

PSI World News 09-2004

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MEETING OF PSI STEERING COMMITTEE

At its meeting on 3-4 May, PSI's Steering Committee accepted 18 unions into affiliation, bringing the total number of affiliated unions in the organisation to 639. The Committee adopted resolutions on Palestine and Israel, Sudan, and British Columbia. Copies of the resolutions are on the PSI website www.world-psi.org.

WORLD WOMEN'S COMMITTEE HOLDS ELECTIONS

The World Women's Committee met in Geneva 6-7 May 2004. The first day of the meeting included a series of workshops on key issues: gender perspectives in the quality public services campaign; women health workers and international migration and the 50/50 campaign to promote affirmative action in decision-making structures of PSI affiliates. The Committee also had the opportunity to exchange plans for the pay equity action week 4-8 October which range from Caribbean calypso competitions to marathon runs in Manila.

On the second day, the Committee held elections, using a secret ballot, for a new team of Chair and Vice-Chairs for the period until after the next Congress in 2007. The New Chair is Nicole Kokoye Quenon, SYNTRAJAB, Bénin and Vice-chairs are: Helen Maunga, CIWA, Cook Islands for the Asia Pacific region; Juneia Batista, FETAM, Brazil for Inter -America; and Gloria Mills, UNISON, UK for the European region. The Committee thanked Vera Morgenstern, Ver.di, Germany, for the excellent work she had done as WOC Chair for the previous Congress period.

BUILDING PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN PUBLIC SERVICES

PSI's Sub-regional office in Brazil organised a three-day seminar on participatory decision-making on 26-28 April. There are already examples in Brazil (in the national health councils and a participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre). The seminar was attended by two Deputies from the Brazilian government who showed considerable interest in the Quality Public Services campaign.

PSI affiliates in the region described their experiences, and presentations from invited speakers from Ver.di, Germany (Herbert Beck), Kommunal, Sweden (Lars -Ake Almqvist) and the Self-Employed Women's Union, South Africa (Khoboso Nthunya) were followed by extensive question and answer sessions. Lars -Ake described the Kommunal experience of participative job re-design; Herbert talked about the approach to collective bargaining in Germany and Khoboso described how women street vendors are being organised in South Africa. The participants were very actively involved and were able to learn from each other. Some of the material gathered at the meeting will be shared with unions on how to develop models of participation, both of workers and communities. For more information, contact Wendy.Caird@world-psi.org.

WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

This new PSI report includes information gathered in the first phase of PSI's campaign on "Women and International Migration in the Health Sector". Between May 2003 and 2004, this participatory action research involved a survey of 600 nurses and other health care workers and in-depth interviews with employers, government officials and NGOs in: Barbados, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, the Netherlands Antilles, the Philippines, Poland, Sri Lanka, and Scotland and Wales in the UK. The report is available in English and Spanish on the PSI website www.world-psi.org.

COLOMBIA: PARTICIPATORY UNIONISM OR STRIKE BREAKING? THAT DEPENDS...

Colombia will present two main issues during the 92nd Conference of the ILO in Geneva next June: state enterprises must be sustainable and their union movements must participate on this process. On 12 May, Vice-president Santos announced, "Union movements must help us solve many of the problems this country faces, instead of being part of the problem. We are keen to build a constructive relationship with them, because we consider their involvement and their work are very important and the Government has taken actions on this direction". According to Santos, President Uribe's Government has many examples of participatory unionism to show. As examples, he spoke of agreements with EMCALI, Paz del Rio, Telecom and the energy sector. However, some days later, PSI heard that The Colombian government is attempting to break the month-long strike at Ecopetrol, the national oil company, by using military force. Colombian troops have been placed in and around Ecopetrol's petroleum facilities. This follows upon the arrest of some 100 members and leaders of the union (known as USO) - as well as death threats made against USO members and supporters.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS TRAINING PROGRAMME

As part of a series of regional staff training programmes, the Asia Pacific team and members of the Secretariat took part in a 2-day intensive training on 17-18 May on the supervisory mechanisms of the ILO, with particular reference to the Committee on Freedom of Association and the Committee of Experts on the Application of Standards. Patrick Carriere from ILO Freedom of Association Branch facilitated the training sessions together with other legal officers from his Department. The Asia Pacific staff were able to review the current cases concerning the public sector before the Committee on Freedom of Association and were given advice on how to draw up a complaint. The staff are now drawing up a briefing note for the affiliates in the region. PSI welcomed the participation of two staff members of Education International at the training. It is planned to repeat the programme again next year.

HEALTH GAP FOR ACTION ON HIV/AIDS

Health GAP (Global Access Project) is an organisation of U.S.-based AIDS and human rights activists, people living with HIV/AIDS, public health experts, fair trade advocates and concerned individuals who campaign against policies of neglect and avarice that deny treatment to millions and fuel the spread of HIV. Health GAP is dedicated to eliminating barriers to global access to affordable life-sustaining medicines for people living with HIV/AIDS as key to a comprehensive strategy to confront and ultimately stop the AIDS pandemic. Visit www.healthgap.org. To endorse the AIDSVote Platform to fight US and global HIV/AIDS, go to www.aidsvote.org.

NEW ILO REPORT : A FAIR GLOBALIZATION

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization was established by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in February 2002. The Commission was initiated as an independent body to respond to the needs of people as they cope with the unprecedented changes that globalization has brought to their lives, their families, and the societies in which they live. In this report, the Commission has looked at the various facets of globalization, the diversity of public perceptions of the process, and its implications for economic and social progress. It has searched for innovative ways of combining economic, social and environmental objectives, based on worldwide expertise. It has made its recommendations seeking to build upon a broad consensus among all key actors.

www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdq/.

JOIN THE ECA-WATCH EMAIL LIST AGAINST CORRUPTION

ECA-Watch is an international campaign aimed at reforming Export Credit, Finance and Insurance Agencies (ECAs). It has recently set up a new email list focusing on issues relating to ECAs and corruption. Participants include environment, development, human rights, community, labour, anti-corruption and other non-governmental organizations and bodies. If you want to join the list, please send an email to Kirstine Drew from UNICORN, the trade union anti-corruption network unicorn@againstcorruption.org. UNICORN and PSI wrote a report in December 2003 ranking the Export Credit Agencies according to how well they were implementing anti-corruption procedures. <http://www.againstcorruption.org/reports/2003-12-03-ECAOECDSurveyAnalysis.doc>.

And visit the ECA-Watch website www.eca-watch.org.

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