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PSI Campaign: Women, Water, Workers and Health

 <http://w...>

For 2009, PSI's is marking International Women's Day (8 March), World Water Day (22 March) and World Health Day (7 April) with the theme "**Women, Water, Workers and Health**". The PSI campaign builds on the achievements of previous campaigns on women, water and workers with a special focus on health and, in particular, the link between quality public water and health services and their impact on women. Women comprise the majority of workers in the health sector as well as the majority of users of public health services. The provision of universally accessible, publicly funded quality water, health and care services is crucial to empowering women and promoting gender equality. Where States fail to provide adequate public health and care services, the burden falls heavily on women to compensate for their non-availability. PSI has developed a dedicated website in English, French and Spanish where you can download a brochure, poster and postcard. In addition, affiliates and regional and sub-regional PSI offices have been supplied with campaign kits. For more details see www.psiwater.org. Contact equality@world-psi.org.

PSI blog on the financial crisis

 Image

Peter Waldorff, PSI General Secretary, has opened a PSI blog on the financial crisis, which will keep you updated on the advancement of the financial crisis and on PSI's work on the subject. This includes PSI's position and any thoughts and observations. You will be able to access PSI's statements, reports on meetings, general documents on the crisis, links to good informative websites and a selection of newspaper articles on the subject. The blog also includes a page with links to trade union websites so that you can keep an eye on what PSI's affiliates are doing on the subject.

You can also truly participate in the PSI blog on the financial crisis by using the comments function. We also encourage you to send us any interesting information you might have on the crisis to the email address mentioned on the homepage of the blog. You can also keep up to date with changes on the blog by using the subscription facility. Take a look on <http://financialcrisisblog.world-psi.org/>

PSI calls for renewed focus on prevention against HIV/AIDS

 <http://www.world-psi.org/images/h...>

During a meeting at the World Economic Forum in Davos, PSI's general secretary Peter Waldorff called for more investment on prevention against HIV/AIDS. "The number of people infected with HIV is rising and yet we see a decline in prevention programmes. We must renew our efforts in effective prevention actions," says Waldorff. In 2001 almost 28 million people around the world were HIV-infected. In 2007, the number had grown to over 33 million. That year an estimated 2 million people died as a result of AIDS. PSI also demands more investments to protect health care workers who have run high risks while performing their jobs. PSI launched a campaign at the end of 2007 to promote

the switch to the use of safe injection devices, such as retractable syringes. The use of retractable syringes protects not only patients, but they also protect nurses, laboratory personnel and doctors as well as waste collectors from the risk of HIV infection.

Download the PSI brochure [HIV/AIDS: A call for more investment in prevention](#) [here](#) (1.5 MB).

Ögmundur Jónasson, PSI executive board member, named Icelandic Minister for Health

 <http://w...>

Ögmundur Jónasson has been named as the new Minister for Health in Iceland. The new government took office on 1 February. Jónasson has served as the Icelandic representative on the PSI Executive Board since 2002. He is the President of the Icelandic Public Service Union; the Federation of State and Municipal Employees (BSRB). He is also a leading member of the Vinstrihreyfingin - grænt framboð, or Left-Green movement. The new Government has been formed in the wake of the collapse of the administration of Geir Haarde. It is a coalition of the Social Democratic Alliance and the Left-Green movement, and will hold office until elections on 25 April 2009.

UN Commission on the Status of Women

 [Image](#)

The 53rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women will take place in New York on 2-13 March. PSI, Education International (EI) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) are submitting a joint statement to the Commission concerning the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. The statement draws attention to women's role as main care-givers and the persistent under-valuing of women's work, notably because of the notion that their primary role is home-based. It also states that the goal of achieving equal sharing of family and care responsibilities, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS, cannot be attained without a firm commitment by governments to increase and sustain predictable public funding to the key services of health, water and education. The statement makes 13 recommendations to governments to improve legislation and develop programmes and facilities that promote gender balance in family responsibilities, education, employment and care. You can read the statement [here](#).

Fatal accidents in Canada: is privatisation to blame?



Image

At the beginning of February, three people were killed by vehicles removing snow in Montreal, Canada. They were all accidents, but voices are being raised against the privatisation of the snow removal services, which means that heavy demands are placed on subcontract workers to reach their targets.

For almost half of its snow removal operations, the City of Montreal relies upon subcontracted companies; the other half is accomplished by its own workers, many of them members of SCFP 301, a branch of PSI's Canadian affiliate CUPE. The transport of snow away from the city, however, is

almost entirely private. Whereas the city workers are paid an hourly wage, the private contractors are paid by volume of snow removed. If they don't meet snow removal targets, subcontractors can be fined up to \$10,000.

This is pushing independent truck drivers to work up to 24 and even 36 hours straight. The subcontractors are determined to escape the penalties for failing to meet their snow removal targets and the drivers, who receive little if any pay when there is no snow to clear, try to maximize their earnings when work is available.

The first accident on the morning of 3 February happened at 9:40. The truck driver had started his shift at 20:00 the night before.

Accidents, yes, but could they have been avoided?

PSI regional staff development workshop



Image

A number of new project coordinators have been recruited in English speaking Africa and Asia over the last few years but there is little opportunity for these coordinators to meet with more experienced staff and share their achievements and concerns. The management of projects has become more complex with the introduction of new guidelines and reporting responsibilities and so PSI decided it was time to bring people together to share experiences and strengthen skills in project implementation.

