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# ICEM

# GLOBAL BALANCE



Th. Lenoir/ICEM

## African HIV/AIDS Project Progresses

*pages 12 & 13*

INTERNATIONAL  
FEDERATION OF  
CHEMICAL, ENERGY,  
MINE AND GENERAL  
WORKERS' UNIONS

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## International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions



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# Canadian Paper Strikers Hold The Line Against UPM Kymmene

**M**iramichi, Canada A bitter strike has raged here over the winter between Local 689 of ICEM affiliate Communications, Energy & Paperworkers (CEP) of Canada and UPM Kymmene, a multinational Finnish papermaker. At issue is the company's refusal to abide by terms negotiated last year in the pattern paper settlement for 25,000 paperworkers in eastern Canada.

The 770 members of CEP Local 689 have held steadfast and strong since the strike began 16 December, and have been buoyed by support from paper mill unions globally through ICEM efforts. CEP has received particular support from Finnish affiliate Paperiliitto, which has alerted workers in over 80 UPM Kymmene wood and paper sites to the strike issues, and has generated favourable coverage of Local 689's struggle in the Finnish press.

The paper sector pattern was set last summer when CEP won major improvements in pension, benefits and severance pay for 4,500 workers of Abitibi-Consolidated at 13 mills. Several other paper companies then accepted the same package. But when bargaining began with UPM Kymmene late in 2004, managers refused to even table the pattern, saying the mill makes magazine-grade papers while Abitibi is a newsprint producer.

This refusal broke a longstanding practice by producers of all grades of paper to follow the pattern. Local 689 had no choice but to shut the mill's two lightweight coated machines and strike to preserve eastern Canadian standards. Even before management's abrupt bargaining stance, CEP President Brian Payne said the company was engaged in "cold war" labour relations.

## **Announced Pulp Mill Closure**

The company set the table for this protracted labour dispute in September 2004 when it announced it would shutter a kraft pulp mill in Miramichi in January, thus laying off 400 Local 689 members. The union protested the closure and generated vast community support to keep it open. In 2000, when UPM Kymmene purchased the paper and pulp mills, plus two nearby

CEP-represented sawmills, it pledged to New Brunswick Province to retain all jobs in exchange for timber harvesting rights on governmental Crown forestlands.

CEP challenged the closure before the provincial government on that basis, but the company retaliated: it hired a security firm to monitor workers' activities, refused to share information with the union on why the closure is necessary, suspended union officers in the performance of their duties, and refused to address official worker grievances.



*Local 689's First Vice President David O'Reilly at a CEP rally*

Those actions caused the CEP to seek an investigation of company conduct with the OECD under its Guidelines for Multi-national Enterprises. "While issues surrounding the mill closure and collective bargaining warrant action on your part on their own merit," wrote Brian Payne to the Canadian Contact Point, "we also point out that UPM Kymmene has failed the OECD guidelines more generally on the social responsibility side."

As the strike began and it became obvious workers had the strong backing of merchants and others in the community, the company offensive grew worse. In mid-January it sought and received a court order limiting the number of pickets at mill entrances. It also announced an earlier than expected closure of the pulp mill and began preparations for demolition and

**See *Canadian Paper Strike*  
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# Historic Colombian Social Dialogue Begins

**A**n ICEM-led initiative that opens a social dialogue process between Colombian trade unions and multinational companies kicked off late in 2004 that just might serve as an essential building block for peace and justice in the war-torn South American country.

A series of meetings between the ICEM, affiliated unions and eight companies produced a formalized process for discussions on social issues, trade union and human rights, security measures and basic working conditions. The programme helps to fulfill a resolution passed at ICEM's 2003 Congress to devote resources and build awareness to the needs and goals of trade unions in Colombia.

"Our affiliated trade unions in Colombia recognize this initiative as a vehicle for peace and reconciliation," said ICEM General Secretary Fred Higgs. "Trade unions are among the few democratic institutions in Colombia. We see this process of social dialogue with employers as a major step to achieving peace and justice, and a meaningful attempt to establish full human and trade union rights."

The eight multinationals that accepted the invitation of the ICEM and Colombian trade unions to participate include: Spanish energy company Endesa; Spanish electrical distributor Unión Fenosa; Swiss oil, gas and minerals trader Glencore; Australian diversified mining and energy company BHP Billiton; UK-based mining company Anglo-American; German gas, engi-

neering, materials handling and refrigeration firm Linde AG; UK household products group Reckitt Benckiser; and Irish paper and packaging company Jefferson Smurfit Group.

ICEM's Colombian trade union affiliates involved include: Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Electricidad (Sintraelecol), Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Industria del Carbón (Sintracarbón), Sindicato de la Industria Química (Sintraquim), and Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Cartón (Sintracarcól).

In October 2004, Higgs and union leaders met collectively with the Colombian managers of the companies, and then individually with respective enterprises to establish a working process. Both labour and management at the company level have designated contact point persons and have already introduced procedures within each company to follow.

Two collective seminars will occur on international labour standards and human rights in the first half of 2005, and then in June 2005 another conference will convene with the ICEM to shape a specific agenda for 2006.

The social dialogue process will operate on two levels: the company level to develop best practices on standards, security, labour relations and working conditions; and group level with all companies and trade unionists participating to bring initiatives and share experiences with other companies operating in Colombia.

## Coordinator for Contract Labour Project Selected

**Gerry Veart** has been appointed to coordinate the ICEM's Contract and Agency Labour project. Veart, who retired early from the UK's GMB Union last year, will lead a project that became a long-term ICEM priority at a conference last September.

The project will initially focus on the need for affiliates to insist on consultation and subsequent agreement with primary employers before any commercial contract at a work-site occurs that affects permanent employment. The project will also be campaign oriented aimed at national governments and inter-governmental bodies to recognize the ill-effects to communities when full-time employment is exchanged for contract labour.

