

Quality Public Services Day

Public sector unions around the world joined with civil society on Whiteband Day 2, to demand an end to extreme poverty and hunger. Many unions made this "Quality Public Services Day", linking access to public health, education, water and sanitation services as the foundations for defeating hunger and disease. Actions took many forms, some on the streets, others more directly with governments. The pictures tell the story, millions of people joining together to demand a better world (www.whiteband.org/PressCenter/photo_album). The focus in the Global Call to Action against Poverty now moves to the WTO meeting in December and the call for trade justice. PSI is calling for the protection of public services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, demanding that recognition be given to the importance of governments retaining democratic control of these essential services. See www.world-psi.org/GCAP.

Pay Equity – the CD

PSI and Education International (EI) have produced a new resource material on pay equity – a CD and website called the EI/PSI Action Tool on Pay Equity for Union Activists. The resource is designed to support pay equity training and awareness among member organisations. It is an easy access system to locate training materials prepared by EI and PSI, information on union strategies, case studies, campaign publicity materials and also international and EU legislation. The CD and website were launched on 7 October as part of the PSI pay equity action week 3-7 October. It is in English, French and Spanish and is available free on request until supplies run out! The website is at www.publiset.be/iegpe/ei-ie/. For more information about PSI's work on pay equity, contact equality@world-psi.org.

Earthquake in Pakistan and India

PSI offers sympathy and support to the people of Pakistan and India after the massive earthquake that devastated the Kashmir region on 8 October. PSI General Secretary Hans Engelberts has sent messages to PSI affiliates in the countries concerned, in which he acknowledges the work carried out by public servants in the area to reinstall transport, health, emergency and security systems, and recognizing their valour and determination at this difficult time. The ICFTU has opened an account to which contributions can be made:

account number: 310-0075779-11
with the ING Bank, Business Branch Marnix,
Rue du Trône 1, B-1000 Brussels
IBAN code: BE30310007577911
BIC/Swift code: BBRUBEBB
Please mark your contributions "Pakistan Earthquake Relief".

New UNISON development fund

UNISON has opened an International Trade Union Development Fund. The aim of the fund is to promote growth of trade unions and support trade unions facing difficulties as a result of wars, natural disasters or severe threats to workers rights in developing countries. Where possible UNISON plans to work in partnership with developing country unions in implementing these projects. Projects should last no more than one year and funding criteria apply. For more information, contact communication@world-psi.org.

Eurecon – bridging the gap

At PSI's 12th European Regional Conference, 26-30 September, nearly 300 leading trade unionists from all across Europe met to discuss how to bridge the gap between East and West. Jürgen Buxbaum, PSI's European Regional Secretary, summed up the conference: "What's at stake here? Eastern countries have been developing trade unionism in the face of economic shock therapy administered by neo-liberal ideologues; those in the West are being affected by increased outsourcing, wage pressures, and demands for more labour market flexibility. In response to this "race to the bottom", we need to find a new form of solidarity. We need to move from arranging assistance towards organising partnership." See www.world-psi.org/eurecon.

Improving quality in Norway

Faced with low staffing levels in elderly care centres, Norwegian union Fagforbundet decided to do something about it. They paid for extra staff for one week and then carried out a survey among workers and the elderly people involved. They found that during the week with increased staff, there was more time to spend on the elderly, they had help during breakfast, help with washing, they were taken out more and staff had time to talk to them. The union action really improved their quality

of life. As a result, management has made better staffing in elder care and nursing homes their top priority for next year's budget.

See this and similar stories on PSI's Resource Bank www.world-psi.org/bank.

PSI Deputy General Secretary position vacancy

PSI is seeking a motivated and experienced trade unionist to assume the post of Deputy General Secretary. The post will become vacant in September 2006 and we are seeking applications from candidates who can start work with PSI in mid-2006, so that there is a period of overlap and transfer of responsibilities before the current Deputy General Secretary retires. For further information go to www.world-psi.org/jobs.

International Migration and Women Health Workers campaign week

December 10-18 is the campaign week for International Migration and Women Health Workers.

All affiliates, particularly those with members in the health sector, are invited to organise activities on the issues of ethical recruitment of health care workers and the negative impact of migration on the health services in sending countries. Please let us know what you have planned for the week, and send in a report and photos which we can share through the website. For more information, email genevieve.gencianos@world-psi.org.

Join the GATS debate!

