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PSI Urgent Action to support South African public sector strike

Public sector trade unions in South Africa called a general strike on 1 June following a breakdown in negotiations with the government. The unions are asking for a 10 per cent salary increase (originally 12 per cent), whilst the government is proposing a possible rise of 7.25 per cent. Meanwhile, proposed salary increases of 57% for the State President and 37% for Members of Parliament have fuelled the union's disillusionment. The government has retaliated to the strike action by issuing letters of dismissal to more than 600 "essential-service" workers, mainly health care workers, and threatening to dock the pay of many others. The government has also deployed police and defence forces in attempts to curb the strike action. Many more public sector workers, including municipal and transport workers, joined the strike in a day of action on Wednesday 13 June. PSI has made an urgent action request to affiliates, asking them to show solidarity with public sector workers in South Africa by sending letters of protest to the South African government demanding the reinstatement of the sacked workers and the resumption of negotiations in good faith and by sending messages of support to affiliates in South Africa. For further details, see www.world-psi.org/urgentaction.

GCAP: Action days for the eradication of poverty

Two days of action are planned for the eradication of poverty: July 7 (07.07.07) and October 17. Trade unions can use these days to highlight the need for quality public services as essential to the eradication of poverty. PSI is calling on its affiliates, together with many NGOs, to call for action and commitments to end poverty. 2007 (and more precisely, 07.07.07) marks the midway point for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, an important opportunity for civil society to remind world leaders of the pledges they made seven years ago and the need to go beyond these commitments to bring about poverty eradication and sustainable development. PSI is using the occasion to draw attention to its campaign for water as a human right and public service by launching its new publication [Water as a Public Service](#). For further information, [click here](#).

96th ILO Conference

PSI, represented by Nora Wintour, Deputy General Secretary, addressed the plenary session of the 96th ILO Conference on 14th June.

Nora Wintour expressed PSI's concern at the high number of complaints of severe violations and repression against public sector trade union leaders. She highlighted in particular the cases of Korea, Colombia, North Carolina (USA), Algeria and Mozambique, and requested that the ILO maintain its resource levels in the vital area of work of the Standards Department and ILO supervisory mechanisms.

PSI also noted with regret the limited trade union participation in the forthcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development hosted by the Belgian Government in Brussels. A strengthened role for the ILO in this forum would ensure that labour migration is addressed within the framework of international human rights norms and labour standards.

PSI advocates the essential role of public services in sustainable development and looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the ILO in working towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Chad: Antiunion repression escalates

PSI continues to monitor events in Chad and deplores the recent increase in violence. The situation was brought about by the government's refusal to enter into negotiations with the trade unions. Public Sector unions have now been on strike for a month and unionists have been under pressure since the beginning of the strike. On 5th June, security officers stormed the Labour Exchange and barricaded its entrance. The General Secretary of the UST trade union centre, Mr Djibrine Assali, was not able to attend the ILO International Labour Conference. His passport was confiscated on 27 May as he was preparing to fly to Geneva. PSI has written both a letter of support to its affiliate and a letter to President Idriss DEBY ITNO calling on the government to engage in serious negotiations and social dialogue with the unions.

Canadian Supreme Court ruling affirms labour rights are human rights

A legal case in 2002 in which the Liberal government of British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell arbitrarily cancelled the contracts of thousands of health care workers and allowed for mass layoffs outside the collective bargaining process has been overruled by the Canadian Supreme Court. The court has ruled that several sections of the B.C. legislation violated Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects freedom of association. This decision means that more than 8,000 fired B.C. health-care workers could get their jobs back. It also leaves B.C.'s government facing a potential compensation tab of as much as \$1 billion to reverse Bill 29 (which permitted the firing of workers who had valid contracts and

their replacement by cheaper, lesser-skilled workers). The hearing reflected recommendations from the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.

PSI's affiliate, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), is pleased that many quotes from the court ruling mirror key messages in their ongoing Labour Rights are Human Rights campaign. "It is a tremendous victory for workers across Canada because it applies not only to British Columbia but to all governments at all levels. As a result we now expect governments everywhere to abide by both the letter and spirit of this ruling", says James Clancy, NUPGE President. The case was launched by a group of B.C. labour organizations, including the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU/NUPGE). [Read more here](#).

Centennial Solidarity Fund

The PSI Executive Board has agreed to establish a **Centennial Solidarity Fund** which will provide support to unions facing severe trade union or human rights violations, and will provide urgent humanitarian relief for victims of natural disasters. Affiliates are invited to make contributions to the fund as part of the PSI Centennial celebrations. Hans Engelberts, PSI General Secretary, has indicated that he would prefer that affiliates make contributions to the Centennial Solidarity Fund rather than offering him personal gifts during the Congress. Make your contributions to:

Account No. 298 630 31.06.90-0 or IBAN CH72 0844 0298 6303 1069 0
Internationale des Services Publics
Banque Coop
CP 3828
CH-1211 Geneva 3
Switzerland
Swift code: COOPCHBB

Please quote "100y fund" on bank transfers to help us identify the intended use of funds.

