and to



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go to meet salaried workers (throughout the country) and listen to their concerns. «*It is absolutely necessary to go to meet them outside their workplace since three out of four salaried workers do not have the opportunity of having a trade union in their company*», declared Jacques Voisin, the President of our French member. Of course the trade union members present in our caravan will not be able to stop for a long time during the stages of the Tour. This is why local members organise «resting points» to meet them for a longer period. The trade union organisation has understood the powerful tool of internal and external communication very well which was the Tour de France. If in addition, the sporting event is of quality, any reasons will be good enough to be on the circuits! **For further information:** www.cftc.fr

AN APPEAL AGAINST FORCED CHILD LABOUR IN THE MINES

Each year, 12 June is devoted to World Day against child labour. As we have announced in a previous edition, the International Labour



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Organisation, ILO, had decided that the 2005 edition should draw attention to the situation of children who work in the mines and quarries. This situation is part of the worst forms of child labour. «*Such is the danger for children who work in the mines and the quarries where they risk their health, security and lives, that action must be taken without further delay*», declared Juan Somavia, Director General of the ILO on this occasion. «*A million children carry loads too heavy for their bodies and take on back-breaking responsibilities for their age. We should also together, remove this weight from their shoulders by taking them away from the mines and quarries*

and sending them to school». An appeal by the ILO was therefore sent to governments, workers and employers of the mining sector in order that, together, they assist the small-scale operations of mines and quarries in isolated regions to become economically and environmentally viable without resorting to child labour. Generally, these small operations do not have enough resources to protect the workers. For the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour, IPEC, it is certain that the concerted efforts of the ILO and its members will allow elimination of child labour in the mines and quarries. The World Confederation of Labour which is active in this area through its Equality Department, completely shares this view. We recall that no region is spared when it comes to child labour; in Africa, the diamond, gold and precious metal mines; in Asia, precious stones mines and quarries, in Latin America, gold, carbon, emerald and tin mines. **For further information:** www.ilo.org

THE ILO DEMANDS THE BOYCOTT OF BURMA

For several years Burma, Myanmar has been in the dock because it has seriously breached ILO

Conventions 29 and 105 on the ban on forced labour: requisitioning people and money for the construction of bridges, roads and military camps, recruiting the youth into the army, mobilisation of people for the detection of landmines, etc. For many years the ILO has tried the path of diplomacy and direct assistance to make the military regime in Myanmar change its attitude. Missions have been undertaken to the highest level. In spite of these initiatives, the situation is still worsening. Forced labour has even increased and the government has refused to co-operate. In addition to a debate on Myanmar at the Standards Committee, a special session on forced labour has been held in this country. Luc Cortebeek, Chairman of the CSC and mouth piece of the Workers' Group, has indicated that since Myanmar does not want to change its attitude towards forced labour, the ILO must act and implement far-reaching measures. These conclusions are also the outcome of consultations with the FTUB trade union exiled in Thailand and led by

Maung-Maung as well as NGOs operating in the region. The workers' group, most governments and the European Union have rallied to these conclusions. It is undoubtedly the only means to put an end to these intolerable situations. The result is that, the ILO Director General will request all parties concerned (governments, trade union organisations and employers' organisations, international organisations, including the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations) to review their relations with Burma. Directly affected are foreign companies, investment funds and importers. In less diplomatic terms, this means that the ILO is calling on member States to break off trade relations with Myanmar.

UNCTAD ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



*Carlos Fortin, interim
Secretary General of
UNCTAD*

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD was established in 1964 as a result of pressure from developing countries to be a counterbalance to the GATT. The interim Secretary General was the Chilean, Carlos Fortin. He will soon be replaced by Supachai Panitchpakdi, the outgoing Director General of the World Trade Organisation. During a visit of the WCL to the headquarters of UNCTAD in early June, Carlos Fortin

reaffirmed the goals of his organisations: it is first of all a place for intergovernmental discussions. Then it provides technical assistance adapted to the needs of developing countries. To carry out this assistance mission successfully, it collaborates in different programs such as the «Integrated framework for trade related assistance to least-developed countries» which is an agency that aims at assisting least-developed countries to participate in the world economy. The IMF, World Bank and the WTO, the three main players in neoliberal globalisation, also participate in the latter. We stress the fact that UNCTAD is open to dialogue and has received our delegation composed of trade union leaders from throughout the world. **For more information on this organisation:** www.unctad.org

