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### **Greetings for 2008 from Peter Waldorff**



As we move from 2007 to 2008 I would like to say goodbye to Hans Engelberts, PSI General Secretary for more than 26 years, and a committed trade unionist at the service of PSI and its affiliates. Thank you Hans!

The New Year has been dominated by political crises in both Pakistan and Kenya. PSI is following the unrest after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and the riots after the questioned result of the presidential election in Kenya, with great concern.

For PSI, representing 20 million public sector employees in more than 140 countries, those crises intensify the need to fight for democracy. A prerequisite for democratic structures is the development of a well-functioning public sector, including

good governance. This includes ensuring public sector employees have the right to organise, and to take part in collective bargaining.

In PSI, we are now entering a phase where we will develop our strategies according to the important decisions taken by our centennial congress in Vienna last September.

A number of big challenges are lying ahead of us and I am looking forward to facing them, with the support of PSI affiliates. I know that this requires a clear strategy in what we are doing, and the commitment to fight to achieve our common goals, and I am sure that together we can succeed.

Having taken over the responsibility as PSI General Secretary, I can assure you that I am looking forward to meeting your expectations and bringing us into the next Congress period with an even stronger commitment for the development of a high quality public sector and powerful trade unions.

I look forward to working with you and I wish all affiliates a happy and successful 2008.

### **Philippines: Public sector trade union wins case against corrupt government officials**



The Office of the President in the Philippines has upheld the decisions of the Philippine Anti-Graft Commission, concerning a long-standing case of embezzlement of public funds at the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. The five persons accused were found guilty of grave misconduct.

Over the last two years, PSI has supported Annie Geron, General Secretary of PSLINK and other unionists who brought the case in the first place when they denounced the corrupt practices of the TESDA Director General Augusto Syjuco. Annie and other unionists have been threatened, intimidated and

dismissed as a consequence. This anti-union intimidation is currently the subject of a complaint to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.

Now, in a 20-page ruling, the accused have been found guilty of embezzling Philippine Pesos 9.2 million (or approximately USD 185,000). Because Mr. Syjuco is a cabinet minister, a Committee of Peers consisting of other Cabinet ministers, will hear the case in order to determine whether he will now be prosecuted. PSI has written to the President, Gloria Arroyo and the Office of the Ombudsman calling for penal prosecution procedures.

[More information here](#)



### **Health workers in DRC successfully lobby for safer injections**

PSI has received confirmation that the use of retractable syringes has become mandatory in all health centres, public or private, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is a great victory for PSI's affiliate, the Nurses' union SOLSICO, which initiated and led the efforts to persuade the government.

Information about the syringes was available at the PSI World Congress. Jorge Mancillas, PSI Health and Municipal Services Officer, was approached by several PSI affiliates, and unions from the DRC and Nigeria took the information back to their governments. In Nigeria, the government has agreed to make a large initial purchase. In DRC, SOLSICO representative Aimée Lukwasa immediately contacted the Ministry of Health, presenting further material and information about the retractable syringes. The government responded positively, and on 5th January, signed a decree making the use of retractable syringes mandatory by law.

This law will make a huge difference to health workers and patients. This measure will provide

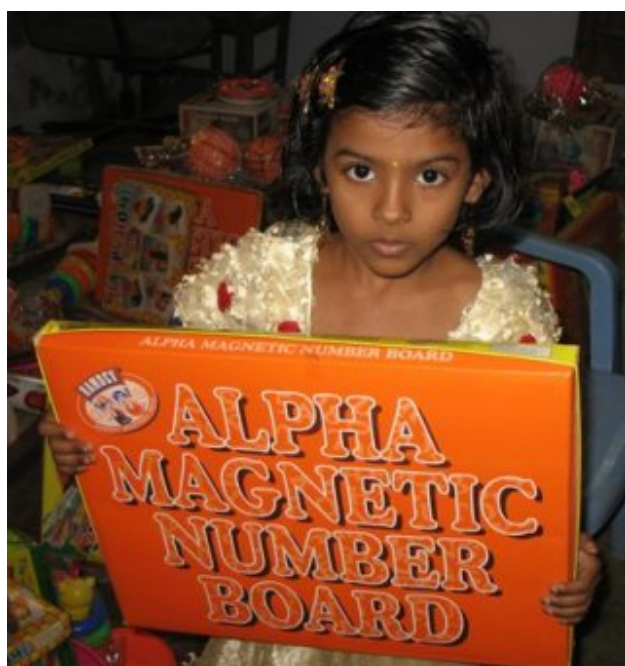
protection to the 28,789 nurses and 5,827 doctors in the country and to all home and community users of syringes. It will also benefit patients by preventing reuse of syringes. It is estimated that up to 200 million syringes will be used per year.