Consultancy for International Migration Project

PSI is accepting applications for a Consultancy to manage the International Migration and Women Health Workers Project, while the Project Coordinator will be on maternity leave. The period of employment will be 1st August to 30 November 2007. This PSI project is on its third phase and is implemented in 19 countries (Philippines, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Chile, Ecuador, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Canada, Spain, the Netherlands and UK). For further information [click here](#). Please note that the contract does not include any international relocation expenses. Candidates are asked to submit a statement of skills and competences of not more than 2 pages and a CV and

the names of 3 references. While we would prefer to have a person who can work from the PSI Headquarters, applicants wishing to work from elsewhere will also be considered. The deadline for applications is **30 June**.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining in Inter-America

PSI affiliates and government representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay took part in the Second Regional Joint Meeting on the Promotion of Social Dialogue in the Public Sector, focussed on Freedom of Association and organised by ILO/ACTRAV in Chile on 15-17 May. During the meeting's conclusions, the participants approved the decisions taken, such as "the promotion of decent work in the public sector", "promoting bipartite dialogue in the region", "promoting the sharing and diffusion of good practice of negotiation". They welcomed the advances in collective bargaining that had occurred in Uruguay and Argentina and the progress accomplished in Brazil and Ecuador. PSI was recognised by the governments and the unions for its active participation and promotion of this initiative in the Americas. If you wish to receive a complete version of the conclusions of the meeting, write to psiamerica@verizon.net.

Guinea on the road to democracy

Following the recent unrest in Guinea, the ITUC together with the four Guinean trade union centres held a trade union conference with the theme of international solidarity and promoting sustainable development. The conference was held on 23-25 May in Conakry. The Prime Minister Lansana Kouyaté presided the opening session, after which the 180 participants spent three days in workshops and debates on : Democracy, human rights and trade unions (led by Têko Kpodar, PSI Regional Secretary for Africa and Arab countries); Economic and social development; and Governance and institutions. At the end of the conference, a roadmap containing the conclusions and recommendations from the conference were given to the authorities. It also made a call to the international community to support Guinea in a peaceful transition towards real and long-lasting democratic changes.

Photo: Têko Kpodar discusses the issues with Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary.

Jeffrey Sachs on the World Bank

Jeffrey Sachs, Professor of Economics and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, was recently able to participate in high-level meetings between Chinese and African officials at the ADB (African Development Bank) meetings, hosted by China in Shanghai. The advice that the African leaders received from their Chinese counterparts was much more practical than they typically get from the World Bank. Sachs has written an article which illustrates

what is wrong with the World Bank, even aside from Wolfowitz's failed leadership. Unlike the Chinese, the Bank has too often forgotten the most basic lessons of development, preferring to lecture the poor and force them to privatise basic infrastructure, rather than to help the poor to invest in infrastructure and other crucial sectors. Read the article, available in several languages, on <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/sachs129>

PSI Public Sector Forum on the Future of Public Services

In November last year, the Public Sector Steering Group hosted a public sector forum on the future of public services. However, it was not a normal forum with invited speakers, but more like a workshop that exposed participants to the concept of scenarios planning - working out likely and important trends in aspects of public services and deciding what unions can and should do to make a desirable and possible scenario more likely to eventuate. An outline of this event can be found on the PSI website in English, French, Spanish, German, Swedish and Japanese. Click below for the English version.

- [PSI Public Sector Forum on the Future of Public Services](#)

PSIRU starts Masters degree in public services

Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU), the PSI-funded research unit at the University of Greenwich, in London, is starting a new masters degree from September 2007. PSIRU staff have designed the course, and will be teaching the core elements of it. Unlike other degrees, it focuses on public services and the issues surrounding privatisation. Its three core courses cover: public policy and public services; the public private interface; and employment and management in public services. There are optional courses on the EU and public services; PPPs; and utilities. All students will do a dissertation. The degree awarded is a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) (Public Services). For more details, see the document below. For further information and applications contact Merlin Harries: pgoffice-business@gre.ac.uk.

- [Download the document \(Word\)](#)

No medal for the Olympics on labour rights

A new report "No medal for the Olympics on labour rights" by the PlayFair 2008 campaign group exposes gross violations of basic labour standards by several Chinese factories

supplying goods under license for the Beijing Olympics, including adult wages at half the legal minimum, use of child labour, and employees made to work 12-hour shifts seven days a week in unsafe and unhealthy conditions. With freedom of association banned in China, the workers lack any effective means to defend their rights. The IOC imposes a range of strict conditions on licensees, however these do not include requirements to respect fundamental labour standards. Beijing Games licensing is expected to generate some US\$70million in income to the Olympics - 40% more than for the 2000 Sydney Games. Substantial profits are also expected to be made through the sale of other Olympics-related merchandise. See the report on http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/playfair_2008.pdf.

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