

**~Gender" in der Internationalen Zusammenarbeit**

*Genre dans la Coopération Internationale*

*Género en la Cooperación Internacional*

*Gender in International Cooperation*

6

Report about the International Conference:

Gender Mainstreaming in Collective Bargaining

Potsdam 24/25. October 2000

The series "*Gender in International Cooperation*" addresses current issues of the discussion on gender. It is meant as a forum for discussing political options for and international experiences in implementing gender-oriented policies with the aim of improving the general socio-political conditions. This series is intended as a contribution to gender equality between women and men in shaping the economic, political and social developments of their countries.

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## Summary

It was the aim of the conference to take stock of gender mainstreaming and its implementation within the trade unions, to exchange experience and to draw up joint strategies. The contributions of the participants highlighted the fact that women are both greatly under-represented at the level of trade union leadership and bargaining committees and are discriminated against on the labour market. Women are earning less than men, are more often out of work and have more limited career opportunities. In addition, childcare, parental rights, maternity protection and parental leave are still inadequately regulated in the majority of countries. One of the key demands therefore concerned the strengthening of women within the trade unions by means of quotas for union bodies and bargaining committees and qualification and advanced training programmes for the generation of future women leaders. To study and to analyze female employment was regarded as both crucial in establishing a sound basis for arguments and actions and worthy of specific support. Fair pay was identified as the core objective of their efforts by many of the participants who demanded a reevaluation of women's work by means of gender-neutral job evaluation systems. So-called "Equality Packages" and "Equal Opportunity Funds", aimed at forcing the employers to share the responsibility, were recommended as negotiating strategies vis-a-vis the employers. Moreover, ILO Conventions and minimum standards at the level of the EU in combination with the payment of grants were appreciated as effective means of exerting pressure.

The discussion illustrated that while trade unions have included gender in their agenda, they have not, in fact, changed the established structures for women. Fair pay, a family-friendly design of working time and adequate representation at the level of trade union leadership have not yet materialized. This is why women-specific structures continue to be necessary in order to focus attention on these forms of discrimination. Quota systems in

combination with improved education and training of women were regarded as the most important instrument for ensuring a women's lobby within male-dominated trade unions. The different evaluation of women's and men's work in all countries appeared to be one of the most important problems to be faced in bargaining policy. In many countries, women must also be twice as qualified or better trained when competing with men for attractive jobs. Deficiencies in maternity protection, maternity leave and in returning to the workplace after a baby pause cause problems in ensuring equal job opportunities in the majority of countries. In addition, sexual harassment at the place of work proved to be an equally widespread negative phenomenon in all parts of the world. Discussions reflected the different levels achieved in the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming in the bargaining process. While some countries are still struggling for an appropriate data base to determine their existing mainstreaming situation, others are able to upgrade evaluation and information systems which are already in place. A reform of pay systems by abolishing low-wage grades altogether or supplementing them from equal opportunity funds and also the introduction of a statutory minimum wage were proposed with a view to overcoming pay discrimination.

A public meeting on the issue "Equal Opportunities in Bargaining Policy" following the workshop concentrated on the effects of globalization on trade unions and bargaining policy and on the question of what women can expect in general terms from trade unions.

Globalization is having similar effects in both the North and the South: deregulation of labour markets at the expense of the workforce, a growing number of unprotected jobs and pseudo self-employment, the reduced influence of bargaining policy at the national level and of the trade unions in general. The resulting negative effect is even greater for women because less attention is

traditionally paid to their concerns in male-dominated organizations.

This is why the time has come for trade unions to become more attractive for young women and to reclaim lost power by increasing their membership in the process. This requires, on the one hand, increased networking amongst trade unions worldwide in response to globalization and on the other, a new impulse to gender policy within the trade unions. The women who took part in the discussions were in no doubt that bargaining

policy was in principle an appropriate means to achieve this. To this end, men needed to be won over as "brothers in arms" at all levels. Gender mainstreaming was particularly suitable as a strategy in their eyes, but needed to be explained more comprehensibly than hitherto. In order to reach out to women workers in sectors in which the trade unions were not yet represented, examples were presented from some countries where unconventional methods and projects had been successfully implemented.

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## Introduction

A major result of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing has been a conceptual reorientation of women's issues which is gaining ground worldwide. While in the past efforts were aimed at reducing disadvantages for women by means of specific action, the concept of gender mainstreaming has by and large met general acceptance four years after Beijing. Under this new approach gender policies are regarded as a task that cuts across all sectors and needs to be realized in almost all fields of policy-making. The past has shown that women's interests are given little or often no attention in almost all areas of politics, including those of an apparently gender-neutral nature, because women are not represented at the decision-making levels.

Gender mainstreaming therefore aims at taking into account the given situation and needs of men and women in all fields of policy-making and at orienting concepts and measures towards the objective of gender equality. Positive action for women will not become obsolete as a result, but will constitute one of the elements of gender mainstreaming.

However, the change of paradigm from pro-women positive action to gender mainstreaming affects not only the political sphere, but also the internal structures of international and national organizations. In consequence, gender mainstreaming has become an issue for the trade union movements and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung as well. Structures have been set up and networks have been emerging. Growing globalization of the economy and its largely negative effects on women in the South make it imperative to exchange experience at various levels. One step in this direction has been a 5-days workshop, organized jointly by the DGB and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, on the issue "Globalization and Women's Work" which took place in Hattingen in

1999 with women trade unionists from Brazil, South Africa and Germany. One conclusion of this meeting has been that women are disadvantaged to varying degrees in all three countries not only by globalization and in society, but even within their own trade union organization. They are under-represented in the executive bodies and too little attention is therefore paid to women's concerns and needs in trade union policies. In consequence, the women were greatly interested in creating their own networks as a counter-balance to those of men for the exchange of information and experience.

The late trade union coordinator in the Division of International Development Cooperation of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Rüdiger Sielaff, who unfortunately died far too early and to whom this brochure is to be dedicated, supported this project from its inception. It was he who proposed to discuss the gender mainstreaming concept against the background of very practical problems. The issue of bargaining policy suggested itself because women are earning less than men in all parts of the world. Further action is urgently required in this field. With this in mind, 35 women and one man from 26 different countries came together in Potsdam. Their aim was to take stock of how far the individual countries had progressed in the implementation of gender mainstreaming, to exchange experience about "best practices" and to develop joint strategies accordingly.

This documentation is to ensure a wider dissemination of the results. It is directed, in particular, towards those trade unions and women colleagues who could not themselves take part in the meeting, enabling them to participate in the discussion about a new kind of bargaining policy which does justice to women and men equally.

*Astrid Ritter-Weil*

*Raja Nejedlo*

## Opening of the Conference

### Christei Nickel-Mayer, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

On behalf of the Management Board of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. I would like to welcome you to the conference "Gender Mainstreaming in Collective Bargaining". It is a tremendous pleasure to me, that so many of you came to Potsdam, to work for two days on the issues of gender equality and collective bargaining. Originally, this conference was designed to be of smaller size, but during the preparations an enormous interest in the matter emerged and the number of enrolments grew constantly. This clearly demonstrates the relevance and urgency of the topic.

