

Events for March/April

8-22 March PSI campaign on Water, Women and Workers: Sources of Life

15-17 March South Asia Sub-Regional Women's Committee and Sub-Regional Advisory Committee (SASRAC), Katmandu, Nepal

20-21 March PSI/EPSU Working Group on Integration, Brussels

22 March World Water Day

22-24 March Inter-American regional women's committee and Regional Executive Committee (IAMREC), Quebec City

27-30 March Sub-Regional Women's Committee and Sub-Regional Advisory Committee for Oceania (OSRAC), Auckland, New Zealand

28-30 March PSI Public Sector Steering Group Geneva

4-7 April PSI Regional Women's Committee and Regional Executive Committee for Africa and Arab countries AFREC, Tunisia

12-13 April Congress Standing Orders Committee (3rd meeting) Geneva, Switzerland

17-18 April PSI European Regional Executive Committee Meeting (EUREC), Geneva

15-16 April PSI European Youth Forum, Ferney-Voltaire

SIGN THE PETITION FOR HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Together, we demand public services that genuinely meet people's needs, and we call upon the European Commission to bring forward European legislation.

www.petitionpublicservice.eu



Water privatisation halted in Quito, Ecuador

On 7 March, the Mayor of Quito announced publicly that the water privatisation process would be halted definitively. This is a major victory for the Coalition for the Defence of Public Water, a national organisation of trade unions and community groups, which supports the human right to water. The

organisation of trade unions and community groups, which supports the human right to water. The Quito Municipality had been planning to privatise the Water and Sewage Company (EMAAP-Q) since 2003. The Municipality brought in Price Waterhouse to conduct a study on how to privatise part of the system, arguing lack of public funds to make the necessary new investments. The Coalition was able to prove that the financial calculations made by Price Waterhouse actually required the Municipality to provide almost USD 20 million in the first 5 years. On the other hand, the private companies, which would take over the concession, would only be required to invest USD 7 million. The Coalition also showed that after the 6th year of the concession, the private company could expect to make a profit over the next 30 years of up to USD 226 million. Further, the company would have exclusive rights to the water sources in the Quito region. The Coalition carried out a very successful information and education campaign to denounce the privatisation process, to call for water to remain in public hands and to assert the human right to water. For more information, see the Press Release on www.world-psi.org.

PSI affiliates celebrate International Women's Day with water, women and workers' activities



Since the launch of the Water, Women and Work: Sources of life days of action on International Women's Day, March 8th, PSI affiliates have been raising the importance of public ownership and management of water for women and gender equality, organising panels on water as a fundamental right and strategies to fight water privatisation. In Algeria, SNAPAP has organised a week-long campaign on the right to water. In Latin America, FFOSE from Uruguay and FENTAP from Peru have been very active in strengthening the affiliates in the water and sharing women trade union activists experience in organising in the water sector. Women's committees in the Andean region are producing a flyer describing women's struggle to maintain water in public hands. In other parts of the world, women have organised vigils, round tables, meetings, protests and post card signing events. Some have prepared political declarations, national and international forums on the theme of women and water, have lobbied their finance ministers to invest sufficient resources in the water sector and have held public meetings with political leaders. Please send us reports of how the Water, Women and Work campaign is taking root in your country so we can share the information with other PSI affiliates. The campaign material already available in English, French and Spanish has been translated in Thai, Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia and Dutch. www.world-psi.org/water2007.

World Water Day 22 March



On the occasion of World Water Day on 22 March, over 60 civil society and labour organisations from Europe and around the world, including PSI, have published a statement commenting on the policies of the European Commission regarding water and sanitation in developing countries. The statement was also published in the European Voice newspaper, as an advert paid for by contributions from the endorsing organisations. The statement makes several demands of the Commission:

- Stop using aid money to facilitate private sector involvement.
- Drop requests for market access within trade talks.
- Greatly increase aid and public investment in the sector.
- Support the development of strong public utilities in the Global South through 'public-public partnerships' that enable the exchange of expertise between public providers, working hand-in-hand with local communities.

See www.worldwaterday.eu.