Veart is former GMB National Secretary and a longtime negotiator in the chemicals, rubber and glass sectors. He served on the ICEM Executive for four years, and also chaired the General Purposes Committee of UK's TUC. "This is a massive project and it is important that we take small steps at first to tackle the problem in an effective way," he said. "The ICEM intends to make a difference on this issue and I am committed to help make that happen." The ICEM will hold a follow-up conference on contract and agency labour in Brussels on 15-16 September 2005.



*Gerry Veart*

# Turkish Paper Mill Occupation Ends in Victory

**Izmit, Turkey** A 51-day occupation of a state-run Turkish paper mill by 700 workers ended 10 March when ICEM affiliate Selülöz-Is gained agreement with the government for guaranteed employment. It also won wage levels similar to those earned inside the mill.

Workers, family members and citizens of this industrial city had occupied the mill since 20 January in a critical Turkish battle over privatisation. The standoff reached a peak 4 March when two national labour centers—DISK and TURK-Is—linked hands by mobilizing affiliates to join the occupation.

And throughout Turkey that day, at the urging of the national centers, thousands of workers occupied their own worksites as a message of support to Izmit's paperworkers. The ICEM played a key role throughout the occupation by generating global awareness to a labour dispute that was gaining more and more attention inside Turkey.

The accord to end the dispute cedes all land and equipment to the Municipality of Izmit. Workers ended their employment contracts with state-run Turkish Cellulose and Paper Factories (SEKA) effective 10 March and received all financial rights. They were given new contracts by Izmit at a salary comparable to their old wage.

Selülöz-Is and municipal leaders began conducting a joint and extensive technical study to determine if the mill is viable. Regardless of that outcome, the 700 will have guaranteed employment.

The dispute began in November with a decree by Turkey's High Commission of Privatisation to shut the factory. Selülöz-Is immediately applied to a court in Ankara to suspend the decree. But fearing the government would begin removing machinery, workers behind Selülöz-Is seized the mill. A week after the occupation began, the Ankara court suspended the decree and ordered the commission to submit further arguments for privatisation.

On 18 February, security forces in armed vehicles ringed the paper mill. But sensing the resoluteness of the 5,000 workers and allies present, and fearing the

bad publicity that a mass assault would bring, the government ordered forces to retreat after only minor skirmishes.



*Trade union leaders from across Turkey amassed in Izmit 4 March in support of Selulöz-Is. Front row, second from right, President Mustafa Kumlu of TES-Is, the electric power union of Turkey, and ICEM Executive member*

Selülöz-Is had been critical of the government throughout the dispute for spending huge sums on consultative fees on privatisation and valuation plans for SEKA rather than making investments in the mill.

ICEM General Secretary Fred Higgs, visiting Izmit in early February and witnessing the community, worker and family resolve, sent a message to Turkey's government while speaking at a rally: "Rather than investing in bribes to workers to give up their jobs and in unemployment costs, the government should make a relatively modest investment to make this company viably sound and one that will preserve the livelihoods of a loyal workforce."

The ICEM then began a campaign to alert all its global affiliates to the worker/community resistance, and urging them to write Turkish ambassadors in their countries urging them to keep the family-sustaining jobs in Izmit. The result was resounding with more ICEM affiliates responding than on any issue over the past several years.

# News of Affiliates

## *Sintracarbón Gets Lucrative Wage Gains for Colombian Miners*

**G**uajira Dept., Colombia Affiliate Sintracarbón here negotiated excellent wage and bonus payments in a collective agreement for 2,500 miners at Carbones del Cerrejón. The two-year contract calls for 8% pay raises and three monthly bonus payments to miners for the union's consent to legislation legitimizing the privatisation of the vast mining enterprise that occurred four years ago.

Cerrejón is a profitable coal mining and export company owned equally by Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Glencore International. In December during negotiations, the ICEM raised the issue of death threats and extortion attempts by right-wing paramilitaries against Sintracarbón leaders. The Colombian government is now addressing that issue.

## *Alexander Yurkin Takes Helm of Ukraine's Labour Federation*

**K**iev, Ukraine The ICEM's loss is the trade union movement of Ukraine's gain. Presidium member and chairman of the ICEM's Nuclear Sector, Alexander Yurkin, is stepping down in order to devote full time as chairman of the national labour center Ukrainian Trade Union Federation (FTUU). Yurkin was the steadying hand during tense negotiations of FTUU member unions in early December during the political standoff between Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich. He was a member of the FTUU's Presidium then and also president of ICEM-affiliated Nuclear Power and Industry Workers' of Ukraine. On 31 January, the Nuclear Power Workers' elected former Vice President Valeryi Matov to succeed Yurkin.



Alexander Yurkin

## *PACE Members Reach Accord with Taiwanese Company*

**N**ashville, US The longest labour dispute in Oklahoma State history ended late last year when members of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical, Energy Workers Union (PACE) in Ponca City, Oklahoma, ratified a five-year agreement with Continental Carbon, wholly-owned by the powerful Koo Group of Taiwan. The lockout of 86 workers began on 8 May 2001 after the management of the carbon black manufacturer sought and failed to gain economic concessions totaling US\$12,000 per worker.

PACE mounted an extensive campaign that included alliances with local groups over environmental concerns, awareness to tyre makers of sub-standard carbon black produced by replacement workers, mailing of some 60,000 alerts to retailers about the same, and pressure on the Koo empire of manufacturing and financial subsidiaries. Locked-out workers made a handful of trips to Taiwan to protest directly, and with the help of the ICEM, staged a seven-day hunger strike last June in front of company offices in Taipei. The agreement is not only void of economic concessions, but grants regular wage increases. PACE also maintained all contractual rights, as well as a union pension plan. PACE President Boyd Young was credited for "never flinching in providing the resources necessary for a winning campaign."