The term "Gender Mainstreaming" is still unfamiliar to the majority of people. What exactly is Gender Mainstreaming? - In technical terms: The gender-specific roles individuals take on in society are the results of structural directives and cultural norms, which determine the personal development. This role theory implies, that gender-specific behaviour of women and men is not so much the result of genetic predisposition, but rather that of social conditions. This understanding of gender-specific roles also forms the basis for the pro-

jects of the international development cooperation of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The strategy of Gender Mainstreaming has been introduced to Germany through the policy of the European Union. Yet, the roots of Gender Mainstreaming are in the worldwide women's rights movement and their experiences with the proposing of claims to governments. Since the mid of the 90's, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung takes the gender concept into account. A whole new chapter of the foundation's country profiles has been devoted to this task, in order to keep a record and evaluate the process properly.

Regarding women politics as a central cross-section task is not altogether new within the Federal Republic of Germany. However, the realisation of this idea among the organisation of political decision-making processes is far from being satisfactory. Generally, there used to be a particular department - a women's ministry or equal rights office - in charge of women politics, which would work out its claims and concepts. This unit would then present its plans to the other political fac-

tions, demanding its own objectives to be achieved. This concept did not work well at all. One of the most essential factors for the success of this kind of women's influence on politics was the authority of the individual women on the posts.

It is a proven fact, that an adequate representation of women in powerful and decision-making positions influences processes. This year five women in the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung were able to benefit from this policy and reached senior management level.

Therefore, the central characteristic of the Mainstreaming strategy is the development of influence on decision-making processes. Only if the decision-making processes are changed to the effect that gender relations are taken into account as a rule, a solid base is laid for equal chances between women and men. Obviously, this can only work on a limited scale. The Gender Mainstreaming principle can change the processes of decision-making within an organisation, but it cannot change the decisions made within an entire society.

As a result, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung concentrates its work in political education and projects on two fields:

- the increase of posts for women in key positions, where politically important opinions and decisions are formed

- the strengthening of women's social rights, in particular the improvement of women's social security and working conditions.

Although the political debate about the advantages of women quotation has cooled down significantly in Germany, it should be looked at in detail, if and how the discussion about instruments to increase women's representation can be promoted. Of particular interest is the question of supporting the introduction of a quota for women in all federal states of Germany. This issue is worth comparing with the situation on the national German level. During the last federal parliamentary elections the 30 % women parliamentarian's quota could be topped for the first time ever.

If the Gender Mainstreaming concept is taken seriously, it can indeed be an innovation to decision-making processes and thereby lead to chan-

ges in the conducts of the involved organisation. Governments and NGOs alike are asked to develop some fantasy on this issue. The risk chain of marriage, children and women's poverty has to be tackled.

Now how can collective bargaining benefit from the principles of Gender Mainstreaming? First of all, let me point out that the parties involved in the wage agreements ought to remodel their own structures according to the Gender Mainstreaming concept. Apart from that, collective bargaining is an exceptionally suitable area for applying the Gender Mainstreaming concept. A strong influence on decision-making processes in collective bargaining brings along a massive impact on the lives and working conditions of many people. Including claims for equality between women and men collective bargaining has and will be an important tool of women politics.

Ever since the beginnings of the women's rights movement, women have fought for justice and equality in employment politics. They have achieved a lot, especially on the trade union level. There are some excellent examples for fair, gender orientated wage agreements. The compatibility of family and job has been improved significantly by various parental leave models, which go far beyond the laws we know in Germany. The reduction of wage differences between women and men is being tackled with the help of new evaluation methods or even - for example in Finland - with special employer's funds for unequal pay. Also, there are some good initiatives on the field of promotion and education, working towards an evenly balanced proportion between women and men.

Notwithstanding all those efforts and successes, differences between the forms and chances of employment for women and men are yet enormous. Worldwide women are still doing the larger part of the workload and are everywhere on the world still earning less than their male colleagues.

To provide women with true equality in the working world is the goal of the Gender Mainstreaming principle.

I hope you will have fruitful discussions. Thank you for your attention.



## Heinz Putzhammer

### DGB, German Trade Union Federation

Dear colleagues, first of all I would like to welcome you on behalf of the German Trade Union Federation and I wish this conference as much success as possible, because the elimination of gender discrimination in our society is indeed one of the main aspects of the public debate. Surely the efforts against women's discrimination are particularly urgent at the workplace.

There is no doubt about the significant role the social partners have in this. But I think that they have not yet done as much as they could have to tackle gender discrimination. Thus a conference like this is absolutely necessary, because much has to be done to implement the concept of Gender Mainstreaming in collective bargaining policies. Especially because the concept of Gender Mainstreaming is not about putting on paper some points about women's direct or indirect discrimination and then plead with the collective bargaining commission to eliminate them. This is not the way it can possibly work! The concept is sensible, exactly because it is not merely about collecting claims, but about starting with a very broad analysis of the discrimination: Why does discrimination exist, why is it not already eradicated? Next, a discussion with all participants can lead to a drafting of plans against discrimination. Finally, strategies and tactics for wage negotiations should emerge from this process.

This all goes to show, that Gender Mainstreaming reaches far beyond the former concept of compiling lists about where women are discriminated in their day-to-day life and at the workplace. Gender Mainstreaming is a practical concept with a promising chance of success, because the analysis, the planning and the implementation are well connected.

What areas are involved? Some have already been mentioned. As far as discrimination of women at the workplace is concerned, the salary remains one of the most important aspects. Even now

women earn less than men in most parts of the world and even in industrialised countries, even in Europe, even in Germany. The struggle against direct discrimination in a legal sense, that is to say the blunt differences in pay between the sexes, written down in wage agreements, is luckily a chapter of the past, at least for the developed countries. I have to emphasise that this is only true for the industrialised countries. In developing countries being paid less than men still openly and recklessly discriminates against women. In particular fast-developing nations exploit their female workers in order to gain a competitive advantage on the international markets. The annual reports of ILO, OECD and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions state very clearly, that in most parts of the world wage dumping is still widely practiced and direct discrimination against women through low pay is not abolished at all.

However, what is just as important is the indirect, unobtrusive discrimination. In the trade unions we were all very happy, when this differentiation was included in the laws of the European Union. The European Court of Justice has decided that not only the direct discrimination against women in wage agreements, i.e. unequal pay, but also any other kind of discrimination in all other regulations which are contained in wage agreements, does not correspond with the laws of the European Union and the Human Rights. Obviously, indirect discrimination is even more persistent than direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination simply means - as far as income is concerned - that although the wage agreements read that men and women earn the same, miraculously women pop up in the lowest wage groups, are scarcely found in the highest wage groups, have less chances for promotion and on the whole have less safe, well-paid jobs than men.

Clearly there are various mechanisms helping to initiate and implement such indirect discrimina-

tion. It all sets off with qualification. This is especially applicable for developing countries. Women's chances on the job market decrease to the same extent as their opportunities for education decline. Moreover, women are paid less, because their qualifications are lower, which is not their own but society's responsibility.

Nevertheless, we have to watch out not to reduce the question of qualification to the detectable, traditional qualifications. Especially in collective bargaining it is necessary to carefully evaluate all aspects of work, including specific characteristics suitable for women's work and to consider them in the wages. I think it is quite interesting, that foreign companies make use of a, far larger variety of qualifications for the selection of their employees than German companies do. - I mention this, because in Germany we presently have a learning process ahead of us. - In doing so, they raise the number of female workers, especially in well-paid and high ranking jobs. And in Germany we wonder why in many of the foreign managements that settled down in Germany in the course of globalisation, high anti-discrimination standards for women are in place and work well without being questioned. In Germany we can only dream of such standards. Business philosophies are often more advanced abroad than they are in Germany.