ARREST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE MIGRANT WORKER'S TRADE UNION IN KOREA

Anwar Hossein is the President of MTU – Migrant Worker's Trade Union. On 14 May, Mr Hossein was arrested by more than 30 policemen whilst going home. We have reason to believe that he was injured during the police operation. He is currently in custody at the immigration detention centre at Chungjoo. These events took place just after the establishment of the MTU, affiliated to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, KCTU. The trade union organisation has encountered many problems such as the absence of the guarantee to form associations, to go on strike or of collective bargaining. Already in 2003, many migrants were considered terrorists and were arrested and deported. The WCL has requested the authorities of the country to immediately release Mr. Hossein, as well as Kim Young-Gil, President of KGEU who has also been arrested. It is time the acts against migrant workers and freedom of association ceased in this country.

DECENT WORK MUST BE AT THE CORE OF THE REFORM OF THE UNITED NATIONS

On 23 and 24 of next June, informal hearings with civil society will be organised in New York

by the Chairman of the United Nations General Assembly. They are aimed at discussing the report of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, «For more freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all». For Annan, these three themes are intrinsically linked. The document presents the most urgent measures in the perspective of the Millennium Declaration Evaluation Summit, 14-16 September. The Non-governmental Liaison Service of the UN, the NGLS, in collaboration with the world forum of Civil Society networks, UBUNTU, the WCL, the ICFTU and the Conference of NGOs with consultative relations with the UN, the CONGO, have organised a pre-session on 10 June at Geneva, to discuss the points of view and proposals of civil society. Nearly a hundred organisations have registered for this event. They can discuss the report together. The position of the international trade union movement was very clear. Decent work occupies a very low position in the proposals of the report. However, it appears that the promotion of decent work is one of the key factors in the poverty reduction struggle, one of the main subjects of the Millennium Goals.



Schedule of activities

June 2005

- 22-24: WFIW – Congress and World Conference (Dakar);
- 24: WFAFW – Executive Board Meeting (Brussels);
- 28: G8 – Meeting of Trade Union Leaders with Tony Blair (London).

July 2005

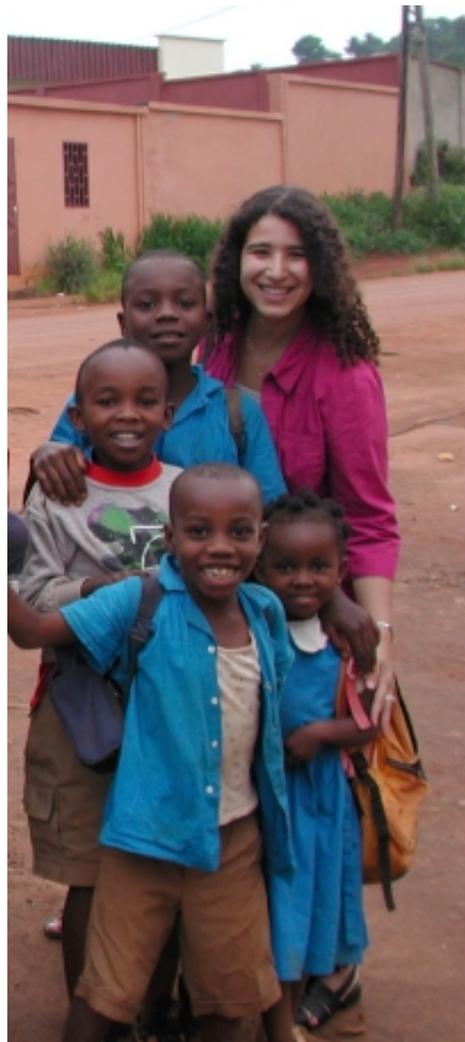
- 04-14: Institute for International Workers' Education (IIFE) – Seminar on trade union action: What strategies to follow? (Bangkok);
- 10-14: BATU – Congress (Bangkok).