PACE Special Projects Director Joe Drexler speaks to reporters in Taiwan during a hunger strike last June

## ***Bitter Belgian Glass Strike Reaches Negotiated End***

**Fleurus, Belgium** A three-month strike by Belgian unions ended in 15 March at an auto glass factory. The unions, including affiliates CG-FGTB, with majority membership in the 800-employee work-site, and white-collar SETCa-BBTK, resisted a restructuring plan consisting of mass job cuts, agency labour, and forced rationalization of both production and maintenance.

The plant is part of Glaverbel, the Belgian subsidiary of Japan's Asahi Glass. The dispute became fractious when Glaverbel admitted it was targeting—specifically using the term “blacklisting”—elected delegates of CG-FGTB for sacking. In early March, Asahi executives in Japan issued an ultimatum giving Glaverbel managers and the unions one week to negotiate a settlement or risk closure of the entire operation.

The dispute did reach a negotiated resolution when it was agreed to reduce the job cuts from 284 to 246. Workers voted by 62% to accept the terms, including early retirement offered to those over age 50 and those workers retrenched getting an extra €13,000 above Belgium's legal severance pay.



*ICEM participated in a 10 March manifestation in Fleurus*

## ***Union-Busting by Managers of Norwegian Chemicals Firm in Turkey***

**Cerkezköy, Turkey** Refusal by a Norwegian chemicals company to honour terms and conditions of a negotiated labour agreement last year brought on a labour dispute at a paint factory. A short strike in 2004 at a plant of Jotun A/S called Jotun Toz Boya Fabrikasi produced the labour contract, but after shop-floor leaders and officers of Turkish affiliate Petrol-Is complained that terms and conditions were not being met, managers retaliated 21 December by sacking 50 union members.

The ICEM intervened on behalf of Petrol-Is with senior executives in Norway. ICEM and Petrol-Is contend Jotun is hiring more supervisors in order to limit union membership as a means to avoid representation under Turkish law. After the sackings, the plant's general manager contacted each of the dismissed workers individually and offered a return to work if he were to resign from the union.

As *Global-Info* went to press in mid-March, the ICEM had succeeded in getting senior managers from Norway involved in the dispute and dialogue with Petrol-Is has started.

## ***T&G Preserves Work Terms in Impending BP Spinoff***

**Grangemouth, UK** The power of solidarity and early action by two branches of Transport & General Workers Union (T&G) will preserve hard-won union benefits at a BP oil refinery and petrochemicals plant. BP announced last year plans to make the two complexes a separate enterprise. With that, the possibility of redundancies, erosion of benefits and work terms, and other cuts might occur.

But the two branches—led by Conveners Russell Gray and Mark Lyons—mounted a spirited campaign that included threats of industrial action, mass meetings, on-site meetings, posters, literature and t-shirts, and outreach to Scottish legislators in the House of Commons. The result was a positive dialogue in which BP did not even propose concessions. The T&G won for the 900 workers long-term job security, guarantees that all terms and conditions would be protected, a pension scheme preserved and worker stock options would continue.

BP plans a public offering of the integrated complex in April 2005 with an initial 20% stake put up. It eventually hopes to part with 51% of the enterprise. “We were naturally unhappy with the uncertainty of this,” said Lyons. “But the solidarity of workers, a unity between the two branches and direct action inside the workplaces preserves our future.”

# Rhodia, EDF Sign Global Agreements

Global Framework Agreements with two French companies were signed by the ICEM within a week of each other in January, bringing the GUF's total to 11. On 31 January, ICEM signed its first such agreement in the chemicals sector when Paris-based specialty chemicals producer Rhodia agreed to uphold all internationally recognized labour and human rights standards regardless of whether such standards or principles are required by national law of the countries in which Rhodia operates.

This Global Agreement was supported by ICEM French affiliates Fédéchimie CGT-FO and Fédération Chimie Energie CFDT.

A week earlier, Electricité de France (EDF) inked the world's broadest Global Agreement with not only the ICEM but also three other international trade union organizations, including Public Services International. Again, ICEM French affiliate Chimie Energie CFDT provided the lead on this agreement.

## Rhodia

The Rhodia agreement affirms a commitment to uphold all Fundamental ILO Core Conventions on trade union and workers' rights and the ten principles of the UN's Global Compact. It also calls for "in-depth and balanced dialogue between labour and management."



On safety and health, Rhodia pledges "to ensure good working conditions and to manage risk on a daily basis. The company commits to continually improve safety performance and to regularly assess safety practices of both employees and subcontractors. It will use both preventive and precautionary measures regarding the environment, and places a priority with the ICEM on enhancing employee awareness and expertise on environmental protection.

"We are quite satisfied with the language of the agreement," said ICEM General Secretary Fred Higgs, "but of equal importance to the text is the company's commitment to the spirit and intent behind the agreement. We are confident our affiliates around the world will fully participate in its implementation."

## EDF Group

The EDF Global Agreement pledges the expanding utility also to the ILO Core Conventions—even in countries that have not ratified such conventions—and refers to UN's Declarations on Human Rights and the UN's Global Compact principals.

The agreement calls safety and health adherence a "priority" and contains responsible language on conveying to local communities potential environmental hazards. It commits to ensure "each employee of every EDF-controlled company" has social benefits, and has strong language on contractors performing EDF work. Such compliance covers legal, the full range of

international standards, employee safety and health, ethical behaviour for customers, and respect for the environment.

"This is the first time ICEM has negotiated a Global Framework Agreement with other international trade union organizations," stated Higgs. "The agreement is wide-ranging in scope and we pledge our commitment to be a responsive voice in upholding and improving its content."



*ICEM's Fred Higgs signs agreement with Rhodia CEO Jean-Pierre Clamadieu*



# Women's Day Actions Crushed in Nepal

Celebrating the 95th International Women's Day in Nepal 8 March was intended as re-emergence of the open and visible struggle for human and labour rights in the Himalayan country. ICEM affiliates met 25 February with their national centers NTUC and GEFONT and resolved to push ahead for restoration of basic trade union rights, and to plan joint training actions.