Women's discrimination is not only about the actual income, but what comes along with the income as well. As an example I would like to bring up the pension. This is also an example for the fortunate effects the decisions of the European Court of Justice have had so far. The judges declared that the exclusion of part-time workers of certain kinds of retirement allowances is illegal, because of an indirect discrimination against women, who make up the majority of part-time workers.

However, there is a large number of aspects left, which have to be dealt with in order to diminish discrimination. I mentioned earlier that one priority has to be the employment of women. And this is something where we are way behind what is called for. Not only in Europe but also in large parts of the world the majority of women is still repelled from the job market. I would like to choose a German example for this as well. In Germany, the number of working women had increased in some areas after reunification but in the meantime is decreasing again. Especially in the eastern part of Germany, the number of employed women is declining dramatically. Maybe this is not always due to specific policies of the companies, but it is quite obvious, how on the one side childcare facilities are reduced and on the other side women

have to return to house and home, because there is nobody else to look after the children. Social policies that lead to a decline of childcare standards consequently have a negative effect on the employment of women.

Apart from that, men could of course perfectly well look after their children but as a matter of fact - and the experiences we had to make in Germany verified this - women are made redundant and not men, if there are not enough childcare facilities available. In that way, workplaces of women are cut back on and the employment of women decreases in general. That means those women who want to work and are qualified for it do not get a job at all.

Another crucial aspect is the qualification, not only the initial education but also the constant continuation of education, in particular if women, who raised children, come back to their jobs. At that moment it is absolutely necessary to carry out active measures, which provide women with a renewal or improvement of the required qualifications.

In Germany we take care of the question of qualification in the "Alliance for labour" ("Bündnis für Arbeit", tripartite employment agreement). A working group investigated the training programmes of companies and found out that companies do not hesitate to spend time and money on the training of employees they consider worthy, e.g. for the qualifications required for new information technologies. But that at the same time those groups, which are disadvantaged anyway, because of low qualifications, do not benefit from internal training. Again this is especially true for women, who do not only form less than half but only a very small part of the participants of inside training courses. Therefore, it is extremely significant indeed that we pushed for an agreement in the "Alliance for labour", which will support the training of previously discriminated employees with the help of legal support from the government and in cooperation with the employers. This will be part of future wage agreements, too.

A further aspect of how wage agreements can help eliminate discrimination against women and simultaneously give women equal chances is the

question of working hours. When we tried to promote a 35-hours-week in Germany, that is a general reduction of working hours, we always argued for a better reconciliation of work and family life. Clearly, it is easier to combine work and family duties along with a smaller amount of regular weekly working hours, for both men and women.

Up till now the majority of part-time workers is made up by women. There is a controversial debate going on among trade unionists, whether part-time work is an adequate tool at all to improve women's chances to get and to keep a job. Surely, women want to have a full-time job in the first place and do not want to be forced into part-time work. However, it is widely accepted that under the given circumstance women have no other choice but to work part-time. If that is the case, part-time work has to be made acceptable for women. There are a number of factors that can be considered in wage agreements. For example, if part-time work has to be the rule for women who want to stick to their job during the time of child upbringing, they need to have the legal right to come back to a full-time position, once they want to do so.

I do not want to restrict myself to the ideas we deal with in the developed countries or in Germany or in the European Union, since there are a lot more and far more complicated problems in the developing countries. In the reports of the ILO and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions for example, it is repeatedly described that women are forced by employers to have a pregnancy test before and during their employment. Employers want to make sure that they can explore female workforce without interruption and without being troubled with costly allowances. And I could name far more examples to demonstrate that there is still lots left to do in order to stop women's discrimination at the workplace.

I do not want to continue the list of examples. It will be the task of this conference to carry on from here. And there is a very detailed study of a European research institute, which I think has been made available to all the participants, in which a large amount of already existing agreements and regulations of European countries are presented,

tackling the problems of women's discrimination at the workplace. Fortunately, the authors of the study point out as well, that all those good regulations are not necessarily successfully implemented simply because they are written down in a wage agreement.

And this is where I come back to the question of Gender Mainstreaming. It is indeed not enough to make a list of women's discrimination and prepare claims about the abolition of discrimination. But it is necessary to draw up a comprehensive action plan together with the trade unions, to tackle the different fields within collective bargaining. Firstly, the collective bargaining teams, both trade union's and employer's side, have to be joined by more women. It can no longer be acceptable, that women in the women committees discuss Gender Mainstreaming while at the same time collective bargaining teams are composed only of men who mind their own business. It is absolutely crucial that the collective bargaining commissions are composed in a way that gender equality can be reached through wage agreements.

This implies as well, that the concept of Gender Mainstreaming has to be acknowledged, discussed and accepted within the trade unions. The fact that a gender coordinator is part of collective bargaining commission does not guarantee that all members of the commission know what Gender Mainstreaming is all about. Therefore we need to make Gender Mainstreaming widely known with the help of training, debates and discussions between man and women so that it will be accepted as the main concept for collective bargaining. Additionally we need to find ways to ensure that the collective bargaining commissions do not merely add Gender Mainstreaming to the list of their claims but let Gender Mainstreaming actually become the central task in everything they are demanding. Otherwise, we might find those claims unaccepted by the employers at the end of the negotiations.

There are always packages like these: we demand points 1 to 10 and points 1, 2 and 3 concern wages and points 8, 9 and 10 concern apprentices and

women. And at the end of the negotiations it is announced that we pushed those points through but unfortunately the employer's side was unwilling to accept points 8, 9 and 10. I think it is necessary to develop action plans, about how the different claims are valued in connection with each other and how they can be imbedded in a comprehensive strategy.

I do not believe that wage agreements are a panacea against women's discrimination. Wage agreements can only embark upon one part of women's discrimination. The safeguarding of legal regulations will always be required. And it is particularly required at a time when in most countries and as well in Germany, the influence of wage agreements and the number of employees protected by wage agreements is constantly declining. There are many workers who do not benefit from wage agreements and do not receive union wages, without much for the unions to do about it. Just because of that, minimum standards do have to be ruled by law as well.

And therefore I would like to stress as a final point that the German Trade Union Federation regards it as absolutely urgent that the federal government eventually enacts an equality law for the private sector, as they promised in the coalition treaty. The DGB General Committee passed a resolution in which the federal government is requested to take action. An equality law for the private sector cannot be about specific and completely undetermined rules, but to force companies to take steps. And this is where the social partners come into it again. The unions or the works committees can negotiate with the employers if they have a legal obligation. If this prerequisite is given, the social partners can take steps and introduce regulations on company or industry level. For that reason wage agreements are no cure-all. They have to be supplemented and backed by laws. But wage agreements have the advantage of being very company or industry-related, for which reason they are very flexible and hence suitable to implement Gender Mainstreaming and put an end to women's discrimination at the workplace. Thank you very much.

# The Panel Discussions of the Conference

## SESSION 1:

### Gender in Trade Union Work - Review and Concepts

#### Panel Participants

Presentation:

*Astrid Ritter-Weil*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

*Babro Budin*, IUF, International Union of Food etc. Workers

*Monika Kemperle*, GMT, Austrian Trade Union of Metal and Textile Workers

*Jette Lykke*, LO, Danish Confederation of Trade Unions

*Nobantu Mayikeso*, COSATU, Trade Union Confederation of South Africa

Opening by *Astrid Ritter-Weil*

The first panel discussion was supposed to serve as stocktaking of the different stages of Gender Mainstreaming in the trade unions. What different kinds of women and equality policies exist in the trade unions and what role does Gender Mainstreaming play in trade union work? Various concepts will be presented and the term Gender Mainstreaming is going to be explained.

