



# PSI World News

Public Services International [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org) June 2006

## The People vs the World Bank & IMF



The ICFTU has released a report showing how unions and NGOs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America have organised to defeat World Bank and IMF-sponsored initiatives, such as the privatization of essential services, transport restructuring, and labour market reform.

### Fighting for Alternatives

is based on interviews and first-hand accounts of campaigns, and presents case studies of popular campaigns in countries including Argentina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Indonesia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uruguay and Zambia. See:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223658&Language=EN>

## Sustainable energy and development



Speaking at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD14), PSI has argued that one of the major barriers to improving access to services is government policy premised

on privatisation. The Commission has begun a two year cycle of meetings on energy. The labour movement is represented through the ICFTU, with most participants coming from national centers. PSI urged governments and international organisations to recognise the fundamental role of public utilities in providing accessible, quality services to all citizens, and organised discussions with other groups (women, youth and NGOs) to develop a common position regarding the heavy corporate focus of the meeting. PSI will keep the pressure on for the next year at UN CSD meetings. See <http://www.world-psi.org/csd>

## Pay Equity Now Video CD



We have produced another run of the popular **Pay Equity Now!** Video CD.

This short documentary film runs for 13 minutes, and looks at the experience and

strategies of pay equity activists in the Philippines, Namibia and the United Kingdom. It can play in dvd players, vcd players and any computer cd-rom. Copies are available from [equality@world-psi.org](mailto:equality@world-psi.org) in NTSC or PAL/SECAM formats.

## Child labour declines



A new report from the ILO estimates that the number of child labourers worldwide fell by 11% between 2000 and 2004 (from 246 million to 218 million). The number aged from 5-17 trapped in hazardous work decreased by 26% (to 126 million). An executive summary of **The end of child labour: Within reach** is available in Arabic, English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, and the report itself is available in English, French and Spanish here:

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris/declarationweb.indexpage>

## It's the people, stupid!



### The UN's World Public Sector Report 2005

surveys some of the major trends, models

and related visions that have influenced human resource management in recent decades. The UN says the main message of the report is: "there is no short cut... In the end, it is the quality of the civil service that matters". Subtitled **Unlocking the Human Potential for Public Sector Performance**, the report calls for a major strengthening of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and leadership abilities. How effectively governments align the behaviour of staff with the public interest is determined by the capacity, motivation and integrity of human resources, and the quality of leadership. For English see:

[http://www.unpan.org/dpepa\\_worldpareport.asp](http://www.unpan.org/dpepa_worldpareport.asp), or for other languages: [www.unpan.org/index.asp](http://www.unpan.org/index.asp)

## Focus on Health



PSI is working on a new publication - **Focus on Health** - which will bring together discussions on the critical changes which are currently occurring at

global level in the health sector. For the first time in many years genuine concerns are being raised about wages and conditions, and the worldwide staffing crisis looks set to receive some major attention. If you would like to receive the publication (En, Fr, Es, Jp or Rn, PDF email about 1.5 mb) contact [communications@world-psi.org](mailto:communications@world-psi.org)

## Building unionism in Indonesia



A PSI-led project in Indonesia is aiming to promote independence and professionalism amongst unions in the public sector. Building these unions is essential in the struggle for

democracy in the country. Training is being provided in leadership, collective bargaining, education, strategic campaigning, gender equality, membership awareness, recruitment and dues collection, anti-privatisation work in energy, and corruption monitoring. Materials are published in Bahasa Indonesian. The project website is under development at [psi-tudiproject.atijembar.net/](http://psi-tudiproject.atijembar.net/)

## The private pensions agenda



Pension issues are provoking increasingly militant action around the world. The World Bank has warned of an "unprecedented economic burden on working age people". One proposed solution is

to raise the pension age; another to raise the retirement age; a third to persuade people (or compel them) to save. Such savings, it is argued, would generate profits to pay pensions, and also stimulate growth. More than a decade since the World Bank endorsed this idea, the evidence remains unconvincing. The privatisation of pensions has not led to better pensions for more people, nor to greater economic growth. A new report from the Cornerhouse: **Too Many Grannies?** concludes that privatising pensions is not really about pensions at all, but about liberalising financial markets, expanding stock markets and changing the role of the state. See <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/>

## More on "flexicurity"



Our piece in the last issue on flexicurity caused a lot of interest. Flexicurity has three elements: a flexible labour market with lots of job openings and a high

labour and job turnover; social security offering generous unemployment benefits; and active labour market programmes which upgrade the skills of the unemployed. "Active" is the key word, as this is necessary if people are to escape the poverty trap. For more (En, Fr, Es) see: [www-ilo-mirror.cornell.edu/public/english/bureau/inf/features/05/flexicurity.htm](http://www-ilo-mirror.cornell.edu/public/english/bureau/inf/features/05/flexicurity.htm)

## Sloganizer



Looking for a campaign slogan, or just a bit of a laugh? Try putting your campaign name (or your own name, or just about anything else!) into this English/German slogan generator: [www.sloganizer.net/](http://www.sloganizer.net/)

## Sexual diversity forum



Education International (EI) and PSI are concerned that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) workers' rights are not explicitly recognised in international conventions, and are often not included in national legislation or collective agreements. This allows workplace discrimination,

harassment and inequality to continue. Recently the two federations established a sexual diversity electronic forum, which aims to assist affiliated unions in their work to end discrimination at the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Further information is now available in a leaflet (English, French and Spanish) available from [equality@world-psi.org](mailto:equality@world-psi.org).

