

9.07.03 10:43

- PSI is looking for media contacts
- Global Reconciliation Summit
- Debt relief for Iraq?
- Fast forward to Cancun
- Community involvement for quality public services
- OECD regional development policy/practice
- Support the migrant workers' convention
- No ILO support for inquiry in Colombia
- Strategic planning workshop in Turkey
- SARS and health personnel

The 'media contact person' may be the union press officer, but may have a different title in your union. The person should ensure that media releases get spread around the union (via newsletters/magazines/messages) and will handle relations with the local press on the basis of material which PSI will send.

PSI General Secretary, Hans Engelberts, participated in the World Economic Forum's extraordinary meeting in Jordan, 21-23 June. The so-called "Global Reconciliation Summit" was convened to replace the recent period of confrontation with a spirit of cooperation through exchange of views among academics, business, religious, social and political leaders. The discussions took place around four principal themes: the future of the Middle East, Iraq, the geopolitical situation and the global economy. The assembly of about 1,200 executives, government ministers and others ended with a call for peace in the Middle East, but without formal results. In fact there was criticism that the "authority" in Iraq was not doing enough to restore security and establish law and order, which should be the first priority. See www.weforum.org

A few days before the Reconciliation Summit, two US lawmakers introduced a bill that would require the United States to persuade Iraq's creditors, including the World Bank, IMF, France and Russia, to cancel or reduce the Iraqi debt. Unfortunately, calls for debt relief have met with resistance. Iraq owes US\$87 million to the World Bank and around US\$75 million to the IMF, whereas the debt to Russia is estimated US\$9 billion, France US\$1.7 billion and the US US\$2.1 billion. The World Bank said that the focus should be on larger creditors while the IMF declined to comment. The World Bank sources also said that other countries looking for debt forgiveness are in a worse economic shape than Iraq and do not have the huge oil reserves expected to be used to pay for much of the rebuilding effort. While some countries feel that they did not support the US-led war, and consequently should not be required to forgive debts, the US Congress is reluctant to approve new American funds to rebuild Iraq if the money is used to repay debts!

FAST FORWARD TO CANCÃsN

Assistant General Secretary, Mike Waghorne, represented PSI at the ICFTU Economic and Social Committee, meeting on 23 June in Brussels. The meeting was dominated by preparations and strategies for the WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Cancun in September. The major new issue to emerge was the extremely damaging effect that China's entry to the WTO is having on the textile workforces of Bangladesh, Indonesia, El Salvador and Guatemala, current major textile producers. Given that this is being reinforced by the emergence of Export Processing Zones (EPZ) in China (and elsewhere), the Global Unions will make EPZs a major item in Cancun preparations. Another campaign focus will be TRIPS and the public health issue.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

Brazilian affiliates will be involved in some innovative Quality Public Service campaign initiatives during 2004. In early July, Wendy Caird (QPS Campaign Co-ordinator) and PSI sub-regional Secretary Jocelio Drummond conducted meetings with affiliates, politicians, government staff and civil society to develop an international seminar in Brazil on the issue of Social Control (the process of systematically involving civil society through representative groups in decision-making about public services). The Brazilian Health sector is an interesting example, where Health Councils made up of representatives of the community make key policy decisions on health services. Another interesting Brazilian initiative is Participatory Budgeting, successfully used in Porto Alegre for deciding municipal expenditure. These models can provide valuable guidance for other sectors in Brazil, but may also assist PSI affiliates in developing their own country-specific models. With the seminar planned for early in 2004, PSI is now urgently looking for information from affiliates about their experiences in including community input to provide quality public services. PSI will be using this seminar to develop new ideas, and involvement and participation from affiliates with knowledge in this area will be very valuable. Contact wendy.caird@world-psi.org.

OECD REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY/PRACTICE

On 25 June, Mike Waghorne represented PSI at the first-ever Ministerial Conference of the OECD's Territorial Development Service and Policy Committee/Bureau (TDPC) in Martigny, Switzerland. The TDPC, which is responsible for regional development policy/practice in member states, has recently merged with the old PUMA activities (now as Public Governance and Territorial Development) in the new GOV Directorate. It is the first time TUAC-PSI have been invited to meet the Bureau and to participate in the full meeting as observers. It may be a step towards full participation. Most speakers seemed genuinely concerned about how to generate regional development without undermining social cohesion within the region and the nation as a whole. There was recognition that public authorities/institutions (universities, for example) were central to these developments. A TUAC-PSI concern was that language that talked about making regions 'competitive' should not imply destructive competition between regions, but rather learning from other regions' successes and strengths. In this regard, the Bureau was interested in PSI's ideas on public-public partnerships.

SUPPORT THE MIGRANT WORKERS' CONVENTION

On 23 June 2003 PSI signed on to an NGO call for universal ratification of the UN convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families. PSI urges affiliates to sign on as well by emailing name of organisation, country and contact person to info@december18.net. Details and background are available at www.world-psi.org. ICFTU notes in an 'ICFTU Online' from 1 July, that while 22 countries have already

ratified the convention and a further ten have signed it in preparation for formal ratification, none of the major immigrant âreceivingâ countries in North America and Europe have ratified it. Neither have other major receiving countries such as Australia, Japan, Jordan, Israel, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The full text of the convention is at www.migrantsrights.org/Int_Conv_Prot_Rights_MiqWorkers_Fam_1999_En.htm.

NO ILO SUPPORT FOR INQUIRY IN COLOMBIA

âThe decision of the ILO Governing Body not to establish a Commission of Inquiry into violations of trade union rights in Colombia threatens to undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the international community in the eyes of Colombian trade unionists and civil societyâ, said Hans Engelberts in a media release published a few days after the ILO decision was taken (20 June). The decision coincided with the assassination of yet another public service trade unionist (Orlando Fernndes Toro from SINTRAEMSDES) as well as dismissals and widespread unrest. The killings, beatings, intimidation and harassment have also been documented widely in the recent ICFTU âSurvey of violations of Trade Union Rightsâ (www.icftu.org). What more evidence does the ILO Governing Body require?

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP IN TURKEY

PSI Education Co-ordinator, Jenny Luck, was in Turkey on 26 June-1 July to conduct the second part of a Strategic Planning Workshop (the first part took place on 14-16 April). She also attended the Belediye-IS Congress and the opening of the unionsâ new office building in Ankara. Hot topics were: globalisation, the governmentsâ new anti-union legislation and attacks on the public sector, peace and democracy. At the workshop, participants noted that they had used the methodologies and ideas from the first workshop in planning meetings for education programs and campaign actions. In the period since the first workshop, unions had been extremely busy in peace rallies and demonstrations against the new labour legislation.

SARS AND HEALTH PERSONNEL

The ILO recently published a sectoral working paper (no. 206) entitled âThe impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on health personnelâ. PSI affiliates contributed information and comments to the paper, which is intended to stimulate discussion. It is available from www.ilo.org/sector, click on âhealth servicesâ.

COMMENTS

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=== Kommentar von GRIESR@FES (Rainer Gries) am 9.07.03 14:35

Liebe Marlis,

Neues von PSI!

Schöne Grsse!

Rainer