#### Jette Lykke

Although Denmark used to take the lead in equality policies at some stage, the situation nowadays is far from being regarded as agreeable at all. This is especially true for the trade unions, which therefore started new initiatives for equal chances of women and men only recently. At its last congress in 1999 the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions LO resolved to launch the concept of Gender Mainstreaming on all levels and to develop adequate instruments for its implementation.

The balanced distribution of posts between women and men was recognised as one of the chief tasks to be challenged. In order to get a detailed overview of the state of affairs in the affiliated trade unions, a survey was conducted. The representation survey did not confine itself to merely counting heads, but took age, careers and seniority of the post holders into account as well.

The result of the study brought to light that the higher up the career ladder a post would be, the more likely a man would hold it. The prospects for a career in trade unions were far worse for women than they were for men. The reasons for this are mainly the extra duties of women having a job and a family at the same time and the fact that women start their commitment to trade union work later than men. Also, women do not take on a full-time occupation in their trade unions as often as men do. As a consequence from these survey results, the LO established an educational programme for 25 young women, who are receiving a training in trade union work, which will enable them to start a career in a union.

This most recent example illustrates at the same time the main focus of the Danish Trade Union Confederation's gender policy: The improvement of women's education and the training of senior management for gender aspects.

#### Nobantu Mayikeso

The Confederation of South African Trade Unions changed the name of their "women structures" into "gender structures" without gaining more influence or advantages from it. The highest le-

vel of these structures is the National Gender Committee, which assembles twice a year. The National Gender Committee discusses the gender policy, the programmes and the budgets. The committee is composed of staff coordinating gender from affiliates and regional COSATU administrators, who act as part-time gender coordinators.

A second committee deals with administrative work and is put together of eight persons out of the affiliated trade unions. This commission reports to the National Gender Committee, which itself gives its account to the Central Executive Committee of COSATU.

Despite these gender structures the South African trade unions face considerable obstacles in gender equality. Women are underrepresented in trade unions. In the working world they are confronted with discrimination, higher unemployment, low payment and poor career opportunities. Parental rights, childcare facilities and maternity leaves and benefits lack proper regulations. Traditionally women take not part in collective bargaining processes. Furthermore, sexual harassment at the workplace is an important topic for South African trade unions. However, the already existing, valuable sexual harassment guidelines lack implementation. Same as Denmark, the focus is on education in gender aspects, awareness raising and an increase of women in decision-making positions. The fact that the collective bargaining process has set structures in South Africa (Tripartite system NEDLAC) is estimated as a potential advantage for implementing the Gender Mainstreaming concept.

#### **Monika Kemperle**

Gender equality has been reported to be a fairly young area of the Austrian history. Only in 1976 a new family law was ratified, providing women and men with the same civil rights, which e.g. allowed women for the first time to work without their husband's permission. In 1979 an Equal Treatment Law was passed, protecting women against discrimination at the workplace, which

surprisingly did not apply to civil servants for a long time.

In 1991 the Austrian Trade Union Federation resolved a decree, which demanded the equal treatment of women, youth and senior citizens among their trade union members. Yet, the implementation of this statute is lingering: no more than a few trade unions decided to apply a 40 quotation for women in all positions. In some cases, this quota regulation does even include the constraint of not allowing men to take over vacant posts among those 40 %. This directive meets the frequent line of reasoning of men, who argue that women were not qualified for 40 of posts on all levels.

Apart from that, all trade unions' official documents have to specify a female and male grammatical form, which makes a substantial difference in the German language, but is not at all needless to say. Another essential tool for raising the number of women in trade union commissions is the duty to report to the Federation's women desk about the distribution of women and men on all levels. The example of the Trade Union of Metal and Textile Workers shows the efficiency of this device: in the last four years the involvement of women in commissions raised to 32 % with an overall share of 15 %.

The Ministry of Social Affairs conducted a survey in 130 businesses about the structure of Austrian women's work. According to the study, women still work in low paid and less qualified jobs, stick to traditionally female professions and are considered to be suitable for inferior jobs by their employers. Consequently, guidelines have been brought about for non-discriminating job description, which are supposed to help bringing an end to this injustice.

#### **Barbro Budin**

At least 40 % of the 10 million members of the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) are women. The adequate representation of such a comparably large proportion of women in the commissions of the union has been a very tiresome and not yet completely won battle. There

is a Women's Committee in the IUF too, which assembles parallel to Executive Committee and Union Congress. On the one hand, the Women's Committee has been very successful in having all their petitions accepted by the higher committees. On the other hand, did the approval of its requests not necessarily lead to their implementation.

From the very beginning men were allowed to take part at the Women's Committee meetings as observers. After merely disturbing the meetings at first, men meanwhile developed a true interest which let arise a fruitful cooperation both parties can benefit from. The committee's central tasks are matters of family rights and equality. One of the main instruments at hand is a gender checklist, which is based on surveys and studies carried out by the IUF about women's work.

Similar to what has been said before, the IUF regards education and gender training as essential and successful instruments, which are generally more suitable than mere quotas. Nevertheless, the IUF set itself the goal of a 40 quotation for women, despite some bad experiences from affiliated unions.

### ***Summary and discussion***

The panel contributions demonstrated that "Gender" is on the agenda, but failed to entirely replace former women structures. Claims for equal pay, family friendly workplaces and adequate representation of women in the trade union organisations remained unchanged. The universal outcome of the recent debates, namely the belief that education and qualification is more successful than sheer quotas, might be taken as a first sign of a mainstreaming process.

The discussion unveiled the common view among the conference participants that women structures are still absolutely necessary for the discussion on gender-specific problems and the development of resolutions. As long as women are discriminated against, women are in charge for articulating this discrimination. The necessity for women quotation in trade unions was pointed out many times, in order to make room for women's concerns in a male dominated environment.

## Jette Lykke

### Danish Confederation of Trade Unions

#### **Introduction**

First, let me start out by thanking you for the invitation - and for this initiative where we can sum up our experience - and inspire each other for the continued work with mainstreaming. The relatively heavy work with mainstreaming.

In Denmark we generally think that we come from the best of all worlds as far as equality is concerned. That was in fact the case once - indeed there was a time when we even took the lead in global terms. However, that is definitely not so anymore. We need to learn a lot from other countries, other trade union movements - both inside and outside the EU. That is why I am pleased to be here. I intend to speak in fairly concrete terms today and to tell you about specific initiatives rather than to give you the general picture.

At its last Congress in 1999 LO-Denmark, the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, decided to opt for mainstreaming as one of the strategies for gender equality. To be quite specific, our action plan says (and I quote): *"In conjunction with the trade unions and cartels LO will work for the incorporation of gender in all policy and other types of initiatives. The work with mainstreaming requires supplementary education and training of both political decision-makers at all levels, and of employees/union advisers. LO will initiate the development of tools and specific instructions for tackling this task."*

#### **The representation survey**

As we think that equal representation of men and women is one of the building blocks of a mainstreaming strategy, we did a survey last year of the gender representation in the LO unions - and at the top of LO. We knew of course in advance that this representation was anything but equal, so we tried to go a little bit further than just counting heads; we checked men's and women's trade union seniority, the posts they had held and the

policy areas handled by the two genders as well as their trade union career tracks. All this, to have a more balanced view of where and how we can focus to entice more women into doing trade union work - and maybe even more important - to go on doing it.