Unsafe injections cause infections with Hepatitis B, C and HIV, the majority in developing countries where 40% of injections are considered unsafe. The viruses are transmitted when the same needles are used for several patients. Health workers can also be infected through accidental needlestick injuries when providing care. Over 2 million incidents of needlestick injuries sustained by health workers are reported each year, and many more go unreported.

Retractable syringes avoid unsafe injections because they can only be used once. They protect against needlestick injuries because the needle is automatically retracted back into the syringe immediately after use. This means that many lives will be saved - and that's good news for everyone.

For more information, contact [Jorge.Mancillas@world-psi.org](mailto:Jorge.Mancillas@world-psi.org).

### **Pay equity walk donation**



Children in Anganwadi centres in India will start the year with new toys and educational games, thanks to the funds collected after the sponsored walk held during the PSI World Congress in Vienna. A total of 3000€ was contributed. The toys are being distributed to 32 centres in Tamilnadu selected by the Anganwadi association. Around 650 children will benefit from them.

The Anganwadi workers provide childcare in small day centres for working women. They also deliver health screening for the women and supplementary feeding for the children. Half of the funds collected were

spent on toys for the children. The other half will go towards campaign materials to assist in the organisation of Anganwadi workers in other states.

### **BEAT THE HEAT**

#### **PSI active at Bali Climate Change conference**



PSI affiliates in our recent Congress voted to make climate change a key priority for our work in coming years. PSI sent a delegation to the UN climate change in Bali, including Svend Robinson, Public Services Advocacy Officer (PSI head office) and FX Supiarso from Indonesia. Together they were part of the 80-member ITUC delegation.

PSI's message to the conference was that building and strengthening quality public services must be at the heart of

the global response to climate change. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) must agree to binding, mandatory greenhouse gas emission standards as recommended by the IPCC, both for 2020 and for 2050. Just transition policies, including green jobs, must be in place for workers and communities adversely impacted by climate change. Developing countries must receive financing and technology transfer from developed countries, as promised in Kyoto but never delivered.

PSI is preparing an action plan for approval by the Executive Board and we call on all affiliates to get involved. This is the only hope for our planet. Small island states and indigenous peoples are already suffering from the effects of climate change.

If you would like to get involved in PSI's climate change work, please contact

[Svend.Robinson@world-psi.org](mailto:Svend.Robinson@world-psi.org).

Read the PSI statement on climate change [here](#).

### **UK union lodges 25,000 equal pay claims**



UK affiliate the GMB has lodged its 25,000th equal pay claim against employers in local government and the National Health Service (NHS), worth an estimated £250 million for women workers. The cases cover women cleaners, catering and school support staff and clerical employees who were found to be earning less than men.

The union has also negotiated tens of thousands of other claims in the past few years as part of its drive to achieve equal pay for its members. A GMB study of pay rates in 240 occupations showed there was still much more to be done to close the gender pay gap. The study showed that male financial managers earned almost £50,000 a year more than women in the profession, while the gap was more than £20,000 in other management jobs. For more details, including a pdf file of the recently published data from the April 2007 Annual Survey of Earnings and Hours from the Office of National Statistics (ONS),

visit <http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=96441>



## Latin American Network of University Employees

In the framework of the PSI Sub-regional meeting of university employees, held in San Jose, Costa Rica on 11 and 12 December, 10 trade union organisations from universities in Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic,

agreed, with the support of PSI, to create in 2008 the Latin American Network of University Employees. The meeting culminated with a statement of the commitments made by these unions in defending the quality of public university education and for the recognition of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in this sector. For more information, contact [oscar.rodriguez@psi-ca.org](mailto:oscar.rodriguez@psi-ca.org).



