

## World News - N° 10 , 2003

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### Migrant Health Workers Campaign

As a part of mounting international concern about the increasing inequalities in health systems worldwide, a new PSI campaign, entitled 'Migrant Health Workers Campaign, Women and International Migration in the Public Health Sector', will document the impact of the migration of health workers on health services in sending countries and highlight the experiences of women migrant health workers in receiving countries (with special attention to unethical recruitment practices, occupational segregation, terms and conditions of employment and employment discrimination). The campaign, which is an integral part of the Quality Public Services (QPS) campaign, aims at mobilising public sector unions and local communities, increasing union membership through involvement of women, and promoting the idea of public health as a human right. The campaign is initiated with the approval of the PSI Health Services Task Force and the International Women's Committee. For more information, contact [psi@world-psi.org](mailto:psi@world-psi.org).

### Unions must lead rather than react

Over 80 representatives from 40 Engineer and Scientist Organisations

representing over 5 million engineers and scientists in 15 countries from every region of the world met in Copenhagen from 8–10 May to discuss the challenges and solutions technical unions face in today's fast changing world. Mike Waghorne, Assistant General Secretary, had been part of the organising committee and represented PSI at the conference. The conference dealt with issues arising for engineers and scientists from globalisation, social

responsibility and ethics, work issues such as flexible work, stress and burnout, the brain-drain/brain-gain debate, lifelong learning, membership recruitment and retention issues for unions and a vision for professional unions in the 21st century. It is worth noting that participants were much more union-oriented than at previous conferences, and saw themselves as fitting into traditional union agendas. The conference communiqué ([www.ida.dk/3int/l/communiqué.htm](http://www.ida.dk/3int/l/communiqué.htm) in English only) is also more political than has been the case in the past. It is likely that the next conference in

2005 will be held in Brazil.

#### OECD seminar on corruption

As the only labour representative, Wendy Caird, PSI Co-ordinator of the Quality Public Services Campaign, attended an OECD seminar on corruption in Zagreb, Croatia, 12-13 May. The main theme was the conflict of interests and corruption in transition economies. Wendy spoke on the need to ensure that the approach to the problem was inclusive; that workers and the community needed to be part of strategies developed to address corruption. She also emphasised the importance of legislation to protect those who expose corruption, in some countries referred to as "Whistleblowers". Another point that she made strongly was the need to include politicians and the private sector in provisions designed to tackle corruption, as the problem may begin there. Evidence from around the world shows that the privatisation of public services is one of the major incentives to corruption, in fact of 130 cases of serious corruption in the UK, most were described by police as being linked to the letting of government contracts for services.

#### ILO meeting on public utilities

The quadrennial ILO tripartite meeting on challenges and opportunities facing public utilities was held from 19-23 May in Geneva. Participants included 17 employers, 15 unions and about seven governments. Of the union delegation, eight representatives were from PSI, four from ICEM, two from UNI and one from WCL. Mike Jeram from UNISON was spokesperson for the workers, David Boys from PSI the secretary. The negotiations were difficult, especially since the employers' priority was to limit the influence of workers (and governments) over their pursuit of profits. However, the recent history of corporate meltdowns in utilities – Enron being the most notable – made the employers more vulnerable to calls for accountability. This was complemented by the increasing recognition in international circles of the importance of water and electricity to sustainable development (and UN ECOSOC definition of water as a human right). A resolution presented by the workers was agreed at the very last minute. Copies of available texts can be obtained from [david.boys@world-psi.org](mailto:david.boys@world-psi.org).

#### Water and Evian

When the G8 met in Evian, France, on 1-3 June, they were presented with a statement from civil society urging the European heads of state to immediately withdraw the EU water requests of other WTO members from the GATS negotiations. The statement also called for the withdrawal of the EU proposal to reclassify the GATS category of environmental services, by which it intends to bring 'water for human use' into the current negotiations. Some 120 groups, including PSI, signed on to the statement, which is available from [www.gatswatch.org/evianstatement.html](http://www.gatswatch.org/evianstatement.html) in English. French and Spanish versions will be available online from [www.attac.info/g8evian/?NAVI=1016-113116-14fr](http://www.attac.info/g8evian/?NAVI=1016-113116-14fr) and [www.attac.info/?NAVI=1016-113118-14es](http://www.attac.info/?NAVI=1016-113118-14es) respectively.

#### PSI Annual Coordination Meeting

Every year, PSI staff from all regions meet at Ferney-Voltaire to share experiences about ongoing work. This year the meeting took place from 18-23 May. Particular attention was given to affiliation strategies, recruitment of young workers, solidarity actions, WTO and GATS. The Asia Pacific region reported on two project evaluations and the overall situation and activities in South Asia. A whole day was devoted to discussing ongoing and future campaigns, particularly on Quality Public Services and Pay Equity. ACTRAV/ILO desk officers and affiliates from Finland and Sweden also

participated.

#### Justice for all

A new guide to worker rights in the global economy has just been published by the AFL-CIO founded American Center for International Labor Solidarity. 'Justice for All' gives workers, worker and human rights activists, educators, attorneys and others the information they need to fight the onslaught of globalisation. It traces the history of worker rights, summarises essential international labour standards, and studies the impact that regional and global trade agreements have on working conditions. It highlights the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and reveals the role that international financial institutions play in creating national development policies that affect workers and their families. It also contains a selection of educational materials. See [www.solidaritycenter.org](http://www.solidaritycenter.org).

#### Holding Multinationals to Account

The British Trades Union Congress (TUC) in cooperation with the Global Union Federations, including PSI, have produced a booklet on how unions can use the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises to help promote and protect workers' rights. Although the booklet, which is entitled 'Holding Multinationals to Account', is made for a UK audience, it contains information which can be put to use by unions in other countries. The booklet describes the issues covered by the Guidelines and indicates who can submit a case, what information is required, and what happens then. The publication costs £5 per copy and can be bought on-line from [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

#### The role of international labour standards

A new report on labour standards has just been finalised. It is entitled 'Globalisation and Social Progress: The Role and Impact on International Labour Standards', and has been written by Werner Sengenberger for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). The report focuses on the role that universal international labour standards (ILS) can play in promoting social progress in the context of economic globalisation. It presents the case for and against ILS, and shows how they can contribute to economic, social and political development in developed as well as in developing countries. The full report is available in English in pdf format (104 pages, including an executive summary). There is also a flyer and an executive summary in German. An earlier version of the report was circulated at the Global Unions meeting with the IMF and the World Bank in Washington in October 2002.

#### ILGA Conference in Manila

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) of which PSI is a longstanding member is to hold their World Conference in Manila on 11-18 November. ILGA is a worldwide federation of 350 grassroots organisations and NGOs that work together to promote the welfare of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in many countries. Affiliates planning to send a delegate to the conference are requested to contact [Nora.Wintour@world-psi.org](mailto:Nora.Wintour@world-psi.org).

#### Comments

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