Mumbai was chosen as the central point between the two regions and was organised by the South Asia Sub Regional Secretary. Jenny Luck who has project responsibility for these two regions at the Head Office level facilitated the workshop with Christine Roos.

During 2008, draft guidelines for project implementation were prepared at head office to assist coordinators at the regional and local levels. The workshop provided the opportunity to discuss some of the issues raised in the guidelines and ensure they were relevant to the local difficulties experienced by coordinators. The question of project ownership was discussed in depth and the relation between ownership at the local level and the PSI level was explored. The role and responsibilities of the Project Management Committees at the country level was an important aspect of ownership raised by the coordinators; it was agreed that these committees needed to be given a greater role in decision making as well as training to assist them with the specific skills of reporting and implementation. The guidelines will be circulated when finalised.

PSI at the 2009 World Social Forum



Image

Over 100,000 people took part in the World Social Forum (WSF) in late January in Belem, in the Amazon region of Brazil. PSI had a strong delegation, led by outgoing PSI Public Services Advocacy Officer Svend Robinson and Regional

Secretary Jocelio Drummond, included affiliates from the health care, water, and energy sectors in South America. PSI Vice President Juneia Batista and Sub-Regional Secretary Monica Valente led a well attended session on gender equity issues. Drummond spoke at a panel on the important role of trade unions in fighting unfair trade deals. Robinson chaired a plenary jointly organized by the ITUC and TUCA on Trade and Decent Work, and also participated actively on climate justice issues organised by the global network Our World is Not for Sale. A highlight of the week was a huge rally at which five progressive Presidents from South America spoke: Lula from Brazil, Chavez from Venezuela, Lugo from Paraguay, Morales from Bolivia and Correa from Ecuador. Over 2,000 indigenous Amazon people participated, and expressed their concern about destruction of their ancestral lands. PSI delegates stressed the key role that quality public services must play in responding to the global financial and climate crises, and the need to fight privatization and take back public services that were sold off in the wave of IMF/World Bank privatization that has proved to be such a disaster.

Challenging the myths about private health care



Image

Over two decades, we have experienced a relentless drive to promote the growth of the private health care sector and transform health care from a basic human right, into a service for sale. Privatisation policies have been promoted by the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions, donors like USAID and the UK's DFID and political and economic forces in developed countries.

A new and very timely policy paper by OXFAM provides evidence that "making public services work is the only proven route to achieving universal and equitable health care." Recognising that "public provision is lacking or very weak in many countries" it states that "making it work requires determined political leadership, adequate investment, evidence based policies and popular support."

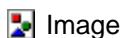
The report reviews the policies through which the World Bank worked to "improve the policy environment for public-private partnerships in health" and supported "private sector-led solutions." Also reviewed are the activities of powerful private sector companies and the "promotion of commercialisation and privatisation of health-care services in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations and in an array of bilateral trade agreements."

Read more about the report on the [PSI health blog](#).

The full report in English, French and Spanish (55 to 64 pages) and executive summaries in these languages and Arabic and German are available at:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/health/bp125_blind_optimism.html

4th People's Summit of the Americas



Image

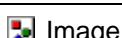
On 17-19 April 2009, the 5th Summit of the Americas will bring together the leaders of 34 states in the western hemisphere (excluding Cuba). For the first time, the Summit will be held in a Caribbean country, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. David Abdullah, President of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs (FITUN), said the summit "... presents a unique opportunity for the social movements of the hemisphere which are

opposed to neo-liberalism to meet and to address an agenda for the people of the hemisphere; an agenda that is opposed to neo-liberalism."

FITUN is partnering with the Assembly of Caribbean People (ACP) and the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) to organise the **4th People's Summit** (which includes Cuba). PSI's sub-regional Office in the Caribbean is also a part of the planning process and is encouraging its affiliates in Trinidad & Tobago and the Caribbean to join the summit. At the next planning meeting, participants will finalise the themes and sub-themes for the People's Summit. They will also discuss participation in the Labour Forum, one of the side activities of the Summit Process. This gathering will be an opportunity to renew people's opposition to the neo-liberal economic model and demand that governments support development policies that respect gender equality and equity; guarantee food and energy sovereignty; demonstrate concern for the environment and promote sustainable development; recognise and respect ethnic and cultural diversity; promote decent work and strive for quality public services.

See www.cumbredelospueblos.org. Contact the PSI Caribbean sub-regional office psicaribbean@sunbeach.net

World Day for Social Justice



Image

At its sixty-second session, in November 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice. The day is observed for the first time in 2009.

Member states were invited to devote this special day to the promotion of concrete national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalising world".

As recognised by the World Summit, social development aims at social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries and social justice, equality and equity constitute the fundamental values of all societies. To achieve "a society for all" governments made a commitment to the creation of a framework for action to promote social justice at national, regional and international levels. They also pledged to promote the equitable distribution of income and greater access to resources through equity and equality and opportunity for all. The governments recognised as well that economic growth should promote equity and social justice and that "a society for all" must be based on social justice and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The observance of the day should contribute to the further consolidation of the efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

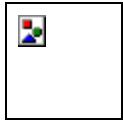
Global Labour University - 1 April deadline for Germany and India

 <http://w...>

The Global Labour University, previously described in PSI World News and FOCUS, offers Masters Programmes for trade unionists in four venues: the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics in Germany; Wits in South Africa; the University of Campinas in Brazil ; and at the Tata Institute for Social sciences in Mumbai, India. The deadline for the next courses in Germany and India is 1st April 2009. 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. Information on the GLU is available on <http://www.global-labour-university.org/>.

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