## Nigeria settles debt



Nigeria has become the first African nation to settle its debts with the Paris Club - a group of 19 lenders including the UK, Russia, and Germany. After the \$4.6bn payment, Nigeria still owes about \$5bn to other

lenders, including the World Bank and the private sector. The debts date back to the early 1980s, with more than \$35bn added due to penalties and late fees during the 1990s. Despite great oil wealth, Nigeria is one of the world's poorest nations. During the years of military dictatorship little of the country's wealth reached the average person. It is hoped that the repayment will clear the way for greater government spending on infrastructure, health care and education.

## Union leader killed in Iraq



The General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW) has reported the kidnapping and murder of Thabet Hussein Ali, head of the General Trade Union for Health

Sector Workers. Ali was taken by a terrorist group as he left his union's headquarters in Baghdad. His body was found the next day riddled with gunshot wounds and showing evidence of torture. The [ICFTU](http://www.icftu.org) has supported the GFIW's demand that the Iraqi authorities launch a comprehensive investigation into the ongoing assassinations and kidnappings of trade unionists.

## Engaging workers in the UK



A new UK website provides a practical guide for improving services by engaging unions and the workforce.

Involving workers in decision-making is a vital feature of high performance workplaces. The website was developed through a partnership between the [Trades Union Congress](http://www.tradesunioncongress.org.uk) and Cabinet Office. See [www.driveforchange.org.uk/](http://www.driveforchange.org.uk/)



## Public services a legal right in EU?



European Parliament members have launched a campaign for an EU law to define, safeguard and promote public services. The text has been prepared by the socialist group, the

second biggest in the Parliament. It sets out key principles on how to define public services, such as their universal provision, high quality at affordable prices, openness and transparency. It also confirms the right of countries' authorities to decide how to manage and finance such services, or grant exclusive concessions and compensations to their providers. They suggest this directive should be legally above the general law on services, which was adopted at the end of May. A draft of the text is available here:

[www.socialistgroup.org/gpes/media/documents/23713\\_23713\\_project\\_directive\\_en\\_060530.pdf](http://www.socialistgroup.org/gpes/media/documents/23713_23713_project_directive_en_060530.pdf)

## Public services, not private profit!



An all-day rally and mass lobby of the UK Parliament will take place on Tuesday 27 June, bringing together union members from across the public sector to positively campaign against the onslaught of privatisation threats. Up to £100 billion has so far been committed to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), a scheme devised in the early 1990s to transfer large portions of the public sector to private profiteers. Rather than increasing investment in public services, PFI has wasted billions in boosting the profits of contractors, who have downgraded services and slashed pay and conditions. The trend puts at risk the accountable and effective delivery of public services across the United Kingdom. To join or support the campaign see:

<http://www.pcs.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NoDelID=901688>

## Corruption in health



Transparency International's annual **Global Corruption Report** focuses on the health sector this year. It contains a detailed assessment of corruption in 45 countries, from high-level corruption in Costa Rica to counterfeit medicines in Nigeria, and health care fraud in the United States. It also

contains a selection of the latest research on corruption trends, and discusses links between corruption and governance. For English and French versions, see:

<http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr>.

The report next year will focus on judicial systems. TI is currently seeking contributions on this subject.

## Health and safety at work



An ILO report to mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work (April 28th) has highlighted the links between decent work, occupational safety and Health, and HIV/AIDS. The ILO estimates that at any given moment HIV prevents 2 million people from going to work. This figure is expected to double by 2015. Total work-related fatalities number about 2.2 million per year, of which 400,000 are attributable to hazardous substances in the workplace. About 160 million suffer from work-related diseases. The ILO has also produced a new CD-ROM for employers to help manage HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace. For more information (in En, Fr, Es) see:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/worldday/index.htm>, or contact [communication@ilo.org](mailto:communication@ilo.org).

## Australian laws start to bite



How would you like to be sacked by text message? Or fired and then rehired on a contract which pays \$US160 (€120) less per week? Or to have your pay docked for doing a collection for the widow of

a friend killed on the job? Australia's Howard government has introduced astonishingly repressive industrial relations laws which have left millions of employees vulnerable to unfair dismissal. People are starting to see the first effects. For more information see:

<http://www.rightsatwork.com.au/>

## User's guide to IFC loans



As we reported earlier, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – which is the private sector lending arm of the World Bank – has launched a new set of performance standards. These require loan clients to observe core labour standards, as well as some other basic labour requirements. To help trade unions understand the new standards, the ICFTU/Global Unions Washington Office has prepared a short users' guide. It is available in English, Spanish and French from [mollya.mccoy@earthlink.net](mailto:mollya.mccoy@earthlink.net)

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