

Events for January/February:

20-25 January: World Social Forum, Nairobi, Kenya

15 January-2 February: UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, USA

6 February: Caribbean Sub-regional Women's Advisory Committee Meeting, St. Lucia

7-8 February: Caribbean SUBRAC meeting, St. Lucia

28-31 January: PSI Sub-regional Advisory Committee for English Speaking Africa and Sub-regional Women's Committee, Tanzania

31 January-1 February: Russia and Central Asia constituency meeting, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

12-15 February: PSI international mission to the Philippines



PSI at the World Social Forum

The 7th edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) will take place in Nairobi from 20-25 January. The WSF is an important international social and progressive get together for trade union, civil society organisations, women and environmental groups. The event has placed social justice, international solidarity, gender equality, peace and defence of the environment on the agenda of the world's peoples. PSI will be well represented with a delegation of more than 30 people from the Americas, Caribbean, Europe, Africa and Asia. PSI will organise a workshop on Energy in Africa; on women health care workers and migration and a round table on bridging the gender gap on pay equity. In addition, PSI plans to participate in many other activities convened by other organisations, namely the many discussions that will take place on water issues. We will also have an information stand where our publications will be displayed. Keep an eye on www.world-psi.org/wsf for the latest news from Nairobi. Please send photos, articles, comments to: Catherine.Laflamme@world-psi.org.

Welcome to PSI !

New Equality and Rights Officer



It is with great pleasure that we welcome Chidi King to PSI. Chidi will be taking over Nora Wintour's duties as Equality and Rights Officer. Chidi is an employment rights lawyer and has worked previously with the Trades Union Congress in the UK on employment and equity issues and with the Lewisham Racial Equality Council. Chidi is a UK national and her family is originally from Sierra Leone. She is fluent in French and has a good understanding of Spanish.

"I am delighted to be part of the PSI Team and look forward to continuing the excellent work done by Nora Wintour", said Chidi.

Promoting women's access to safe, sufficient and affordable water for all!



The last meeting of the World Women's Committee adopted a proposal to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2007 with the theme of women and water. Given that PSI also marks March 22 World Water Day, it has been agreed to propose days of action running from 8-22 March with the theme water, women and workers: sources of life. The key messages focus on the negative impact of privatisation of water, which disproportionately affects women; claim the right to water as a human right and call for governments to publicly own and manage water supplies. In alliance with the other global union federations who are making maternity protection this year's theme of the March 8th celebrations, PSI stresses the importance of safe, sufficient and affordable water for the protection of women and their children. PSI hopes all affiliates will participate in the days of action, particularly calling on PSI's women's committees, and utilities, municipal services and health services trade unions. Affiliates are encouraged to work in alliance with other women's groups and civil society organisations. Campaign kits, including a poster, sticker, post card and leaflet, are soon to be mailed out to all affiliates and regional and sub-regional PSI offices. A campaign website will be launched mid-February (www.world-psi.org/water2007) from which material can be downloaded. Please inform us of the activities affiliates are organising as part of the water, women and workers: sources of life days of action. Please send information to: equality@world-psi.org.

New Global Unions Council created



Following the creation of the ITUC last November, a new Council of Global Unions has been created during a meeting on 9-10 January. The Global Unions are BWI, EI, IAEA, ICEM, IFJ, ITF, ITGLWF, IUF, PSI and UNI. The priority areas of action

identified by the Council of Global Unions included (1) organising and recruitment (2) financialisation and the role of private equity companies (3) global union work on multinationals and a campaign to denounce specific companies for not applying core labour standards. It was also agreed to set up a working group on contract labour and out-sourcing and a number of participants spoke about the devastating impact of precarious work in the public sector. Participants also emphasised the need for a more coordinated trade union rights action programme and a joint communications strategy. Hans Engelberts, PSI General Secretary (photographed while signing the new agreement, see left) welcomed the more coherent approach to planning joint work. On behalf of ITUC, EI and PSI, Nora Wintour introduced the global unions joint programme on gender equality and equal opportunities. The Council will meet annually, with the three representatives of each participating organisation and a Coordinating Committee overseeing its work. See <http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article560> and www.global-unions.org.

Anti-racism conference in the Inter-Americas



About 50 representatives of PSI affiliates in the Americas met in Miami on 13-15 December to lay the groundwork for an action plan to address racism and xenophobia, and to defend and promote the rights of immigrant workers. The Conference – “Racism is a trade union issue” – was coordinated by the PSI Inter-American Regional Office and was planned as a follow-up to the 2003 PSI Conference on Racism in Brazil. Delegates

approved a resolution on “Migrant rights, US immigration reform and December 18th” which calls on public sector unions to join the PSI Campaign on International Migration and Women Health Workers. The resolution rejected the attempts by US corporations to create a new ‘guest worker’ program, which will provide corporations with a constant stream of exploitable workers. Delegates also approved an action plan. See more on www.world-psi.org.



Stop financing the PPIAF!

