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## El Salvador: Murder of Miguel Angel Vásquez Argueta

It is with great sorrow that PSI learnt of the assassination of Miguel Angel Vásquez Argueta, Finance Secretary for the STSEL. Miguel Vásquez went missing on Tuesday 17 July and his body was discovered the following day. He had been brutally assassinated. PSI will be sending out an Urgent Action to Appeal to affiliates, asking them to put pressure on President Saca to put an end to the violence towards trade unionists. The latest details will be posted to the PSI website [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org). PSI had only very recently launched an Urgent Action Appeal concerning acts of violence in El Salvador (see [www.world-psi.org/urgentaction](http://www.world-psi.org/urgentaction)), when participants of a public meeting to oppose water privatisation were victims of brutal repression by the national police force. The STSEL had taken an active part in these recent protests against the water privatisation.



### Fiji: Nurses on strike after talks break down

Members of PSI's affiliate, the Fiji Nursing Association, walked off their jobs at midnight on Tuesday 24 July after talks with the interim Public Service Minister Poseci Bune on their grievances broke down. PSI has written a letter to the FNA fully supporting its attempts to secure the pay and working conditions that Fiji's nurses deserve. Since taking power in a coup last December, Fiji's military government has cut the wages of public servants and reduced the compulsory retirement age in a bid to rein in spending. Some nurses are also contemplating leaving Fiji for Australia or New Zealand where they would receive better wages. For

background information and to read PSI's letter of support to the Fiji Nurses, [click here](#).



### Chad: Public sector strike continues

The situation in Chad is still very unstable. The government has refused to negotiate since the unions went on strike early May. The public sector workers are asking for a re-evaluation of the public sector pay scale and an increase in the minimum wage and pensions. The economic situation of the country has also deteriorated, especially for public sector workers whose salaries are on a downward slide, compared to the cost of living and private sector wages. PSI African regional secretary, Têko Kpodar, visited PSI affiliates 9-15 July to have a better understanding of the

situation in Chad, and to offer PSI's solidarity to the striking workers. PSI has also associated with the ITUC's complaint to the ILO Freedom of Association Committee. The Chad government has cited a long list of workers who they consider provide essential services and has deprived them of the right to strike, contrary to ILO Conventions 87 and 98 which Chad has ratified. Téko Kpodar, Chidi King and a representative from the ITUC were able to meet with the Chadian Minister for Labour during the ILO Conference, but unfortunately that meeting did not have any positive outcome for the affiliates. PSI will continue to monitor the situation and support its affiliates in Chad.

**3rd Congress mailing - coming to your union now!**



Here at the Secretariat we have been busy with the preparations for the 3rd Congress mailing. It is leaving the offices this week and should reach your union and all participants shortly. We are expecting well over 1000 participants at the Congress, which is shaping up to be a really exciting event. The mailing contains information on the programme of the pre-meetings and the Congress, election statements from the two candidates for General Secretary together with an explanation of the voting procedures, and the 22 resolutions and the proposed amendments for adoption at Congress. There is also a list of all the PSI-organised and the self-organised workshops and participants are now able to pre-register for workshops on the Congress website [www.psi100.org](http://www.psi100.org). Remember to visit the PSI Congress website at [www.psi100.org](http://www.psi100.org) where all documents can be downloaded. Remember also to sign the **Centennial Guest Book** and to contribute to the **Centennial Solidarity Fund**. We're looking forward to meeting all participants in Vienna.

### **Welcome to Che Cyprain, PSI South Africa office**

PSI would like to welcome Che Cyprain, the new Project Coordinator working on the Southern African project since June. Che is originally from Cameroon. Before joining PSI, he worked as a project accountant for the Building and Woodworkers International in their South Africa office. Che looks forward to working with his PSI colleagues in achieving the UDIS project goals in the Sub-region.