As it turned out, the gender mix in the local trade union branches was fairly equal, if the composition of members was compared with the political representation. The higher up in the trade union hierarchy, the lower the number of women.

On average women are 5 years older than men when they start being active in their trade union - and they practically never have young children. As a main rule women are doing on a spare time basis, whereas men are doing it on a full time basis. That is to say, primarily men get - and seek permanent employment in the trade union movement, whereas women do trade union work in their spare time; and that is probably one of the reasons why the ways of the two genders part at a certain time.

Generally, after the survey we must ask the question whether it is at all possible for women to represent men? For what we can conclude is that women represent women, men represent men, men often represent women, but women NEVER represent men.

#### **The Starlet programme**

LO's Executive Board decided last spring to focus our efforts in order to persuade more women, especially young women between 25-35, that it is possible to have a career in trade union politics - and to make a living out of it.

It was decided to launch the so-called Starlet Programme. This is a three year educational and training programme which is to give 25 women a kick-start in trade union politics. On the one hand the course will give them an introduction to social conditions and the structure of society, politics and



economics, international relations and globalisation, the history of the labour movement, etc., and on the other, the course is about personal development, clout and assertiveness, as well as communication.

Somewhat rhetorically we asked ourselves whether power can be fitted into a handbag - and whether a high heel is a walking strategy, a navigable strategy? High heels are strategically navigable? High heels may navigate this strategy?

Besides having more women activists the goal of the Starlet Programme is to give the women both a hierarchical network in the Danish trade union movement; once you have been through the Starlet Programme, you will have a number of centrally placed contacts, and also a network of fellow women activists they can draw on later on.

At the same time - and this is where the project is crucial for a mainstreaming process seen from a long-term perspective - we are training equal rights ambassadors; we make no bones about that. On the whole it is in connection with the Trade Union Movement's Training System that we have achieved most; it began back in 1995 when we published the first Guide to development of trade union courses. The target group was the 600 teachers, and this guide was to help them become aware of gender issues in the development of their course programmes.

The guide went into such questions as: Is there a difference in the distribution of representative posts, power and finances in the area? Why is that - and how do I take account of that in my teaching? The guide has become an annual publication, which is revised in the light of the experience gained and distributed to all teachers that give courses for shop stewards and other trade union activists. In addition there are a number of minor-scale mainstreaming projects, courses and seminars in mainstreaming.

In 1999 it was decided to spread mainstreaming activities more while at the same time working on a more targeted basis. The definition recommended by the Council of Europe was accepted by our organisation (and I quote):

*'Mainstreaming is the reorganisation, the improvement, the development, the implementation and the evaluation of political processes such that the gender equality perspective is integrated in all policies at all levels and at all stages by the parties normally involved in the decision-making process.'*

On the basis of the definition's statement that this process should take place at all levels by all parties involved a Guide for the mainstreaming of the culture at the trade union training centres was prepared. The idea was that cooks, librarians, receptionists etc. were to question critically the way their own day-to-day decisions affected men and women respectively - whether the consequences would differ for the two sexes.

In the spring of 2000 there was mainstreaming of specific trade union courses by means of observations and descriptions made by researchers with theoretical insight into the importance of gender. These observational studies are evaluated immediately afterwards with the individual teachers. Not surprisingly, the observations have shown that gender equality is not integrated in the teaching as a matter of course.

### *The future*

Not very long ago we adopted - also in connection with the trade union movement's training system - a more systematic and targeted plan for the shift from equal rights activities to a mainstreaming strategy.

The plan will run for three years and will involve:

- the launching of a mainstreaming project where 7 chosen shop stewards on the basis of a test guide will test minor mainstreaming projects at the workplaces. The project will be evaluated over the next two years.

- .. a gender evaluation of political decisions on the basis of a check list

- the initiation of the work with gender equality accounts in the education and training system

- the initiation of training in mainstreaming for teachers; the first group has in fact already started.

The gender equality accounts that the different parts of the trade union training system are to prepare will as a minimum consist of four figures:

the gender distribution of the course developers  
of the teachers

of the course participants

and finally a statement of the financial resources applied in mainstreaming the course developments.

### ***Conclusion***

I shall stop here before things become too technical, but I hope I have given you an idea of the way we are tackling the issue in the Danish trade union movement although we have of course only covered a small distance in the long mainstreaming process.

## Barbro Budin

### IUF, International Union of Food etc Workers

#### *IUF and its membership*

The IUF is an international federation merging unions of the whole food chain: agriculture and plantation workers, food processing workers, hotel and restaurant workers. The organization, which was founded in 1920, represents today approximately 10 million workers in 118 countries. Most estimated - many unions, including some European, are still lacking gender-segregated data - 40 % of the membership is women. In spite of the relatively high proportion of women members, it has been a long and sometimes difficult process to integrate women into the organization.

#### ***Women's representation within the organization***

At the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1977, the general secretary deplored that the IUF had celebrated the International Women's Year (1975) in a peculiar way by losing its only women member of the Executive Committee, and he continued: "There are few issues which gives rise to such displays of hypo-

crisy in trade unions as the question of working women. Many progressive declarations are made but few are ever carried out."

However, it turned out that one of the resolutions adopted at the 1977 Congress was the beginning of a process that in 1989 led to the introduction of special seats for women in the IUF governing bodies. This measure tripled women's representation from 6,6 % to 20 % in the Executive Committee.

But it did not happen without problems. Some European unions, and surprisingly those who a couple of years earlier had been in the forefront of the development of equality policies within the IUF, regarded the reserved seats as an intrusion in the internal democracy of their unions, as a discriminatory act towards women (since women and men were equals) and as a threat against the unity within the trade union movement.

It should be noted that while regional women's committees were established already as from 1985 in the Asia/Pacific, Africa and Latin Ameri-

ca and special women's seats were introduced in the regional committees, it took another decade to secure women's representation in our European regional organization.

The proportion of women representatives in the EC has only slightly increased over a ten-year period to 22 % and few women have been elected on non-reserved seats. Therefore, the last IUF Congress in 1997 set up new targets to break the threshold: since women make up 40% of the membership, this should be reflected at all levels of the organization. Furthermore there should be a fair representation of men and women in all IUF activities, including sectoral meetings, company meetings, trade union development projects etc, to ensure that gender aspects are taken into account. The objective of fair representation shall be reached by 2007.

### ***The impact of more women***

The quantitative increase of women within the organization has given results:

Women workers' issues are no longer at the bottom of the agenda.

Women's Committees on regional and international levels always meet prior to statutory meeting in order to discuss issues of special concern to women workers and to make sure that these are dealt with by the governing bodies.

- Among issues raised by the Women's Committees are organizing of women in precarious employment, lobbying and promotion of ILO Conventions, health and safety conditions, including reproductive health and repetitive strain injuries, gender check lists to be introduced in project planning.

Also on the initiative of the IUF Women's Committee, a comprehensive survey based on the ILO/ICFTU survey "The role of trade unions in promoting gender equality and protecting vulnerable women workers" was launched in the beginning of this year among the affiliates. The rate of responses is four times higher compared to a similar attempt made in 1989, which is an encouraging indication. The result of the survey will help to define more adequate policies and activities to

improve the situation of the women workers and their adherence to and participation in the trade unions.