PSI has joined dozens of global justice groups and trade unions to call for an end to European public money paying for water privatisation consultancy in poor countries. The European Commission recently became a donor to the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF). The PPIAF has funded water privatisation in at least 37, mostly poor, countries from Afghanistan to Zambia. Since PPIAF was created, the evidence of the failure of water privatisation to deliver clean, affordable water to the poorest communities has grown. In a letter to Louis Michel, the European

Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, to which PSI is a signatory, the groups call for EU aid money to instead be used to support public-public partnerships in the water and sanitation level, building on the expertise found in the public sector within developing countries. See more on www.world-psi.org/PPIAF



Second phase of Zimbabwe project to go ahead

The executive board of ABVAKABO has approved funding for the 2nd phase of a project for three Zimbabwe PSI affiliates and one UNI affiliate.

The project develops the skills of shop stewards at the local level.

Ensuring the continuation of the union at the workplace level and representation for workers, shop stewards are able to negotiate grievances and take up workplace issues. The project also assists with recruitment, and last year the unions were able to maintain their membership and activate the unions at the workplace level. The affiliates planned the project and they implement the workshops using union education officers trained in previous projects.

The funds are part of the ABVAKABO solidarity fund. These funds are raised as part of collective bargaining in different sectors within ABVAKABO, including National Administration and Provincial Employers. PSI thanks ABVAKABO for their solidarity support for Zimbabwe public sector unions.



ASEAN Governments sign declaration protecting migrant workers' rights

Heads of State attending the 12th Summit meeting in January this year of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed a

Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. The Declaration makes strong reference to United Nations human rights instruments in protecting the fundamental human rights, welfare and dignity of migrant workers. However, it avoids the issue of regularisation of undocumented migrants while reiterating the sovereignty of States in determining their own migration policies.

The Declaration enumerates obligations of sending and receiving member States towards migrant workers ranging from access to resources and information, prevention of exploitation and illegal recruitment to providing remedies in cases of violations. It identifies a list of commitments by the ASEAN as a whole, which include promoting decent employment, human resource development and integration programmes for returning migrant workers, capacity building and information sharing among States, extending assistance to migrant workers in crisis situations, and cooperating with international organisations and other States. An ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers will be developed as

a follow-up to the Declaration. See the full text of the Declaration on www.world-psi.org/migration.



Slow start for Global Anti-corruption Agreement

The first conference of the states parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) was held in Jordan, 10-14 December. Major decisions on implementation were postponed until the parties next meet in Indonesia in December 2007, but they did reach an agreement to establish a monitoring mechanism to review UNCAC implementation.

On asset recovery, an intergovernmental working group will be set up to advise on the return of the proceeds of corruption. On technical assistance, governments agreed to hold a workshop to bring development and anti-corruption experts together for discussions on coordination. Civil society organisations (CSOs) from over 30 countries attended, including the PSI affiliate Tchiko Mourad from the Syndicat National Autonome des Personnels de l'Administration Publique (SNAPAP) of Algeria. (Annie Geron of PSLINK was unable to attend due to the pending court case). The CSOs formed the Coalition of Civil Society Friends of UNCAC, publishing regular bulletins, Monitor (see below). They submitted a joint statement calling on governments to honour their UNCAC commitments, including the protection of whistleblowers. Further information on UNCAC, the Jordan meeting or the Coalition of Civil Society Friends of UNCAC can be obtained from Kirstine Drew, UNICORN: unicorn@againstcorruption.org.

- [Read Monitor No. 1](#)
- [Read Monitor No. 2](#)
- [Read Monitor No. 3](#)



No Cubans allowed

A group of Cuban tourists were turned away from the Edderkoppen Hotel in Oslo, who informed them that they could not stay there this year. The group had regularly used the hotel over the past five years. However, the hotel is part of the Scandic hotel chain which has been bought by the American Hilton Hotel group, who turned away the tourists because of the US trade boycott of Cuba. The Norwegian Union of General Workers (organising among others the miners and private cleaners) and Norway's biggest union and PSI affiliate Fagforbundet started a boycott of the hotel chain immediately after Scandic's decision was known. This boycott has already cost the hotel chain hundreds of thousands of euros. "We cannot accept that USA shall

dictate the whole world, and in addition Fagforbundet is a strong opponent against the US boycott of Cuba", said Anne Grethe Skårdal, second vice president in Fagforbundet in a press release. Norwegian law prohibits the denial of services on the grounds of a person's citizenship or other ethnic reasons. See

<http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article1588670.ece>



UK government in corruption inquiry

UK prime minister Tony Blair is under intense international pressure from 130 campaign groups and charities to reverse his decision to scrap a corruption inquiry into a Saudi arms deal.

Lobby groups including Amnesty International, Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, Transparency International and PSI and UNICORN, have written to Mr Blair and other ministers in an effort to get a Serious Fraud Office (SFO) inquiry into the Al Yamamah deal between BAE Systems and the Saudi government reopened. The letter warns Mr Blair that the government is likely to do "irreparable damage" to Britain's anti-bribery reputation and could be accused of "double standards" in its dealings with developing nations.