### **Welcome to Bernard Harbor**



We are pleased to welcome Bernard Harbor, who has joined PSI as a temporary press officer, based in the Ferney office. He will be working on press and communications for the PSI Congress, after which he will return to the Irish affiliate IMPACT, where he works as Information Officer. We are grateful to IMPACT for this additional support. Bernard will be in touch with you about the press work shortly. He can be contacted at [bernard.harbor@world-psi.org](mailto:bernard.harbor@world-psi.org).

## Healthcare costs impoverish 150m worldwide



At least 150 million people worldwide suffer financial catastrophe each year simply because they need to pay for health services, according to new World Health Organization (WHO) research. Countries that fund their health care systems using a form of prepayment, such as taxes or insurance, were less likely than countries that fund their health care systems through out-of-pocket payments to have a population that suffered financial catastrophe. When a country relies primarily on patients' out-of-pocket payments to providers to finance their health care system, it risks plunging its people into poverty, said David Evans, director of the Department of Health Systems Financing, Health Systems, and Services at the WHO. This can mean forcing people to make choices between health care and basic expenses such as food, shelter, or education, he said. Financial catastrophe occurs even in countries at high income levels, but more than 90 percent of the people worldwide who suffer financial catastrophe as a result of health care payments live in low-income countries. [Read more here.](#)



## Needed: a new model for the WTO

Responding to the release of new negotiating texts at the WTO, civil society groups from all over the world sent letters to their Trade Ministers, calling on them to acknowledge the failure of the Doha Round. "We believe that the time has come to officially declare the Doha Round of the WTO negotiations dead and to provide the necessary space to re-think the kind of multilateral trade rules that are needed to create employment and achieve sustainable development," the letter states. It was signed by over 90 civil society organizations from more than 35 countries, including PSI.

Ever since the launch of the Round in 2001, people all over the world have been denouncing the Doha talks as paying little attention to peoples' rights and needs. It is clear that the current model of trade cannot deliver on the alleged goal of the Doha Round - to promote development and lift millions of people out of poverty - and that WTO Members will never be able to agree on a deal within the current parameters. The letter asks Trade Ministers to:

Acknowledge the failure of the Doha Round; Institute a two year moratorium to provide the time and space necessary to re-think the model and process of global trade negotiations; Stimulate public discussion and debate with governments and civil society about creating alternative trade regimes. You can read the letter here: <http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=99258>



## Global Forum on Migration and Development

On 10-11 July 2007, governments met in Brussels for the first "Global Forum on Migration and Development." The Global Forum is the outcome of the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development that took place in September 2006. However, the Forum takes on a process independent of the UN. Trade unions and migrants' rights organisations are deeply concerned at this emerging trend of an inter-governmental consultation on migration outside the UN Charter as the tendency is to veer away from existing commitments on human rights and labour standards while attempting to establish policy measures and multilateral cooperation to govern international migration. PSI, in cooperation with ITUC and the Global Unions, sent a delegation of trade union representatives to the Global Forum Day of Civil Society on 9 July. See more details, including reports and links [here](#).



## Masters Programmes for trade unionists at the Global Labour University

As mentioned in the April edition of PSI World News, the Global Labour University now offers courses at the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics in Germany; at Wits in South Africa, and at the University of Campinas in Brazil. Students have the possibility to attend courses at more than one of these campuses, so that their masters in Globalisation and labour will be truly a globalised degree. The courses are taught in English, and applicants should preferably not be more than 40-years-old. Applications should be submitted **before 1 September 2007** for Brazil and South Africa, and **before 1 April 2008** for Germany. For further information, go to <http://www.global-labour-university.org/>.