### ***From resolutions to implementation***

Some of the IUF framework agreements with transnational companies also include clauses on equality. These help to open up space for negotiation on local and national levels, but unless the women members are informed about the possibilities that these agreements offer and are actively involved in the negotiating process, these agreements tend to be left in a drawer.

Equality agreements are not a priority for many unions who unfortunately do not realize what a useful organizing tool they can be. Therefore it is not sufficient to pass resolutions on international level if there are no mechanisms for follow up and assisting women at local levels to implement the decisions.

Trade union development projects is an effective vehicle for implementing policy decisions and it is also within the project work that it so far has been easiest to measure results. Just one example to illustrate that:

In the mid 80's a major project called "Workers' Education for integrating women members in rural workers' organizations" was initiated in four African countries by the former international union for agricultural and plantations workers, IFPAAW, and the ILO, following the impossibility of the African agricultural unions to identify women participants to an ILO tripartite meeting on agriculture. This should be seen against the fact that women make up at least 80% of the agricultural workforce in Africa.

In 1997, the IUF and the ILO made an evaluation of the second and final three-year-phase of the project, and among the main achievements can be mentioned:

Women membership had increased in all the unions involved and so had the number of women trade union office bearers.

Women's committees had been established at all levels of the unions and their input on mainstream union activities was secured through the

participation of their chairpersons as members of the decision making bodies of the unions.

† Constitutions had been amended in all four countries to secure a better women's representation in union structures.

Collective agreements increasingly reflect gender issues. Paternity leave has been introduced in CBAs in Ghana and Uganda and is under discussion in other countries. Child care facilities, reproductive health and sexual harassment policies have been added to the bargaining agenda and the unions were able to safeguard and even improve clauses on maternity rights in spite of weakened labour legislation.

The women coordinators and grass root activists trained in the project have been used in mainstream union activities, such as recruitment, organizing and grievance handling and in general trade union education courses.

The women had been very successful as organisers: in Ghana, for example, they recruited 21,217 new members (both female and male).

The project had a positive impact on other unions in the respective countries, and the women coordinators have often served as resource persons in training activities of the confederations.

A prerequisite for the outcome has been the involvement and commitment of the male leadership to the objectives of the project.

Three years later, the positive effects continue: the sisters who have participated in the training have become very vocal and participate actively without trembling in public debates. One of them is now the IUF regional education coordinator and another the first women president ever of the IUF agricultural trade group. And in the ILO tripartite meetings, there is no lack any more of competent and outspoken women representatives from Africa.

# The Panel Discussions of the Conference

## SESSION 2:

### Gender Mainstreaming in Collective Bargaining

#### Panel Participants

Presentaion:

*Barbara Stiegler*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

*Deise Aparecida Recoaro*, CUT, Trade Union Confederation Brazil

*Rita Morena Preciado*, CC.00.,  
Trade Union Centre Spain

*Shyma Abdul Latiff*, AUPE, Public Service Union, Singapore

*Petra Ganser*, ÖTV, Public Service Union, Germany

Opening by *Barbara Stiegler*

The panel participants were asked to consider three aspects in their statements. Is Gender Mainstreaming an objective in the policy of their trade unions? What are the main subjects of the collective bargaining politics at the moment? Have the wage agreements been searched for discriminating features?

#### Deise Aparecida Recoaro

In Brazil the concept of Gender Mainstreaming has grown to a human rights issue and is already a central part of Brazilian collective bargaining politics. Since 1992 trade unions have established a quotation rule, allowing no more than 70 % and no less than 30 % of either sex in the commissions. Since 1995 an equal chance campaign is in process. Parts of it are a brochure and posters, which help to raise awareness among the trade union members for women's discrimination and provide inspiration for discussions. Pictures show a black women being on an equal level with a white man, emphasising the extent of disproportion in Brazilian society.

Uniting three trade unions, CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores do Brasil) is the largest Trade Union Federation of Brazil. Subsequent to a CUT gender campaign a list of minimum demands for collective bargaining and a catalogue of answers to gender related questions have been produced. The current collective bargaining debates include maternal leave, breast-feeding hours and duration of nursing leaves. Presently, there is a hot discussion going on about parental leave for men, which is not yet an option in Brazil. However, the neo-liberal politics and bureaucracy of Brazil are obstacles to the trade union's efforts. Finally Recoaro stressed, that women have to speak up for themselves, because they are the ones facing discrimination and for that reason have to respond to it.

#### Rita Morena Preciado

In the previous years, the proportion of women in the CC.00. raised to 32 %, nonetheless women are still underrepresented in leading positions. There is no general quota, but a proportional distribution of posts among women and men according to the union members of each trade. It is extremely difficult to settle wage agreements in Spain, because centralised collective bargaining negotiations do not exist. Since many years, Gender Mainstreaming is on the agenda, but up to now the employers' attitude ruled out almost any achievements. Women are rarely part of the negotiations, even in trades with a large share of female workers.

Major objectives of collective bargaining negotiations currently are: Fighting the high unemployment, balancing out the wage and working hours between men and women (women earn approx. 23 % less than men), reducing unpro-

tected employment, as well as protective measures like legal protection of expectant and nursing mothers, protection at the workplace and in connection with sexual harassment. So far the negotiations have not been particularly successful, because of a lack of appreciation by the employers, a huge pressure of competition and better strategic goals.

Various tools for the implementation of these objectives are in force: studies about working conditions and wage differences, evaluation of recent wage agreements and brochures informing about the topic, e.g. "Progress at collective bargaining in Spain". Still men - but also women - have to be made aware of occurrences and reasons for discrimination. Preparations are being made for regulations on Gender Mainstreaming among the trade union federations and maybe even with the employers' federation.

**Shyma Abdul Latiff**

In Singapore Gender Mainstreaming has been part of the negotiations for long and Singaporean law is generally gender neutral. The only exception is the legal protection of parents of young children, which does only apply for women.

Currently various issues are discussed in wage negotiations: conditions of paid and unpaid leave during maternity and illness (also for sick children), wedding leaves for women, part-time work reduction while caring for elderly, paternity holiday during birth and unpaid time off for up to four years after the birth. A "Back to Work"-programme aims at assisting women to re-enter the workforce after they had children. Since 1977 Singapore established subsidised child-care facilities. Education and trainings help to improve employees' qualifications and special empowerment-programmes target unemployment amongst women. Singapore's economic situation imposes the obligation to live up to foreign investor's demands for the workplace.

**Petra Ganser**

Since 1996 a "Campaign to increase the value of women's work" is in operation to help achieve equal pay for equal work. The rather male dominated collective bargaining unit of the ÖTV cooperates with the women's department, which is supposed to act as a corrective device. In 1997 a survey was carried out about potential discriminations in wage agreements. The statuto-

ry salary scale BAT (Bundesangestelltentarif), which is a comprehensive wage agreement, served as an example. The decisions of the European Court of Justice provided the criteria for the investigation. In 1998 Gender Mainstreaming became a principal objective of the ÖTV. At this point the "Campaign to increase the value of woman's work" received support by an experts commission.

Moreover, a workshop with the public employers and "Gender-Training" for full-time and voluntary ÖTV staff, aimed at raising awareness for the issue. The project gained more publicity with the help of a "BAT-manual", poster, articles in the ÖTV's magazine, a newsletter and a presentation on the world fair EXPO 2000. Forthcoming activities include a checklist for collective bargaining, a coaching concept for members of collective bargaining groups, a scheme for educational efforts and discussion tactics for Gender Mainstreaming.