There is a crisis in GATS services negotiations. Several countries are seeking to change the negotiating process in order to force developing countries to liberalise their service sectors. This push, called "complementary approaches" by its sponsors, or 'benchmarking' by developing countries, is being discussed in negotiations. Six proposals from Japan, Australia, the EU, Korea, Taiwan and Switzerland have been submitted that would radically change the way services negotiations are conducted. They seek to replace the request-offer approach with quantitative and qualitative benchmarks for negotiations. Members must commit more of their service sectors to liberalisation and remove many regulations for all modes of supply. This could remove limitations on foreign equity or on the number of foreign service providers. Many developing countries have voiced concern over the "complementary

approaches". PSI and others have drafted a civil society response which was sent to the WTO and its members in Geneva. If your organisation or union would like to add its voice, to go www.world-psi.org/GATSdebate where you can find a copy of the letter to send to your trade minister. For further information contact Mike.Waghorne@world-psi.org.

End of two-tier system in the NHS

Thousands of hospital porters, cleaners and other contract staff will get pay increases of up to 25% as a result of a deal brokered yesterday by the UK health secretary, to bring an end to the two-tier workforce in the NHS in England. From April, the basic minimum pay of about 35,000 employees of health service contractors will go up to £5.88 an hour, matching the terms available to staff directly employed by the NHS.

The deal was hailed by Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary, as "the beginning of the end of the two-tier workforce in the NHS". He said the deal was better than one already achieved in local government. The deal did not include electricians, plumbers and other contract staff who do not have direct contact with patients. There would have to be further negotiations to enhance their pay and conditions.

World Development Report surprises

PSI has welcomed some of the findings of the annual World Bank World Development Report (WDR), entitled Equity and Development: Equity Enhances the Power of Growth to Reduce Poverty. The report stresses the importance of respecting core labour standards and presents a generally positive assessment of the role that trade unions play in equitably distributing the benefits of economic growth.

New guidelines on HIV/AIDS

PSI has received the new Joint ILO/WHO Guidelines on health services and HIV/AIDS. Representatives from PSI affiliates were involved in negotiating the Guidelines at a meeting of experts at the ILO last April. All through the text of the guidelines, the process of implementation through consultation is underlined. The gender-specific aspect of the health service is also addressed and dealt with thoroughly. PSI is sending copies of the guidelines to health affiliates and they will be sent by the WHO and ILO to ministries of health and labour. The guidelines are available online on www.world-psi.org/HIV-AIDS.

Getting workers' interests on the WTO agenda

This action guide for trade unionists has been published by the ICFTU with contributions from Global Unions, including PSI. The guide is aimed at supporting lobbying efforts by trade unions in the lead up to the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. It focuses on key issues for the trade union movement, such as GATS, NAMA, workers' rights, agriculture, GCAP and reform

of the WTO. It describes the main areas of negotiations and indicates what trade unionists need to be asking for from their government representatives. It contains a section on taking action, with suggestions about lobbying, organising events and getting good media coverage. The guide is available on the ICFTU website www.icftu.org.

Who cares? Download it now!

The book on women health workers in the global labour market, produced by PSI and UNISON earlier this year, is now available on the PSI website in PDF format. The book contains a collection of 14 in-depth interviews with women health workers from different parts of the globe, who have migrated for work who are considering doing so. It provides vital insights for policy makers, governments, trade unionists and civil society at large, concerned about the future of our global health system. See www.world-psi.org/migration.

Nurses facing patient violence

A recent survey has revealed that one in four NHS nurses in the UK has considered quitting their jobs because of assaults by patients. Government figures show that NHS staff suffer more than 100,000 incidents each year. Just under a third of nurses and care workers have been punched, 19% have been kicked, 17% spat at, and 8% have had their hair pulled. More than three quarters of NHS staff say they believe the government is failing to tackle the issue. PSI is facing the issue of workplace violence in the health service. Together with the ILO, the International Council of Nurses and the WHO, PSI published Framework guidelines for addressing workplace violence in the health sector that are available from PSI. They can also be downloaded from www.world-psi.org.

Trade union rights violations in Nepal

PSI has called on affiliates to join in a protest campaign against the Nepalese authorities after a ban on all types of civil servant organisations. King Gyanendra has issued an ordinance banning public sector unions from organising. The unions have responded by filing an appeal with the Supreme Court of Nepal claiming that the ordinance violates fundamental constitutional rights and ILO conventions. There have also been a series of well-supported rallies and public protests against the government's actions. For the latest news on the situation, see www.world-psi.org/rights.

