

PSI World News 5/04

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SOLIDARITY WITH SPANISH UNIONS AFTER MADRID BOMBING

PSI has sent a message to Spanish trade unions following the brutal bombings in Madrid. PSI conveys its sympathy to the victims and their families and condemns terrorist acts that are a direct attack against workers and the values defended by the international trade union movement.

THAI UNION RESISTANCE STILL STRONG

The union resistance campaign in Thailand has been going on for nearly a month (see PSI World News 4/04). The government has backed down in face of union pressure and has been forced to postpone the planned privatisation. The national umbrella group representing 135 Thai NGOs has come out in support of the union campaign. PSI will be sending a note to unions requesting moral and financial support for this crucial battle in Thailand. Keep your eye on the PSI website for updates on the campaign www.world-psi.org.

PROPOSAL FOR A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PSI was invited by Oxfam UK to be part of a multi-agency meeting in London on March 19 to discuss the possibility of a global campaign on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of the UN. These goals - targets for specific achievements in the health, education, water and HIV-AIDS areas, to be achieved by 2015 - are all seen as essential if any progress is to be made in eradicating poverty. The range of groups at the London meeting, where Mike Waghorne represented PSI, covered education, HIV-AIDS, faith-based and development NGOs, as well as representatives from the UN's own MDG campaign unit. PSI supported this meeting because many of the MDGs are directly relevant to our own Quality Public Services campaign. There was general agreement that the elements which must underpin any commitment by countries of the North if these MDGs are to be met are an increase in quality finances (debt relief and greater overseas development aid) and a turning away from neo-liberal approaches to international trade and trade rules which make it impossible for developing countries to get greater access for their value-added goods and services, to generate the kinds of sustainable economic growth which will put them on a path to sustainable development. The focus of the campaign will be a number of events scheduled for 2005: the G8 meeting in the UK, the UN heads of state summit to evaluate progress in meeting the MDG targets, and a probable WTO ministerial conference. It is hoped that if a wider number of NGOs can be brought into this campaign, it will be possible to put pressure on Northern governments to meet their own MDG commitments and on developing governments to keep their side of the bargain, in terms of good governance and in using extra money for poverty reduction programmes. A further round of discussions will now take place amongst both those who were at this meeting and with other NGOs which may be interested, to put some flesh on the bones of this campaign proposal.

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES MOVING FORWARD IN AFRICA

Jenny Luck attended the Southern Africa SUBRAC in Mauritius to conduct a one day workshop for National Coordinating Committee (NCC) chairs on project implementation. In 2004 there will be more national activities that will be conducted by the unions with project funds. The training included a description of a project cycle and partners and the role of PSI affiliates within the sponsor's country. The rights and responsibilities of the unions and NCCs, PSI and the sponsors was discussed and a list developed to assist unions, followed by discussions on monitoring and reporting. After the SUBRAC, the PSI delegation attended the 59th annual congress of the Mauritius Government Servants Association. The theme for the Congress was "Effective Trade Unionism for Sustaining Quality Public Services", which the union believes to be an important and timely PSI campaign. The GSA launched their new web site to assist with the campaign and to provide up to date information to members.

WORLD WATER DAY 22 MARCH

The theme for this year's World Water Day is 'Water and Disasters' and it will be coordinated by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and The World Meteorological Organisation. IRC International Water

and Sanitation Centre have launched a World Water Day website, they are urging people to submit their events for World Water Day online. The site includes information on previous World Water Days and a Practical Advocacy Guide for World Water Day 2004. See www.worldwaterday.org.

WATER IS A CONSUMER RIGHT

This year, the theme of World Consumer Rights Day on 15 March was "Water is a consumer right." Consumers International, the global confederation of consumers' organisations, has produced a special publication Waterworks: A consumer advocacy guide to water and sanitation focusing on the areas where consumer organisations are most involved. This 20-page set of fact sheets examines issues of access, ownership, delivery, costs, public policies and the environment, based on the experiences of CI members around the world. The complete version of Waterworks is available in English, French and Spanish, and is posted on the CI website in PDF format at: http://www.consumersinternational.org/document_store/Doc1026.pdf.

PLAY FAIR AT THE OLYMPICS

The ICFTU, together with Oxfam and the Clean Clothes Campaign, has launched Play Fair at the Olympics Campaign. The campaign is focused at International sportswear firms that are violating the rights of millions of workers in a bid to fill shops with their latest goods in time for the August 2004 Olympic Games. Companies impose near-impossible demands on suppliers to deliver cheaply and quickly, forcing suppliers to make their employees do more and more work for less and less money. Some workers are paid around four dollars a day making running shoes that sell for over \$100 a pair. See www.fairolympics.org.

WELCOME TO PSI NEWSLETTER PAY EQUITY NOW!

Pay Equity NOW! is an electronic newsletter produced by Public Services International as part of its pay equity campaign. It will be produced every two months in English and Spanish. You can subscribe on-line at the PSI website or by writing to us at equality@world-psi.org. The first edition of the newsletter will be launched next week. The newsletter will focus on pay equity concerns and achievements, including union action to advance pay equity, collective bargaining and equality issues, job evaluation schemes and training and capacity building, new research and publications. It will also cover legislative developments and government and employer initiatives. We hope you find it useful in your own pay equity work. Please send us your contributions and comments.

VISAS!

PSI staff responsible for the administration that surrounds meetings and their organisation are aware of the rapidly increasing level of difficulty involved in meeting participants obtaining visas.

In a recent meeting, around 20% of the planned participants could not take part because they did not manage to get their visa in time.

This issue has become increasingly problematic. We suggest that affiliates make their request for a visa immediately after receiving their invitation to a PSI meeting. Visa requirements vary from country to country, but you will always have to produce a valid passport (often with its validity until six months after the visa request) and an invitation to the meeting.

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