On 28 February the unionists sought and received a permit from Katmandu's district administrative office to conduct a silent demonstration on 8 March with placards proclaiming women's rights slogans. A symposium entitled "Women's Rights: Equality and Decent Employment" was also scheduled by trade unionists in a Katmandu hotel.

But late on the evening of 7 March, despotic King Gyanendra displayed his totalitarian character by canceling the silent street protest and threatening trade union women inclined to participate. The seminar did come off but without the Labour and Transport Ministry Secretary, who was scheduled to speak. Other government officials expected to attend also did not.

Yet, 450 trade unionists and activists did and speaker after speaker, including

ILO Nepal Director Leyla Tegmo-Reddy, called for restoration of democracy and an end to the decree of absolute power and emergency rule.

It was on 1 February that Gyanendra dissolved his government and declared martial law. A specific order was put into effect that made all forms of protest and dissent illegal.

And it was on 8 March that union and women's leaders inside NTUC and GEFONT, as well as ICEM affiliates the Independent Chemical & Iron Workers' Union, Independent Garbage Cleaners Union, and Electricity Employees Union, set as a day of celebration for women's rights.

But gender equality, like trade union activity, free speech and assembly, and other civil liberties, was not allowed on the streets that day. Sporadic demonstrations did occur in several towns and hamlets across Nepal on International Women's Day. But baton-charging police put them down quickly. Some 226 were arrested on 8 March, half of them women.



8 March in Nepal

## Canadian Paper Strike Enters Fourth Month

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equipment removal.

On 15-16 February, some 500 strikers massed at the pulp mill's plant gates not only as a sign of job retention, but also to protest the company's regressive posturing. Some 60 managers were inside. They were only allowed to leave on foot, not in company vehicles or carrying out equipment. UPM Kymmene has retained a local contractor for the pulp mill shutdown and equipment break-down, but that contractor has had trouble retaining unionized building trades workers willing to cross Local 689's picket lines.

### Bargaining Resumes

A provincial mediator succeeded in drawing the two sides back to the bargaining

table for sessions 14-16 March and a tell-tale sign of the dispute came from the general manager of the mill. As reported by local media, he said he has now directed his bargaining team to "be serious" in these talks.

Local 689 President A.J. Dowling is hopeful the company's stance will change, but the union is firm on what it is after. "We are approaching bargaining with an open mind, but it is the pattern settlement that must be tabled," he said.

"The morale of our members is as strong now as it was when the strike started," Dowling added. "We are prepared for a long strike and unless the pattern is put forward, this company will get a long strike."

# Steelworkers Prep for US Bridgestone Strike

Some 6,000 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) at Bridgestone/Firestone tyre plants could be on strike in April if company negotiators do not make the necessary capitalization commitments for eight US plants.

The USWA announced 8 March that it would begin strike preparation training for union members at the eight Bridgestone factories beginning 15-16 March. A prior labour agreement expired in April 2003, but the two sides put off bargaining until after the US tyre pattern was set.

That pattern was established with Goodyear later in 2003, and then at Michelin's BF Goodrich tyre plants in 2004. The pattern contained investment commitments in Goodyear and Goodrich

factories and spelled out specific job security measures for USWA members.

Bridgestone bargaining resumed in November, and USWA and the Japanese-based company have been negotiating steadily throughout early 2005.

"The company still resists our demands that it grow and invest in our plants in order to secure the future of our plants and increase their share of new and higher margin products," said USWA Executive Vice President John Sellers.

A five-day termination notice of the extended 2003 contract must be given before a strike. The USWA reports that attendance by union members at the eight factories for training and strike preparation is extremely high.

## New Staffers to ICEM Secretariat

In accord with last year's ICEM restructuring decision, new staff members of the GUF's Secretariat are now in Brussels. Besides two new additions to the ICEM staff, Phee Jung-sun, former Asia-Pacific Region Secretary, is now working in Brussels. Phee is assigned as regional contact person for that region, and will also be the ICEM Officer for the Materials Section.

Eugene Kuprin has been hired as regional contact person for Eastern and Central Europe, and will be the Paper Sector Officer. Kuprin had been an interpreter and translator for the past 15 years specializing in work for trade unions.

He started that work for ICEM in 1996 at a five-day union democracy workshop in Russia. He has also done work for the IUF, ILO and several other inter-governmental agencies. Kuprin, 44, is a graduate of the Dobrolubov Linguistic University in Nizhny Novgorod.

"Doing labour work globally is an opportunity I will cherish," he said. "It will be a unique chance to work within a climate and atmosphere of an institution that cares for workers as people."

Fons Vannieuwenhuysse joined the ICEM 17 January as Campaigns/Research assistant. He had previously worked for the ICFTU, first on the admin staff and then for the past five years in the Multi-national Enterprises and Organising Section. A native of West Flanders who currently resides in Gent, Belgium, Fons, 37, is multi-lingual in French, English, Spanish, German and his native Dutch.

In the early 1990s, Fons was a conscientious objector and instead of Belgian military service, opted for civil service where he worked in the Philosophy Department of University of Gent. "I will enjoy the more practical, hands-on work dealing with specific problems of ICEM affiliates and the specific companies that present those problems," he said.



*Eugene Kuprin*



*Fons*

## China: Why the ICEM Believes in Engagement

By Fred Higgs, ICEM General Secretary

In 2003, the ICEM Asia-Pacific Region delegation visited China, following which a decision to develop a programme of activities aimed at addressing the terrible death and injury rate in Chinese mines was taken. This raised eyebrows in certain quarters since a number of union organisations have taken the decision not to engage in any way with China.

The ICEM, however, has a long and, I believe, a credible history of engagement in difficult areas. One example was an ICEM Executive Committee decision many years ago to admit into transitional membership status unions from prior communist countries as a means to encourage them to become democratic and accountable unions. History has shown clearly that this was the correct approach.