The SFO stopped its investigation into BAE's dealings with Saudi Arabia on public interest grounds and because of "the need to safeguard national and international security". The decision was made after intense lobbying by BAE and anger among Saudi officials. The SFO had been investigating allegations of slush funds and other unethical practices surrounding the 20-year-old Al Yamamah arms agreement with Riyadh, the UK's biggest export deal. Last year Riyadh agreed to buy 72 Eurofighter aircraft in a deal that would supersede Al Yamamah and eventually be worth up to £40bn to BAE.



Corruption: after Saudi Arabia, it's Tanzania

A further corruption case has come to light in the UK. The UK's biggest arms supplier secretly paid a \$12m commission into a Swiss account in a deal which led to Tanzania, one of the world's poorest countries, buying a controversial military radar system. A Tanzanian middleman, who has a long-standing relationship with military and government figures, has admitted that the sum was covertly moved to a Swiss account by BAE Systems, which is under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office. Tony Blair supported the 2002 sale but former cabinet minister Clare Short says she and the chancellor, Gordon Brown, opposed it. The admissions by the Tanzanian middleman, Sailesh Vithlani, led Ms Short to call for BAE's prosecution if the allegations were proved. She said the prime minister had been personally responsible for forcing the licence for the Tanzania deal through the cabinet. "No 10 insisted on letting this go ahead, when it stank," she said. "It was always obvious that this

useless project was corrupt." See

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/armstrade/story/0,,1990523,00.html>.

The false knowledge bank



The World Bank calls itself 'the knowledge bank', yet another internal report has criticized the Bank's approach to pension and social security reform. The Bank has pushed developing countries to privatise, partially or totally, public pensions schemes, as did the Pinochet regime in Chile in 1981. This latest critique is in an "Evaluation of World Bank Research, 1998-2005", prepared by a group of academic economists, including a former IMF head of research, at the request of WB chief economist François Bourguignon. The report cites two areas where "research was used to proselytize on behalf of Bank policy ... Internal research that was favorable to Bank positions was given great prominence, and unfavorable research ignored." (p.6) Those areas are pensions and the Bank's work on "globalization, growth and poverty", which was "... largely driven by ideology, without concern for the particular circumstances of the country". (p. 136) The World Bank initially rebuffed unions' attempts to discuss its pensions policy but finally held a conference with unions on pension reforms in 2003. Last month, the Bank agreed to a further conference with unions to take place in 2008 to review changes to its pensions policy. The 165-page report "An Evaluation of World Bank Research, 1998-2005" is available on the Bank's web site:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/84797-1109362238001/726454-1164121166494/RESEARCH-EVALUATION-2006-Main-Report.pdf>.



American public sector workers fight for their rights

More than two dozen labour organisations in Mexico, the US and Canada, together representing several million workers, have jointly filed a complaint against the United States, under the North American Agreement for Labour Cooperation (NAALC), the labour side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). PSI is among the signatories. The complaint, formally filed in Mexico, charges that North Carolina and the United States are violating NAALC and international law, by denying 650,000 public employees the right to collective bargaining.

Frustration with the lack of collective bargaining and effective voice on the job has led to increasing protests by North Carolina public employees. PSI has supported a request from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) for a general interest hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (www.iachr.org). For more information,

see <http://www.ranknfile-ue.org/newsupdates/news.php?topicid=279&pageID=uenews>.



A world without the WTO

Focus on the Global South has produced a fourth video in its series “Why the WTO is bad for you”. This video, entitled “A world without the WTO”, answers questions about life in a post-WTO era and invites viewers to imagine a world without the WTO. The video can be viewed at www.focusweb.org/world-without-the-wto.html. The three earlier videos can be viewed or downloaded from www.focusweb.org. The videos also exist in VCD/DVD format which can be ordered from the website, or send an email to admin@focusweb.org.



Richest 2% own half of world wealth

A new report from a UN research institute shows that the richest 2% of adults in the world own more than half of all household wealth. The report by the World Institute for Development Economic Research (WIDER) is different from previous studies because it deals with all countries in the world, and it studies wealth rather than income. Wealth is what people own – their assets, less what they owe – their debts. The study shows that wealth is heavily concentrated in North America, Europe, Japan and Australia, which account for 90% of household wealth. See the very detailed press release (available in English, French and Spanish) on the WIDER website www.wider.unu.edu.

Global Policy Network

The Global Policy Network (GPN) unites international researchers and civil society organisations to provide reliable research that brings the workers’ perspective into policy discussions. GNP empowers civil society organisations by building their research capacity. It advocates for socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable policies. Since its inception in 2000, the GPN has become a vital tool for unionists. See www.gpn.org.



Gender and work database

The GWD (Gender and Work Database) is an interactive research and teaching tool developed at York University in Toronto, Canada. It includes six modules: on health care,

migration, precarious employment, technology, unpaid work and unions. The Module explores gender, work and unions through statistical data, a unique set of union equity and web resources, and research papers on key themes.

The GWD is publicly accessible at <http://www.genderwork.ca>. To access the data tables for non-commercial research, contact Krista.Scott-Dixon@mail.atkinson.yorku.ca to receive a password.

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