### *Summary and discussion*

The inequitable evaluation of women's and men's work turned out to be a universal problem in all countries. A further aspect of the discussion dealt with the significance of qualification and education measures as well as their dangers. Even now women were supposed to be twice as good and better educated as their male counterparts. In addition, the conference participants discussed the dealing with maternal leaves, returning of women into the working world after having children and different approaches to sexual harassment. The question of fixed quotations for women versus proportional quotas referring to the union members gave rise to a diverse debate.

To sum it up, discrimination against women is not legitimised by law, but is still widespread. There was no unanimous view about the question whether men's attitudes would be worth elaborating on or whether women should rather stand in for themselves in the first place. Yet, Gender Mainstreaming should not be mistaken as another word for supportive measures for women.



## Petra Ganser

### ÖTV, Public Service Union, Germany

#### **Structural establishment**

Compared to other German trade unions, the percentage of 46 % women in the ÖTV is rather high, for which reason gender equality has been an intensively treated subject within the union for more than 15 years. One of the central elements in these efforts to attain gender equality is the campaign to increase the value of women's work, launched in 1996 on the 13th Union Congress. The campaign's objective is to achieve equal pay for equal valued work and in doing so increase the value of women's work. Simultaneously, the non-discriminatory evaluation of work in the public service and adequately shaped wage agreements became key objectives of the general union policy. Until then, the increase of the value of women's work used to be a women's topic, dealt with in the women's structures of the union. With the help of the campaign it developed into a topic of collective bargaining.

Since 1994 the ÖTV's collective bargaining programme includes - among other - demands for comprehensive wage agreements, because the differentiation between white and blue-collar workers is outdated. Furthermore, claims for a work evaluation system, which guarantees minimal living wages and allows a more justice differentiation, including the increase of the value of women's work and a non-discriminatory structure.

In 1998 the General Committee decided to systematically include gender specific situations and interests in the collective bargaining policies of the ÖTV. In doing so, the ÖTV took a great leap forward in establishing the Gender Mainstreaming strategy as a general policy and emphasised its intention by appointing the first Gender Mainstreaming Coordinator for collective bargaining. Finally, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Union Congress in the year 2000, it was decided to elevate Gender Mainstreaming to a key objective of the entire organisation.

Since the start of the negotiations in 1999, the ÖTV's large collective bargaining commission has begun to systematically and continuously take account of the definition and consideration of men's and women's interests. The commission agreed on including Gender Mainstreaming in all discussions on concepts, claims and implementations.

#### **Steps for implementation**

In connection with the campaign to increase the value of women's work, a survey was carried out in 1997 to find out about the potentially discriminatory factors of the statutory salary scale BAT (Bundesangestelltentarif), which is a comprehensive wage agreement. The study examined the wage agreement along the lines of the decisions of the European Court of Justice and made use of the same criteria. According to the European Court of Justice, job evaluation systems have to contain objective criteria that can be applied to both men and women, have to be transparent and on the whole structured in a way that gender discrimination is prevented. The study unveiled subtle discriminative aspects of the BAT. Even though wages are equally high for women and men doing the same work, e.g. the salaries of male and female nursery school teachers, other features of discrimination exist. Examples for discrimination are: the differentiation between blue and white-collar workers, separate parts of wage agreements for some predominantly male professions like e.g. technicians, unpaid tasks in typically female professions (e.g. social competence) and the underestimation of autonomous work in typically female jobs.

Subsequent to the results of the study, a commission to increase the value of women's work was appointed in November 1998. The commission consists of union and non-union experts and is supposed to assist and accompany the campaign. It is placed in the main collective bargaining se-

cretariat of the ÖTV Moreover, the results of the study and the recommended measures were presented to the public employers (December 1998) who are called to account in three ways as (1) the state, (2) the employer and (3) the social partner. Correspondingly, a workshop with the title "Non-discriminatory evaluation of work (in the service sector)" took place on the 8 Dec 1999 <sup>1</sup>, together with public employers of the federal, regional and local level.

One of the key recommendations of the survey is the running of a comparative project in a local community (in this case the city of Hanover). This project investigated empirically the question, whether implicit discrimination can be proved with the help of a direct comparison between jobs. The structural features of the BAT were analysed as well, like e.g. its gradual configuration and the selection of job characteristics. The project report will be available by spring 2001. In the Hanover project some of the compared pairs were for example:

Qualified Librarian / Qualified Engineer (both holding a diploma from a university for applied science)

- Kitchen Help / Refuse Collection Worker
- Old People's Nurse / Technician, Technical Specialist
- Chief Medical Technician / Master (Gardener)

The comparative project and its results will hopefully have a major effect on collective bargaining processes, and help achieve a reform of the wage systems in the public service and a generalisation of wage structures.

Furthermore, the debate about non-discriminatory wage agreements we have started with the public employers on federal, regional and local level will be continued. One of the results of the 2000 collective bargaining negotiations was to get a move on the reform of wage systems in the public service - taking gender aspects into account.

### **Events**

In order to successfully implement the Gender Mainstreaming strategy and to let it become a true mainstream task for the entire organisation, the ÖTV organised various events particularly focusing on men.

- Symposium to increase the value of women's work in June 1999 in Berlin (Conference report)
- Collective bargaining forum (on women politics) in February 2000 to establish Gender Mainstreaming in the entire ÖTV (Conference report)
- Specialists Meeting about "Increase the value of women's work". Cooperative project of ÖTV and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in June 2000 (Conference report is being prepared)

The Specialists Meeting was supposed to raise awareness inside the union and in the public for the discriminations women face at work. Moreover, the project aimed at combining the research results and expertise from gender studies with trade union politics. The experts were to work out suggestions for the development of collective bargaining strategies and trade union education policies.

Apart from that, a number of gender-trainings took place for full-time and voluntarily working union members, the secretaries in charge of collective bargaining and the General and Regional Committees. The gender-trainings were expected to clarify the significance of Gender Mainstreaming. The participants had to learn to deal with the new task and to let their prejudices against Gender Mainstreaming go off, like e.g. Gender Mainstreaming being merely another word for promotion of women.

### **Public Relations, Information material**

A number of publications, background information and other media materials have been created to help work inside and outside the trade union.

<sup>1</sup> C.f. National Action Plan of the Federal cabinet; among the objectives are: reduction of women's unemployment, increase number of women in leading positions, and 'abolish existing pay differences between men and women'.

- Guidebook about grouping und upgrading rights in the BAT (Barbara Degen)
- Poster for the International Women's Day
- Articles in union and non-union publications
- Hand-out, poster, ruler, post-it
- Newsletter to keep up-dated with the development of the campaign
- Presentation on the EXPO 2000 in Hanover about equality
- Presentation on the ÖTVCongress 2000 in Leipzig

### *Current activities*

At the moment we are working on a checklist for collective bargaining entitled "Creating non-discriminatory wage agreements" and we accompany the ongoing negotiations in order to minimise discrimination as early as possible. Additionally, we are developing an educational concept for collective bargaining team members and a general concept for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming by educational measures. Finally, we are putting together guidelines, like e.g. the brochure "Revaluation-campaign now!"

## Shyma Abdul Latiff

### AUPE, Public Service Union, Singapore

#### **Introduction**

Gender Mainstreaming in collective bargaining is important in achieving equality in representation for workers of both sexes. While the need for gender equality is more pertinent in some countries than others, nevertheless the consciousness of it is relevant to all. Being aware of gender equality and hence consciously mainstreaming benefits and terms and conditions of employment for gender equality is yet an important step to its implementation.