Another example has been our work to encourage forward-looking multinational companies to sign Global Agreements. This, too, has proven successful with early 2005 bringing two more such agreements (see page 8). We now count 11 Global Agreements. ICEM engagement with China must mean more than just sending the occasional delegation to visit.

The ICEM is not interested in engagement for engagement's sake. We operate on the premise that we must have a purpose, prospect for success and the backing of the Executive in order to proceed.

We do not have affiliates in China for the single reason that China does not permit independent trade unions. The only organisation claiming to represent Chinese workers is the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). And not so very long ago, China did not allow western companies to operate on its soil and it wanted nothing to do with a market economy. Those days are clearly gone; western companies are now welcome in China and western ideas and approaches are being discussed more openly.

Nor is there any longer doubt about the importance of China in the global economy. World media is devoting considerable and increasing space to the analysis of the likely direction and pace of political and economic developments in China and its effect on the global economy. China is now a dominant influence within the Asia region.



Fred Higgs

China is developing both rapidly and unevenly. Fast-growing high-tech industries exist alongside very traditional—indeed antiquated—agricultural practices. Nor have the necessary cultural and legislative changes occurred at the breathtaking pace of China's economy. Health and safety in mining provides a stark example of this disparity.

Government statistics reflect a terrible reality: 6,000 fatalities occur annually in Chinese mines. One source estimates a national rate of 12 fatalities per one million tons of coal mined.

This is why the ICEM approached the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM), the industry grouping representing the world's mining companies, and the ILO to discuss the possibility of a three-way initiative aimed at helping the Chinese government address mining problems. The ICEM felt that the ILO as a tripartite agency of the UN representing governments, employers and workers was the appropriate organisation to help facilitate the initiative. It was also clear that the Chinese government had to be actively involved and supportive from the outset.

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## Coordinator for HIV/AIDS Project Chosen

The ICEM has selected Hans Schwass as Global HIV/AIDS Coordinator. Schwass, a Swiss citizen, has vast experience in trade union building and education in the developing world.

He is former and now retired Assistant General Secretary of the Global Union Federation UNI, and served as head of trade union development in the Regions Department of the commercial workers' federation.

He brings much experience to the ICEM in project funding from donor organisations, particularly for Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Schwass will lead a team of national coordinators and a regional coordinator in sub-Saharan Africa that will have a 2005 goal of establishing three pilot projects. Those projects will consist of creating health care clinics in cooperation with multinational companies and local authorities.

"The ICEM has a strong commitment to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a workplace and union issue," said Schwass. "We now must build on the exceptional activities already done by African affiliates. It is time that we, the ICEM, translate statements and resolutions into action."



Hans Schwass

### ***Engagement on Chinese Mine Safety***

***From page 11***

From the ICEM perspective, the basis for the initiative was:

- The humanitarian goal of trying to help reduce the injury rate and loss of life in a huge and increasingly important mining sector of the world;

- The ICEM's long-standing principle of engagement with companies and governments in the pursuit of the highest possible standards of health and safety;

- Recognition that a number of western-based mining firms were and would continue to be involved in mining in China, and it was imperative that they ensure the same level of safety and health standards as their best run mines in the West;

- By acting in cooperation with the mining industry, the ILO and Chinese authorities, the ICEM could make a material difference in terms of improved health and safety performance.

After an initial Beijing meeting in 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was reached that represents the first agreement of its kind covering labour issues signed by Chinese authorities, the ILO and organizations representing mining companies and mineworkers alike.

The ICEM is now cooperating with the ILO and the ICMM to establish the principles on which to proceed. This will include a

meeting between the ICEM, ICMM and ILO to discuss the logistics of putting together a well-balanced team of experts to make a return visit to China to undertake, with Chinese cooperation, an analysis of needs. Once this has been done, it is hoped that the experts will be able to identify measures to assist with, for example:

- Capacity-building in risk assessment and risk management techniques and practices;

- Capacity-building on gas and dust management and control in coal and non-coal mines;

- Developing and implementing a safety culture throughout Chinese mining;

- Training of workplace safety representatives;

- Introduction of safety equipment and technology.

It will then be necessary to identify the necessary funding to be able to give full effect to the programme of activities and assistance.

While the ICEM recognises that we can only hope to succeed if all parties to this initiative are prepared to play their part, the possibility of our being able to make a real difference in lowering the accident rate and loss of life in China's mines make the effort an essential reason why such engagement is worthwhile.

# ICEM's African HIV/AIDS Project on Track

In November 2004, the ICEM held a workshop for Sub-Saharan HIV/AIDS Coordinators, in Boksburg, South Africa. The workshop was opened by ICEM General Secretary Fred Higgs, who reviewed progress following a previous meeting held in South Africa in March 2004.

Higgs stressed that it was now necessary to develop country- and regional-level activities extending beyond the workplace and into the broader community in which workers and their families live. It was also necessary to seek funding for such activities.

A central objective, he asserted, must be to call on selected companies operating in sub-Saharan Africa to establish clinics at each of their major operations to provide functioning medical services in those communities. Without such infrastructure, there can be no real advances in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The establishment and maintenance of such clinics, said Higgs, "Could make a tremendous difference to a country's health infrastructure deficit and the effective access to drugs, information and counselling which could then follow."

Participants engaged in a lively and detailed discussion, and it became clear there are a number of different trade union approaches in each of the countries represented at the workshop.

In his concluding remarks, the ICEM general secretary indicated there are some important next steps to be taken by both the HIV/AIDS National Coordinators in the region and by the ICEM.