Unions oppose WTO concessions

Unions from developing countries have demanded that their governments resist pressure from the European Union, the United States and others for deep cuts to industrial tariffs in global free trade talks. Rich nations, which are under pressure to slash farm subsidies and tariffs, have called for concessions in industrial goods from developing states as a condition for giving ground on agriculture in the negotiations. A group of 10 developing countries, officially called the NAMA-11 and including India, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Egypt, has insisted poorer states will cut manufacturing tariffs only by a much smaller amount than developed countries. But trade unions say the NAMA-11 has already given too much away and must make no further compromises. "Trade talks that promised to ... promote the needs and interests of workers in developing countries are not achieving these results," they said in a statement. Brussels, supported by Washington, has proposed setting 10 percent as the maximum tariff for developed countries and 15 percent for developing nations. But the NAMA-11 insists there must be at least a 25-percentage-point gap between the two. Read the full trade union statement [here](#).

Historic vote for workers' rights in the US



The US House of Representatives has voted in a new "Employee Free Choice Act", which will give new rights to American workers. H.R. 800 "amends the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes." During a week of action, workers in more than 100 cities met with members of Congress and community leaders to push for passage of the Act. Actions included conferences, worker roundtables, rallies and other gatherings, with workers and union and community leaders meeting with at least 130 members of Congress. The AFL-CIO sent more than 5 million e-mail messages to online activists. Their action had a positive outcome, carrying the vote by a margin of 241-185. This is the first step in the process towards achieving true protection of workers' rights. The Act will allow better streamlining of union certification will facilitate collective bargaining and protect workers against discrimination. See

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-800>

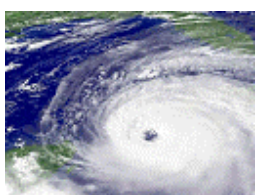
Workplace violence among Ukrainian health care workers



The Health Care workers trade union in the Kharkiv region of Ukraine has made a special request to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Health to provide workplace security for medical staff. They are asking for emergency measures to be taken in order to guarantee the security of the staff, who have been victims of "physical abuse, deliberate injuring and other hooligan actions" both in Kharkiv and the region. The appeal quotes the Constitutional provisions that guarantee each citizen the right to appropriate, safe, safe and healthy conditions of work.

Scandic Scandic union boycott results in takeover

In our January edition, we included an article about Hilton Hotels in Norway, which denied access to their Scandic hotel chain for Cubans, under the US trade embargo against Cuba. Norwegian law prohibits the denial of services on the grounds of a person's citizenship or other ethnic reasons, and it was expected that the Hilton Group would have to pay fines for expelling the guests. In addition, the Norwegian trade union movement carried out a massive boycott which meant the hotels lost a great deal of money. The latest news is that Scandic Hotels has been bought by EQT V, a private equity group that says it will follow Norwegian law and welcome all citizens.



Keeping our cool

PSI's affiliate the National Union of Public and General Employees in Canada has published a booklet on climate change, entitled *Keeping our Cool: a climate change primer*. The booklet explains what causes climate change, and how individuals and trade unions can act to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to it. It offers a list of the most effective ways we can help conserve nature and improve our quality of life. These include reducing home energy use by 10%; buying locally grown and produced food; choosing a fuel-efficient vehicle; and stopping use of pesticides. The booklet is now available in pdf format on the NUPGE website:

http://www.nupge.ca/publications/Environment/Keeping_Our_Cool.pdf

Norway abandons controversial water privatisation scheme



Norway's contributions to the PPIAF fund will cease on the 30 June. By withdrawing its financial and political support from PPIAF, Norway is sending an important signal to the other funders of PPIAF. Since its creation in 1999, the Public Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility has funded water privatisation consultants working in a total of 37 countries, from Afghanistan to Zambia. NGOs World Developing Movement and FIVAS have published a new report entitled *Down the Drain: How aid for water sector reform could be better spent*, that investigates the activities of PPIAF and shows how the fund actively promotes water privatisation by the use of consultants. This is despite the fact the strategy of water privatisation is widely acknowledged to have failed, particularly for the poor. The report recommends alternative ways of increasing access to water for the poor and suggests financial support to strengthen the public sector through increased cooperation between public water operators. Read the report:

<http://www.rorg.no/noop/file.php?id=1512>.

Denial of collective bargaining rights



In the January edition of PSI World News, we published [an article](#) about labour organisations in Mexico, the US and Canada, together representing several million workers, who jointly filed a complaint against the United States, under the North American Agreement for Labour Cooperation (NAALC), the labour side agreement to the

States, under the North American Agreement for Labour Cooperation (NAALC), the labour side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The complaint 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. The request for a general interest hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) could not be granted during the winter session due to a large number of hearings requested, but it will be resubmitted for either the July or October 2007 Commission session. [Click here](#) to read the letter sent to the Commission, of which PSI is a signatory.