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE: THE WCT DEFENDS THE CAUSE OF YOUNG TEACHERS

On the occasion of the last International Labour Conference in Geneva, the WCT – the World Confederation of Teachers – clearly made known its position during the debate which followed the presentation of the report by the Director General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Juan Somavia. The main theme of this report was decent work. The WCT, represented by its Secretary General Gaston de la Haye, again emphasised the importance of the quality of training programs because they are the only guarantee of obtaining a decent job in our present information society. The only way for the men and women of our society to actively adapt to and rapidly face the cultural and socio-economic developments of the society – and to do this as responsible citizens – is through continuing education. Naturally, it has to be a two-way contract. For the WCT, it is indispensable to establish teaching systems by which each person can access life-long education. To do this, it is necessary to accord the highest importance to (young) teachers. They are the mainspring of the teaching profession and essential to our society. It is imperative, first and foremost, to give the young teachers the recognition they deserve by improving training possibilities, working conditions and equitable salaries. Next, the teachers' unions must at all costs be able to defend the teaching staff as it should. During the ILO conference, the WCT again deplored the fact that this trade union freedom was never put into practice in many countries. To conclude, the WCT also requested the ILO Director General to encourage the development of fruitful relations between the schools and the business world.

The full text of the speech is available at the WCT secretariat: wct@cmt-wcl.org



CONCRETE MEASURES AGAINST OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES IN BRAZIL

Occupational diseases have serious repercussions on the society and workers. The union leaders of the STIV – the Union of Textile, Spinning, Weaving and Leather Industry Workers of Jaraguá do Sul and its surroundings in the State of Santa Catarina – are convinced of this. In line with a seminar devoted to occupational diseases organised within the framework of the VERBA programme of the WCL, the participants took concrete measures against diseases caused by the working environment. For example, the trade unions of Jaraguá do Sul have together decided to engage the services of an industrial doctor. And the Federation of Employees of Novo Hamburgo followed suit. The fact is that the workers do not often have the opportunity to consult a local doctor because he wants to avoid conflicts with the enterprises in the town. In all, a thousand workers took part in the event organised in Florianópolis (the State capital). Following the event, workers suffering from occupational diseases presented their case to the House of Representatives in Santa Catarina. Thanks to WCL training programmes, which come to reinforce these actions, the local union leaders will be able to pursue their fight against occupational diseases and continue their campaign to raise awareness of workers and of policies adopted.

AFRICA IS WORKING ACTIVELY TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK FOR THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

One of the main goals of the informal economy component of the VERBA project of the WCL Trade Action is the establishment of a world network of

contacts aimed at mapping out the informal economy and improving the living conditions of workers. The project managed initially from the secretariat in Brussels has in the meantime, spread to several continents. And Africa is part of them. Two officials of the CSC-Congo in charge of the informal economy recently undertook a study trip to Lomé and Cotonou so as to analyse with their trade union colleagues of the CSTT (Togo)



and the CGTB / COSI (Benin), their approach to specific problems and needs of workers of the informal economy. This is with the support of the DOAWTU, our regional organisation in Africa. Active consultations took place in Togo with representatives of the principal federations representing the interests of dress makers, hairdressers, jewellers, motor taxi drivers, musicians, sellers of building materials and handicrafts, electricians, fishermen, etc. Views were also exchanged in Benin with the official responsible for the transport, textile and agriculture sectors. Although there is still a long way to go, we are pleasantly surprised to note that in Togo and Benin, informal economy workers are increasingly aware of the advantages of affiliation to a trade union. More so in Kinshasa (in the Democratic Republic of Congo), they are trying to form trade unions and to organise themselves, to subsequently affiliate with a confederation. In addition to the CSC-Congo mission, the Pan-African Federation of the Textile and Clothing Industry recently visited Chad. A group of workers of the informal economy affiliated to the CLTT was informed of hygiene and health measures at work, and of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

PERUVIAN MINERS HOLD MASS PROTEST

In Peru, the mining sector is considered as the engine of the economy. The country is the third producer of copper and the sixth producer of gold in the world. In this sector, the extraction of zinc also occupies an important place. In Peru, thanks to its three main sites – Cerro de Pasco, Yauli and Chungar – the leading producer of zinc in the country is the mining enterprise Volcan. Last year, the company extracted 230.000 t of zinc and obtained a net profit of 73.3 million sols, thus

largely making up for the loss of 25.2 million sols recorded for the year 2003 (1 USD = 3.25 sol). In order to contribute to the expansion of Volcan, it must be pointed out that the miners gave up their share of profits from 2001 to 2003. This enabled the group to acquire three new mining concessions, including that of Chungar. Today, despite these sacrifices at the root of the success of Volcan, the FLATIC – the Latin-American Federation of