At the end of the meeting, conclusions for the programme were adopted:

- When appointed, the Regional Coordinator,

in liaison with ICEM affiliates in the region, will formulate a list of companies to target for the commencement of negotiations on possible partnership agreements covering the establish-

ment of health care clinics at the company's major locations;

- Agreement needed to be reached on the prime functions of National Coordinators;

- A suitable date for convening the next meeting of the national coordinators should be identified;

- National Coordinators needed to arrange an early national-level meeting of ICEM affiliates, to formally establish a National Coordinating Committee in each country in the region;

- At each of the National Coordinating Committee meetings, National Coordinators will (a.) report on the content and outcome of the workshop, (b.) develop and agree a programme of activities in line with the conclusions concerning education, awareness-raising, behavioral change campaigns, etc., and (c.) agree a process for the follow-up by appropriate unions, with each of the agreed target companies, and the commencement of negotiations on a possible partnership agreement dealing with the establishment of health care clinics at the company's major locations.

- Each National Coordinator to provide a one-page report every two months to the African Region HIV/AIDS Coordinator detailing: activities undertaken, achievements, and difficulties that may require assistance.

Since the meeting, the ICEM has secured the services for a period of two years of a person who will act as the ICEM's Global HIV/AIDS Coordinator (see page 12).



Th.Lenoir/ICEM

# Social Standard-Setting: ISO or ILO?

What a difference a letter in an acronym can make! ICEM affiliates know that ILO stands for the International Labour Organisation. Rather fewer know the acronym ISO: International Organization for Standardization. But that one letter hides a current and crucial difference between the two.

The ILO is the UN's only tripartite structure. ILO decisions are made by governments, employers and worker's representatives cooperating equally to develop basic workplace standards that should apply. The ISO, on the other hand, has historically developed *standards* for technical agreements, providing the framework for compatible technology worldwide.

The problem is that ISO has recently moved beyond what might be broadly termed its "technical remit" into the social field—an area where the Trade Union Movement feels it is neither competent nor representative.

Part of that move is into the contentious field known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR has defenders and detractors, but few deny it has now come to dominate discussion between the relationship of companies, governments, shareholders, broader stakeholders, workers and the environment. And CSR is increasingly important because it is linked to corporate governance and socially responsible investment. This may be the reason why the ISO has decided to involve itself in CSR; there is real money to be made and influence to be had by such involvement.

ISO's national members (such as British Standards Institute, BSI) pay subscriptions that meet the operational cost of ISO's Central Secretariat. However, another source of revenue is the sale of its standards. The ISO maintains that its main costs are borne by member bodies, which manage development of the specific standards. But it also admits it depends on business groups, which "loan" experts to participate in the technical work. As ISO says, "These organizations are, in effect, subsidizing the technical work by paying the travel costs of the experts and allowing them time to work on their ISO assign-

ments."

But there is another very good reason why unions are less than interested in CSR activities the ISO might dream up: there already exists a more appropriate home for this work, the ILO. In June 2004, ISO's main governing body, the Technical Management Board (TMB), decided to enact an "international standard providing guidelines for social responsibility."

The ICFTU has been closely involved in the process that led to the ISO taking a formal decision to pursue a *standard* on CSR, and has from the outset insisted that ISO become involved in issuing such an ISO standard only if a number of clear pre-conditions were accepted by the ISO.

The TMB decision to proceed with CSR standard-setting explicitly refers to an ISO Advisory Group, as well as to points from an ISO CSR conference held in Stockholm in June 2004. Crucially, the Advisory Group's recommendation was that the ILO was the only organisation with a mandate to set international, universal public standards in labour and social areas, and that ISO should formally recognise this mandate before treading into the area.

As a member of the Advisory Group, the ICFTU has "clearly and forcefully stated that the next step for the ISO would be to contact the ILO and that the formal communication concerning the ILO's mandate envisioned by the Advisory Group should be based on an agreement with the ILO."

In a letter to ISO in December 2004, the ILO expressed concern that the TMB had failed to make the distinction between universal inter-governmental standards and private initiatives. The TMB, at a meeting in February 2005, did modify the ISO process by passing a resolution stating that any ISO draft related to ILO's mandate on standards receive ILO approval prior to a draft being circulated or voted upon.

The ICEM makes the following points:

- ISO's Advisory Group stated ISO would only proceed if it "recognizes that it does not have the authority or legitimacy to set social obligations or expectations, which are properly



defined by governments and intergovernmental organisations." ICFTU clearly states there is a need to distinguish between private standard-setting and the role of governments and intergovernmental organisations. Private standard-setting, dominated by special interests, must not be permitted to define the interests of the entire society.

The TMB reworded this to read it "recognizes the role of governments and intergovernmental organisations to set social obligations or expectations." But this negates the Advisory Group's recommendation, specifically, that the ISO does not have authority or legitimacy in this area. The Advisory Group states clearly that the ISO should not be setting certain kinds of standards. The idea that ISO should not act in areas that fall within the competence of the ILO was lost.

- One problem with many CSR initiatives is that they are used to revise, reinterpret, redefine or evade legitimate and established expectations of socially responsible behaviour. The Advisory Group said the ISO should only proceed if it "recognizes the *difference* between ... instruments adopted by authoritative global inter-governmental organizations," (meaning ILO Core Labour Conventions, the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other relevant UN Conventions) "and on the other hand, private voluntary initiatives that may or may not reflect the universal principles."

TMB reworded this to read it "recognizes" such instruments "but also that there is scope for private voluntary initiative in the field of (CSR)."

This rewording is easily interpreted as going in the opposite direction of the Advisory Group's recommendation. In eliminating the word "difference," the TMB is avoiding any restriction on the nature of an ISO standard for social responsibility. Again, one is left with the impression that the ISO may attempt to set standards in areas where it does not have the legitimacy to do so.