NGOs win debt cancellation

The joint action of the Global Call to the Action Against Poverty and the NGOs has resulted in the cancellation of \$57.5 billion in debt to 18 of the world's poorest countries. This is a huge step forward and must be followed by debt cancellation for all poor countries that need it. Kofi Annan has stressed the importance of the work of NGOs in the areas of development, peace, disarmament and democracy, and told NGOs that they must make themselves the guardians of the reform of the international system.

Workplace death and injuries higher than thought

According to a new ILO report, the number of work-related deaths per year has risen to 2.2 million, a figure that is probably vastly under-reported. Fatality rates in some European countries are twice as high as in some others, and in parts of the Middle East and Asia fatality rates soar to four-fold those in the industrialised countries with the best records. Likewise, insurance coverage varies widely: workers in Nordic countries enjoy nearly universal coverage while only 10 per cent or less of the workforce in many developing countries is likely to have any sort of coverage. The ILO report to the World Congress can be found in Spanish, French and English at <http://www.ilo.org/safework>.

Quality highest in non-profit childcare

The childcare debate has started in Canada. Since the provincial government has committed \$5 billion for licensed child care, and among fears that private operators will be eager to siphon off the money,

NUPGE is campaigning for community-based childcare operators to receive their share of the funding. A Canadian study from December 2004 has shown that non-profit childcare centres outscore their commercial counterparts in all aspects of early learning and care. The study found that non-profit centres do better on every measure, but especially on

- Personal care provided to children
- The use of materials, activities and teaching interactions that affect language and thought development.
- The way staff interact with children, including supervision and discipline, encouragement, warmth and respect.
- Issues specific to parents and staff, such as the level of staff communication to parents about their children, and support for the personal and professional needs of staff.

Download the survey here: www.childcarepolicy.net./pdf/NonprofitPaper.pdf

See this and similar stories on PSI's Resource Bank www.world-psi.org/bank.

IFC new labour standards

The International Finance Corporation's (IFC) new draft Policy and Performance Standards on Social and Environmental Sustainability includes a section on labour standards stipulating that any enterprise borrowing from IFC (the private-sector lending arm of the World Bank) must abide by core labour standards and other basic requirements on issues like information provided to employees, procedures in case of retrenchment, and occupational health and safety. The new draft contains improvements on earlier versions, including direct reference to the eight ILO core conventions and the inclusion of language requiring IFC borrowers to respect freedom of association and right to collective bargaining. Global Unions will be submitting recommendations for resolving the draft's few remaining weaknesses during the two-month consultation period that has just begun. If your union wishes to submit comments or recommendations, send them to communications@world-psi.org.

A link to the draft document (available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian) is on this page:

<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/policyreview.nsf/content/home>.

PSI meets the Asian Development Bank

PSI's Asia-Pacific Regional Organisation met with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila on 17 September. PSI was represented by Annie Geron, PSI Vice-President (pictured), and 11 other members from the region. PSI emphasized the importance of core labour standards, trade union rights, and trade union participation in ADB projects. PSI will invite an ADB representative to APREC in April 2006 and a PSI delegation will attend the ADB Annual Meeting in May 2006 in India.

Global Labour University graduations

The Global Labour University held its first MA graduation ceremony for 23 students in Berlin on 29 September. The MA in Labour Policies and Globalisation is a recognized degree awarded by the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics. The Global Labour University brings together the worlds of trade unions and academic research. It gives young people with some trade union experience a chance to pursue academic work. For 2005/06 the format will be similar to the first year, with courses at Kassel University and an internship in a union or union-related office. From the beginning of 2007, universities in South Africa and Brazil will offer similar courses. For further information go to www.ilo.org/lpg.

2005 Right Livelihood Awards

Activists from Canada, Malaysia and Botswana have received the Right Livelihood Award for their work to promote fair trade and the rights of migrant workers and indigenous peoples. The prize of two million Swedish kronor will be shared by Canadian free trade defenders Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, Malaysian migrant workers' rights advocate Irene Fernandez, and Roy Sesana, an advocate for the rights of the Kalahari indigenous people of Botswana. Barlow and Clarke won the prize "for their outstanding, world-wide work for trade justice and their recognition of the fundamental human right to water". Fernandez is being honored for her "outstanding and courageous work to stop violence against women, to stop abuses of migrants and poor workers in Malaysia". Sesana, the founder of the First People of Kalahari, will receive the prize for his "resolute resistance against (the Kalahari people's) eviction from their ancestral lands". The prizes will be awarded at the Swedish Parliament on December 9. For more information see www.rightlivelihood.org.

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