## Asian Development Bank Chief Economist slams growing inequality

It wasn't the usual neo-liberal World Bank nostrums from Asian Development Bank Chief Economist Ifzal Ali, during a recent interview with Business Times magazine. He spoke out against growing income inequalities in Asia, what he called the "shivering face" of Asia. "These are the people...who have been completely bypassed and marginalised by exuberant growth rates that many economies in total

are enjoying. But a disproportionate part of the benefits of this is going to maybe a fraction of the population...income gaps are opening up and widening". Ali lays the blame for this squarely at huge cuts in public services: "...prolonged neglect of vast swathes of society in terms of lack of even the most elementary forms of schooling, the most elementary forms of public health, the issues of lack of sanitation..." He charges that there has been a "complete breakdown of the delivery of public services" in Asia.

"Let's hope that his bosses at the ADB and World Bank are listening, and end their policies that

➡ have led to this huge growth in inequality in Asia and elsewhere”, said Katsuhiko Sato, PSI Asia Pacific Regional Secretary.

You can read the whole interview [here](#).



### **Tanzanian unionists skilled in labour law**

Unions in Tanzania, including the island of Zanzibar, have played a major role in ensuring that new labour laws not only protect union rights but are also being implemented and enforced at workplaces. A two-year awareness campaign involved members and representatives, making the laws accessible for workers by translating them into the local language and producing simple guidelines. The unions are now conversant with the laws and the management of government departments and the ministries regularly contact them for advice; a further benefit is that local management and workers are accepting the union's legitimate role in the public service. The government now includes union leaders in discussions on economic, public sector and labour issues and has established a public sector negotiating committee. Following national centre elections, PSI affiliates hold many leadership positions and led a successful campaign for an increase to the minimum wage. PSI is implementing a sub-regional project sponsored by FNV and LOTCO in Tanzania.

### **Reclaiming Public Water**



The Reclaiming Public Water (RPW) network of NGOs, academics and unions, managed by CEO-TNI met in Brussels to develop a common work plan focusing on the EU and its member states. So far, RPW had focused mainly on developing countries. More than 50 participants, including unions from Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands also heard from public water managers, including Anne le Strat, director of Eau de Paris who is preparing for 2009, when the city will create a unified public operator (and not renew the lucrative contracts for Suez and Veolia); from Christian Legros of BelgAqua who told of the creation of Aqua Publica Europea, an organisation for public water operators. Participants discussed the 2009 World Water Forum in Istanbul with a number of Turkish colleagues, as well as the annual Stockholm Water Week in August 2008 and the European Social Forum in

Malmö, Sweden in September 2008. A working document has been circulated among participants. Please contact [david.boys@world-psi.org](mailto:david.boys@world-psi.org) for information on how you can participate. Visit [www.remunicipalisation.org](http://www.remunicipalisation.org) which is tracking the re-municipalisation of private water contracts.

### Focus on health



PSI has published a new edition of Focus on Health, the magazine for health sector workers. This edition covers the decisions made during the PSI World Congress, but also offers insight into the way health services are reacting to growing privatisation and contracting out. An article about the Global Plan of Action for Workers' Health gives suggestions on how PSI affiliates can participate to bring about improvement in workers' health and safety and access to health care for all workers. Another article studies the gender inequality and inequities in the health workforce (women worldwide constitute less than 28% of doctors, but close to 90% of all nurses). You can download a pdf of the magazine [here](#), or if you would like to subscribe to receive it by email, go to [www.world-psi.org/subscribe](http://www.world-psi.org/subscribe). If you want to receive paper copies, please contact [communications@world-psi.org](mailto:communications@world-psi.org). Focus on health is published in English, French and Spanish.

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