- The ILO already is the authoritative global standard-setting body. The Advisory Group recommended that ISO enter into a formal agreement with the ILO, which should recognise the "ILO's unique mandate as the organisation that defines, on a tripartite basis, international norms with respect to a broad range of social issues." The TMB again reworded the Advisory Group's recommendation to read the TMB "supports the development of an agreement with the ILO to govern co-operation between ISO and ILO in the area of social responsibility." Lost in the TMB's rewording is the Advisory Group's intent, which was for the ISO to recognise the mandate and authority of the ILO as the standard-setting organisation in certain areas. The purpose of a formal understanding would have been to clarify these areas and formally recognise the jurisdiction of the ILO. The processes used for technical standard-setting cannot set the expectations of society concerning behaviour of business. Genuine representation is non-existent.

- The ISO Advisory Group recommended ISO "review its processes and where necessary makes adjustments to ensure meaningful participation by a fuller range of interested parties." In its formal decision to proceed with standard-setting, TMB only agreed to "ensure that ISO processes are adjusted where necessary to ensure meaningful participation by the full range of interested parties." In other words, the ISO will not be conducting the kind of review envisaged by the Advisory Group. Presently, ISO processes do not identify or apportion influence among various interests in a consistent or rational manner. Moreover, there is no way to determine legitimacy of participating organisations or of claims by organisations to be representing parties that have genuine interests.

**See page 17**

# Kyoto Came into Force 16 February

According to Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary of the UN's Climate Change Convention, "The 16th of February 2005 (marked) the beginning of a new era in international efforts to reduce the risk of climate change." Across the globe, a series of official events were held to celebrate the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

Waller-Hunter added: "The Kyoto Protocol offers powerful new tools and incentives that governments, businesses and consumers can use to build a climate-friendly economy and promote sustainable development."

The Protocol was originally adopted on 11 December 1997, but only became operative following its adoption by Russia last year. That adoption came despite strong opposition from major developing countries, including US and Australia.

The Kyoto Protocol's entry into force means that from 16 February 2005:

- 35 industrialized countries and the European Community are legally bound to reduce their combined emissions of six major greenhouse gases during a five-year

period (2008-2012) to below 1990 levels;

- The international carbon trading market receives a strong market signal. The Protocol's "emissions trading" regime enables industrialized countries to buy and sell emissions credits among themselves; this market-based approach will improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of emissions cuts;

- The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) gets a major boost. The CDM encourages investments in developing-country projects that promote sustainable development while limiting emissions;

- The Protocol's Adaptation Fund, established in 2001, can become operational to assist developing countries to cope with the negative effects of climate change.

The coming into effect of the Kyoto Protocol coincides with recent evidence that the extent and impact of climate change could be considerably worse than previously estimated.



photo news

# Higher Safety Standards Recipe For Future Profits, Report Finds

**A**t year outset, the European Agency for Safety & Health at work published two reports. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Safety and Health at Work* identifies ten occupational health-related criteria that underpin CSR. The other, *Quality of the Working Environment and Environment (working paper)*, explores deep links between quality of work and productivity.

The agency analyses CSR functions in 11 businesses, highlighting what it believes are key ingredients to effective CSR strategies. It also provides an overview of initiatives to promote CSR at global, European and national levels.

The agency states the commercial impact of well-structured CSR, including safety/health, can be significant, citing one firm which not only grew in a declining market but lowered annual staff turnover to 8%, half the industry's average.

The second report on company productivity tracks findings that companies with good safety records are generally on the road to future profitability. The relationship between the levels of safety and health standards and productivity is the link, the report finds. The study identifies factors that enable safety and health standards to translate into increased productivity. These include:

- Close cooperation between company management team and workers;
- Enabling workers with greater autonomy and more challenging tasks;
- Introduction of more ergonomic work methods and equipment.

The European Agency's director, Horst

Konkolewsky, stated, "Both reports, on corporate social responsibility and productivity, underlines the importance of treating improvements in occupational safety and health as an investment in competitiveness, not as a cost." He added the reports "clearly show that such improvements can make a significant contribution to a company's financial health as well as to the personal health and safety of its employees: it's a win-win for everybody."

## Tips to Linking Health & Safety and CSR

**T**he European Agency for Safety & Health at Work's report, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Safety and Health at Work*, cites occupational safety and health criteria that link directly to successful CSR formulas. They include:

- ▶Linking safety and health goals with a company's long-term strategic and environmental objectives;
- ▶Integrating safety and health into key departments and activities, including human resources and marketing;
- ▶Taking into account external as well as internal aspects of good safety and health practices, including the need to assure that suppliers aspire to the same standards;
- ▶Communication safety and health developments openly and honestly to both internal and external stakeholders.

## Social Standards the Mandate of ILO

### From page 15

The ICEM clearly believes TMB should have heeded the advice it received from its own Advisory Group. The ICFTU has challenged ISO to make clarifications regarding its intentions. ICEM affiliates who may be involved in the activities of

the ISO through their national bodies should note these developments, and should contact ICFTU principals assigned to the matter, Dwight Justice (Dwight.Justice@icftu.org) or James Howard (James.Howard@icftu.org.)

# Plan 28 April Day's Events Now

The 10th universal Workers' Memorial Day is 28 April and the ICFTU once again has twin themes: *Safe and Healthy Work for All* and *Prevention Through Employer Accountability*.

The ILO estimates that 2.2 million people die from work-related causes each year; 750,000 women and 1.5 million men. The difference relates to the distribution of the two sexes within dangerous jobs. However, the ILO notes the large percentage of women in agriculture in developing countries makes them vulnerable to work-related infectious diseases.

The ILO also says statistics underestimate the real situation in nearly all cases given the lack of information and reporting in many countries. But 6,000 work-caused deaths per day—one every 15 seconds—add up to more deaths than are caused by war each year.

Of the 2.2 million deaths each year, 350,000 occur as a result of work accidents; the rest due to work-related illnesses. More than 400,000 deaths are caused by exposure to chemicals, and it is estimated that this also is responsible for 35 million of the 160 million cases of occupational sicknesses recoded worldwide.