## Spanish Parliament to hold World Bank and IMF representatives to account



On 30 May, the Spanish Parliament adopted a motion that requires the Executive to report annually to the Parliament on the positions adopted by Spain at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Government will also have to report on the decisions taken by the IFIs with regard to foreign debt, the fight against poverty and the Millennium Development Goals. The motion also asks for greater transparency on the financial resources allocated by the Executive to the Bank and the Fund. This motion is intended to increase parliamentary oversight of Spanish policies advocated in these institutions, and it seeks to establish greater transparency and coherence in the overall Spanish development policy. Follow this link to the parliamentary resolution (in Spanish):

[http://www.eurodad.org/uploadedFiles/Whats\\_New/News/Representants%20espanyols%20FMI%20i%20Banco%20Mundial.doc](http://www.eurodad.org/uploadedFiles/Whats_New/News/Representants%20espanyols%20FMI%20i%20Banco%20Mundial.doc)



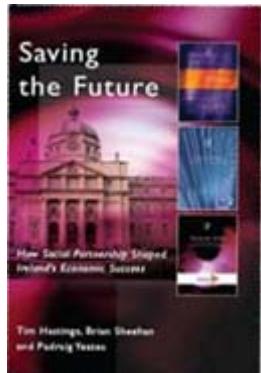
## The social, political and economic role of public services in Europe

Three European institutions are organising a conference in Brussels on **19-20 November** to highlight the role played by public services in the European Union and the failure of the European Commission to acknowledge it. Public services have been described by the EC as "services of general interest" rather than public services and their priorities are all about competition, the internal market and the economic and financial policies of the stability and growth pact, not about

delivering high quality public services.

The conference, organised by EPSU, ETUC-REHS and SALTSA, will present an “alternative to the market”. Considering the mounting evidence that the marketisation and privatisation of public services have not delivered the expected results, there is a need to re-evaluate the role of public services in Europe, including a re-examination of the basic assumptions underlying current policies and taking into account political implications. A call for research papers for the conference and further information is available on <http://www.epsu.org/a/3056>.

## New book says unions helped build Irish economic success



Irish affiliate IMPACT has sponsored a new book that says social partnership has made a big contribution to the political, economic and social life of Ireland. Written by three of the country's most respected industrial journalists, ***Saving the Future: How Social Partnership Shaped Ireland's Economic Success*** traces the contribution of social partnership over 21 years of Ireland's economic and social development. It draws on over 40 new interviews with leading players including top politicians, trade unionists, senior business leaders, and civil servants. Get Saving the Future for €15 (Ireland), €18 (Europe) or €21 (rest of the world) - including postage Contact Roisin Nolan at [rnlolan@impact.ie](mailto:rnlolan@impact.ie) or IMPACT, Nerney's Court, Dublin 1, Republic of Ireland.

## Public Sector Pensions and the Challenge of an Ageing Public Service



The challenge of attracting and retaining capacity within the public service as large numbers of experienced public servants retire is set to be a growing concern in many OECD countries. A recent OECD report looks at how pension reform may be assisting in meeting this challenge. The report **"Public Sector Pensions and the Challenge of an Ageing Public Service"** explains that the primary contribution of pension reform to meeting the ageing challenge is through the incentives and opportunities that it creates for skilled staff to join, or remain within, the public sector as part of a flexible working career that embraces the public and private sectors. Pension reform has taken some steps towards encouraging skilled older staff to remain at work for longer, through pension supplements and some tentative moves towards raising retirement ages. However, hurdles to mobility are to be found for staff wishing to pursue a career that encompasses both the public and private sectors and, of most concern in the context of the capacity problems raised by ageing, this very probably includes highly skilled managers and technical staff. Pension reforms have also not, as yet, fully addressed the challenges faced by those workers who would join the public sector if they could work flexibly. See the report on

[http://oberon.sourceoecd.org/vl=16275756/cl=22/nw=1/rpsv/workingpapers/19934351/wp\\_5l4tdjcj61r8\\_long\\_en.htm](http://oberon.sourceoecd.org/vl=16275756/cl=22/nw=1/rpsv/workingpapers/19934351/wp_5l4tdjcj61r8_long_en.htm)

## Young union leader elected in Guatemala



PSI congratulates Samuel Hernández for his recent election as union representative in the Executive Council of the National Electricity Institute in Guatemala, one of the largest public utility companies in the country. Samuel is a young leader of PSI affiliate STINDE, at 29 years old. He is also in his last year of his studies in industrial engineering.

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