Industry and Construction Workers – informs us that the miners have still not received their share of profits released at the end of the year 2004. By embarking on mass strikes at the end of May on the sites of Cerro de Pasco and Yauli, the miners not only intended to protest against the indifference of the State and relevant ministries, which authorise enterprises to appropriate profits belonging to workers, but also against their particularly low daily wages (8 US dollars for 12 working hours), their unacceptable working conditions and also to obtain the protective clothing that the enterprises do not provide them.



THE ETUC PLEADS FOR THE MODERNISATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIRECTIVE ON WORKING HOURS

From the result of referenda organised in France and the Netherlands, it is apparent that the majority of the population of these countries reject the idea of a European constitution. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is of the view that the European political leaders must take account of this unambiguous message. It is

for them to show the population that they are taking the defence of the interests of European workers seriously and intend to pay attention to the demand for a more social and stronger Europe. One of the basic themes in this discussion is the European directive on working hours. The employers are exerting increasing pressure for a softening of the legal provisions relating to working hours and to benefit from more flexible opportunities of employing workers. To better understand the situation, it is enough to mention the «opt-out» formula which would enable the employer to conclude an individual agreement with a worker on the number of working hours that he will put in, despite the Collective Bargaining Agreement, or even the larger basis for calculating a 48-hour week. For the ETUC, the important thing is to find lasting solutions, offering, on the one hand, the necessary flexibility to workers and the employer, and guaranteeing, on the other hand, the health and safety of workers. This increasing mobility of the labour force in specific sectors must reside in agreements that are unambiguous and convenient. It is necessary to offer workers real possibilities of harmonising as best as possible their professional and family lives. For the development of these modern regulations on working hours, collective bargaining with the social partners naturally remains a fundamental aspect!

EUROPEAN OFFICE OF THE WFCW: THE SERBIAN EMPLOYEES DEMAND ASSISTANCE TO RESUME SOCIAL DIALOGUE

On 6 June, the members of the European Committee of the World Federation of Clerical Workers (WFCW) were welcomed to Belgrade by the local federation BOFOS. The participants discussed, among other things, the situation of Serbian workers in the banking and insurance sector. The privatisation of this sector is at its height without the authorities involving the trade unions in the process. In fact, they have no say in the tender committees or in the negotiations with potential investors. In so far as the federations have no say in purchase contracts, it is impossible for them to protect their members who are affected against the potential negative consequences: like dismissals, loss of social rights, right to strike, etc. That is why BOFOS is requesting the support of its European colleagues for rebuilding social dialogue in Serbia. A statement was drafted jointly with the European Bureau of the WFCW. This has been presented and explained to the press. **The full statement is available at the WFCW secretariat: olga.nicolae@cmt-wcl.org**

TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE CBA IN TOGO AND GHANA

The third training program provided for under Capacity Building component of the VERBA programme of the WCL was held at the Notse training centre, some 120 km north of Lomé, the Togolese capital. The trainers Gbadago Amaglo,



Emmanuel Agbenou and Amivi Adossi organised an information session devoted to Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA). In all, 21 local trade union leaders, including 7 women, participated in the training. Several sectors were represented, including those of agriculture, construction and wood, transport, textiles, services, public services and industry. The trainers informed the participants of the processes of creating CBAs and stressed the importance of social dialogue.

A follow-up program on the CBAs was also organised in Ghana on 8 June 2004. The trainers involved were Ebenezer Aidoo and Kenneth Koomson, the Chairman of the 'Ghana Federation of Labour' (GFL), our member organisation in Ghana. 15 participants were present. The media officials of the Ghana Federation of Labour managed to draw the attention of the press to the training. Three television stations and various newspapers sent their journalists to cover the event. At the end of the training, the participants declared that they had learnt a lot of useful things that will enable them to achieve better results in their activities as local union leaders. This is the eighth very successful training in Ghana as part of the Capacity Building component of the VERBA programme!