Costa Rica: Why we reject CAFTA



On 26 February, tens of thousands of Costa Ricans took to the streets in a demonstration to block ratification of the free trade agreement and reject approval to implement legislation demanded by the United States. Costa Rica is the only country included in the Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Central America, and the Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR) that has not yet ratified the agreement. A broad grassroots movement in the country is trying to make sure it stays that way. See http://www.bilaterals.org/article.php3?id_article=7385.

Raising awareness of stress at work in developing countries



The World Health Organisation has published a booklet entitled ***Raising awareness of stress at work in developing countries: A modern hazard in a traditional working environment***. Work-related stress is an issue of growing concern in developing countries due to processes of globalization and the changing nature of work. Traditionally, the focus of Occupational Health and Safety initiatives is on chemical, biological and physical exposures, while the psychosocial risks at work are still largely neglected and their causes and consequences still insufficiently understood as they pertain to the developing country context. This booklet raises awareness of the issue for employers and workers' representatives. Download the full text on http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/pwh6pub.pdf

Japanese working women still serve tea!



A 59 year-old clerical worker in a major Japanese trading company was shocked when her company suddenly decided to move all the men in her department to nicer offices while keeping the women in the old work space. The affront did not end there, as the clerical worker, whose job involves handling invoices and customs forms, was then ordered to trek down the hall to serve tea to male employees and visiting customers. The logic: There were no female employees in the new work area, a problem in a country where women in the office are still expected to pour beverages during business meetings. When she complained her boss responded "We can't hire a new woman just to pour the tea". She has since joined five other women in a broad sex discrimination suit against the company.



Migration of health workers: Philippines

This report from the ILO Sectoral Activities Department, by the Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies aims to provide in-depth information on the migration of Filipino health workers and the repercussions this has on individual migrants, their families, their professions and the nation as a whole. The Philippines is recognised as being one of the major source countries of health worker migration. For many decades, the country has consistently supplied skilled health workers to countries such as the United States and Saudi Arabia. The report seeks to explore the reasons why health workers choose to migrate or stay in the country. It discusses the impact of health worker migration on the country's health system, in terms of the working conditions of the remaining health workforce and the health service provision. It analyses existing migration policies and practices and discusses the different viewpoints of the various key stakeholders. It identifies lessons learned and best practices, and it recommends strategies and practices for socially acceptable management of health worker migration. The report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/health/wp236.pdf>



Health worker migration flows in Europe

The ILO Sectoral Activities Department, Health Services Unit, initiated an explorative research project on health worker mobility in Europe with focus on CEE countries. This report by Christiane Wiskow, "Health worker migration flows in Europe: Overview and case studies in selected CEE countries – Romania, Czech Republic, Serbia and Croatia" presents the results of the research project in two parts:

Part I provides an overview on the discussion of international health worker migration in Europe. It includes background information in summarizing general labour migration trends, namely in the context of European Union enlargement, looks at information on health worker flows and at migration influencing aspects such as policies managing migration, professional regulation, and demographic and labour-related determinants such as ageing and working conditions.

Part II presents the four country case studies. As the country-based information is not directly comparable, due to the diversity of the health systems and the composition of their workforce, the country reports are presented in their original state. They thus provide a comprehensive basic overview for each country on health labour market and workforce issues as a background, and the information available on international

migration of health workers within the countries. The report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/health/wp245.pdf>

Global Employment Trends for Women



The International Labour Office (ILO) has released a new report on the occasion of International Women's Day, "Global Employment Trends for Women Brief - 2007". The report reveals that more women than ever before are in work, but that a persistent gap in status, job security, wages and education between women and men is contributing to the "feminization of working poverty". More women than ever before are unemployed (81.8 million), stuck in low productivity jobs in agriculture and services or receiving less money for doing the same jobs as men. In addition, the share of working-age women who work or are seeking work has actually stopped growing or declined in some regions, partially due to more young women in education rather than work. "Despite some progress, far too many women are still stuck in the lowest paying jobs, often in the informal economy with insufficient legal protection, little or no social protection, and a high degree of insecurity", said ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. "Promoting decent work as a fundamental instrument in the global quest for gender equality will go a long way in raising incomes and opportunities for women and lifting families out of poverty." See www.ilo.org/trends.

Applied Research on the Millennium Development Goals

The UNDP's International Poverty Centre (IPC) has launched a webpage dedicated to "Applied Research on the Millennium Development Goals". The page contains recent IPC research publications focusing on MDGs as well as information on the latest MDG-related events organized by IPC, including papers and training material for the events. See www.undp-povertycentre.org/mdg.htm.

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