Each year, as 1,000 new chemicals come on the market, and with over 100,000 different chemicals in use each



day, the hazards created by improper handling are profoundly multiplied. More than 300,000 cancers per year are claimed to be due to dangerous substances. The ICFTU's primary theme is *Prevention Through Employer Accountability*. The secondary one is *Safe and Healthy Work for All*. A country-by-country performance review of 28 April-related issues along with background material on this year's Workers' Memorial Day is now available.

The file is a large one (260 pages) so the visitor might only print the

Profile's Annex, and the maximum two-page profile of a particular country. The Profile's Annex contains such information as Introduction to the Profiles (E): National Trade Union 28 April Reporting; Organising for 28 April (F): Social and Employment Transition Index; Joining 10th Anniversary Activities (G): Workers and Trade Union Participation or Rights; and 28 April Themes (H): Instruments, Measures and Programmes.

The ICFTU has produced a downloadable 28 April reporting form in which trade unions that conduct activities can report them in a global labour showcase. The website address for obtaining these forms in English, French and Spanish:

[http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH\\_3b.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_3b.EN.pdf)

[http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH\\_3b.FR.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_3b.FR.pdf)

[http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH\\_3b.SP.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpH_3b.SP.pdf)

## Benzene Exposure in Refineries

According to *Aging and Elder Health Week*, South Korean researchers report that more chromosome damage was found in workers exposed to low levels of benzene than in an unexposed control group.

Exposure to benzene is typically found among those in the petrochemical and petroleum refining industries. The study was done specifically to determine if chromosome aberrations in workers exposed to low levels of benzene in a refining plant were higher than an unexposed group.

The elevated levels were found to be significantly associated with benzene concentration after adjusting for confounding variables such as age, smoking status and alcohol intake. The research has been published in *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health*. For more information, contact H.W. Chung, Seoul National Univ., School Public Health, 28 Yunkeun Dong, Seoul 110460, S. Korea.

# Do Bonus Schemes Mask Health/Safety's Honesty, Reliability?

Accident stats are the most commonly used indicator of an employer's health and safety performance, yet they are often inaccurate and incomplete. Under-reporting and faulty diagnosis present major credibility problems on accident and injury statistics.

Many companies are diligent about encouraging the reporting of accidents, recording them accurately, and investigating them thoroughly in a non-threatening manner. But many are not.

The ideal situation is one in which reporting is seen as itself a good thing, and not something only occurring behind ulterior motives. A significant and growing problem is development and implementation of bonus schemes aimed at rewarding improved safety performance. While such schemes differ in specifics, they commonly have as a stated goal the reduction of lost time accidents and injuries. Of course, companies that make genuine efforts to achieve this goal should be strongly encouraged and supported. However, when human life and limb are at stake, it is vital to ensure that what is being measured is the genuine reduction of accidents and injuries, as opposed to merely reporting of them.

In most cases, fatalities are not the issue; they are very difficult to hide. However, it is much easier to disguise lesser incidents. Bonus schemes, unless carefully constructed, can have exactly this effect. In a bonus scheme whereby a particular unit, site or work-team depends on a bonus for low levels of lost-time incidents, there is a major incentive for massaging the figures.

So, for instance, it is not uncommon to find injured workers reporting for "light duty" in order to continue attendance. In this way they do not register in lost-time figures, and bonuses are protected.

However, any understatement of lost-time accident figures may disguise indicators of much more serious problems that becomes a potential disaster down the road. A company with a publicly stated

low lost-time injury rate, which subsequently suffers a major incident, may find the shortcomings of its bonus scheme becoming very public very quickly. Bad news—like water—does not easily travel uphill, and trade unions



should be careful to ensure that bonus schemes and other incentives do not encourage only good news reports, thus masking the realities.

There is no easy answer to the question of whether incentive schemes compromise honesty and reliability in the reporting of accidents. Levels of union organisation, company size, and cultural differences are some variables that need to be taken into account. Safety and health policies and practices need to be regularly and critically reviewed to ensure they deliver what they claim to deliver. The best chance of this happening is if there are jointly agreed union/management structures and practices on safety and health.

The ICEM would be pleased to hear from affiliates about their experiences with safety and health bonus schemes and, specifically, the procedures in place to ensure that they are effective and credible.

*Mining Sector salutes 10th Anniversary of South Africa in Johannesburg*



## **Four-Year Work Plan for Mining/DGOJP Section**

- Under banner “from mine to fashion,” ICEM merges the Mining Sector and Diamond, Gems, Ornaments and Jewelry Sector.

- ICEM stresses the importance of beneficiation and keeping economic benefits from extracted minerals in local hands by promoting jobs and economic development through diversification.

- The ILO’s Concept of Decent Work through Core Conventions and Fundamental Rights and Principles at Work, and UN’s Global Compact Principles, are standards we seek to ensure multinational companies observe and adhere to.

- Growth in minerals and mining sectors, particularly southern hemisphere, be met with increased union density. We must ensure mature mining nations develop young skills and talent, particularly among women. Attention and networking by coal affiliates must be paid clean coal technologies to reduce carbon emissions in line with Kyoto.

- Worker Networks and Global Agreements are part of global strategy to unite and organise workers. A priority target for formation of Worker Network is BHP Billiton.

- Pursue policies of safe, humane and productive industries that meet basic human needs, promote economic development, promote human and trade union rights, peace and security. To financing organisations, ICEM does not accept the “one-size-fits-all” mine privatisation and sector restructuring model.

- Develop long-term policies for acceptable solutions on gender equity, employment security, job creation and sustainable development.

- Campaign for ratification for ILO Convention 176 on Mine Health and Safety in all mining sectors.

- Build local partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

- Discussion among asbestos miners in way forward on implementing ILO Convention 162, the employment and social impact of call for ban on asbestos mining.

complete text of four-year Mining/DGOJP at [www.icem.org](http://www.icem.org)