In Singapore, our situation is different from that of some of our comrades. Our concern now is that of providing training to our workers to upgrade their skills to remain relevant in the new economy. Globalisation has struck us and we have to react accordingly to retain and encourage investments into Singapore to ensure that there are jobs for our workers.

The need for training and upgrading of skills for the new types of jobs created by the technological change is far most important if we want our workers to have quality life. I will briefly give you an overview of women participation in the labour force, as it is the focus of the mainstreaming, our legislation that is of gender neutral and other programmes that we have put in place for women and also workers in general.

#### **Women's Participation in the Labour Force**

In Singapore, the favourable economic conditions and employment market have led to a significant improvement in the female labour force participation rate from 48% in 1989 to 53% in 1999. More women are now in the professional, managerial, administrative and technical positions. The proportion increased from 12 % in 1980 to 33.8 % in 1999. More women are also in the Finance and Business Services Sector. The proportion of women involved in this sector increased from

9.9% in 1980 to 18.4 % in 1999. In the case of the clerical, sales, service-related and production jobs nearly half were women in 1999 (49.7%).

#### **Singapore Labour Legislation**

Singapore's legislation does not contain any provision that discriminate workers by gender. The Singapore Government advocates an equal opportunity policy for both sexes in all sectors on the principle of meritocracy. This policy is incorporated in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes of the various Government Ministries. Women have equal access to education, training and employment opportunities as well as equal protection under the labour law.

The Women's Charter that came into force in 1961 protected women's right in marriage and property and was the foundation for other developments such as maternity benefits and non-discriminatory hiring policies of employers.

The labour laws of Singapore such as Employment Act, Industrial Relations Act and the Trade Union Act give equal rights to women and men in employment. There are provisions in the Employment Act for maternity leave (8 weeks) and the prohibition of the dismissal of women on grounds of pregnancy.

The Employment Act also provides avenues for aggrieved workers to seek redress. For example, Section 14 (2) of the Employment Act stipulates that an employee who considers himself/herself to be unfairly dismissed, which includes discrimination of any kind, has recourse to appeal to the Minister for Manpower to be reinstated in her employment. This is to be done in writing within a month. This right applies to both male and female employees.

In the case of unionised employees, they may seek recourse through their union under section 35 (2) of the Industrial Relations Act if they consider themselves to have been wrongfully dismissed.

Workmen's Compensation Act enables an employee to claim compensation in work-related accident regardless of the gender, race or nationality of the employees.

### ***Women's Participation in Trade Union***

As more women are joining the labour force, the union membership has also increased accordingly, making up almost half of the total union membership. Participation of women at NTUC Central Committee level and Union Executive level are low. Although unions do not practice quota system in its leadership positions, conscious effort has been put in to encourage women to take up leadership positions.

The NTUC has a Women's Committee comprising of representatives from affiliated unions to focus on increasing women's participation in trade unions and organises and conducts training programmes and seminars for women. The Chairperson of this committee also hold the positions of Assistant Secretary General in NTUC, Director of NTUC Legal Services Department, Director of the Singapore Institute of Labour Studies and also a titular member in the ILO.

### ***Provisions to Promote Women Participation in the Labour Force***

#### **Childcare Centres**

In 1977, the NTUC set up a Child Care secretariat to take over the running of childcare centres from the then Ministry of Social Affairs. The purpose is to ensure that childcare facilities and services are available to mothers who are in need of someone to look after their children while they are at work. It has since expanded into NTUC Child-care Co-operative Ltd in 1992 with 15 childcare centres. Today, there are a total of 28 centres island-wide with more than 3000 childcare places. Besides NTUC, there are many centres run by different agencies and voluntary groups bringing a total of almost 500 centres providing about 43,000 places. Financial incentives introduced by the Government for the provision of institutional childcare include a subsidy of \$150 per child per month for full-day care and \$75 per child per month for half-day care. These subsidies are

available to working mothers for each of their first three children under six years placed in approved childcare centres.

### ***Flexible Work Arrangements***

In 1984 the Employment Act was revised to allow employers to implement flexible work hours and introduced a graduated scale of annual leave related to employee's length of service.

To encourage flexible work arrangement, in 1992 the NTUC established a tripartite Steering Committee and a Working Committee to look into ways to encourage women to remain in or re-enter the workforce through the promotion of flexible work arrangements. A study of flexible work arrangements was launched to examine ways to retain female employees in the labour market and to determine whether economically inactive women would enter the labour market if they are provided with suitable work arrangements. Base on the findings the Committee recommended that employers, unions and government should work together to promote flexible work arrangements as a mean to help working women cope with their role at work and in the family.

#### **Back-to-Work Programme**

As a follow up the NTUC Women's Committee organised a National Conference on the "Back to Work - Are you Ready" in 1995. This was organised jointly with the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board (PSB), and co-sponsored by the Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF), People's Association (PA) and Singapore Council of Women's Organisation (SCWO). The aim was to promote awareness and provide information and assistance in terms of training to help non-working women re-enter the workforce. Part-time and flexi-work is preferred by housewives as not only it helps them to take care of their family but also keep in touch with the working field.

In September 1996, the "Back-to-Work" programme was officially endorsed by the government. The scope of this tripartite programme was later expanded to include older persons as well as re-trenched workers.

Women could register under the programme and be eligible for:

Free job referral and placement services at the Manpower Deployment Department, Ministry of Manpower; and

Training opportunities supported by the Skills Development Fund (SDF), namely Core Skills Training and Job Skills Training. The Core Skills training is aimed to help develop confidence, communication skills and a positive attitude towards quality work. The SDF provides employers a flat grant of \$350 per trainee, which covers 100% course fee support and includes an allowance of \$100 each for the trainees to help defray their meals and transportation expenses. Returnees to the workforce may also attend Job Skills Training as required by their employers, who will enjoy enhanced SDF funding up to 80% of course fees for external training programmes of \$4 per trainee hour for on-the-job training conducted.

This was implemented to encourage employers to employ housewives who are willingly to return to the workforce. Observations drawn from the programme have shown that employers are generally reluctant to restructure jobs to meet the needs of housewives, and their perception was that employment of part-timers would be costly and less reliable. While for the housewives, there is no financial push factor and therefore no urgency to secure employment.

#### **Family-Friendly Work Environment**

To promote family-friendly work environment in addition to flexible work arrangements the followings terms are provided for in the public service and private sector:

Child-care sick leave - 5 days of full-pay unrecorded leave per child below the age of 6 years, to a maximum claim of 15 days per year granted to employees on full time employment to look after their sick child. Employees on the part-time employment scheme are also granted this leave on a pro-rated basis according to their hours of work. The number of days ranges from 2.5 days to 4 days (Provided for in public service).

No Pay Leave for childcare - 1 year at a time up to a maximum of 4 years for each child to be

taken within the 4 years after the birth of the child (Provided for in public service).

Marriage Leave - 3 days (Provided for in public service / Number of days vary in private sector).

Paternity Leave - 3 days (Provided for in public service / Number of days vary in private sector).

#### ***Impact of Globalisation on the Workforce***

Globalisation has an impact on employment relations as companies go through merger and acquisition to pull their act together to be competitive in the new economy. Companies are restructuring, re-engineering and outsourcing to remain lean and competitive. New types of jobs are created and hence workers have to be re-trained to meet the requirement of these new jobs in the market.

With the recovery of the economy after the Asian Economic crisis of 1998, unemployment has not gone back to the pre-crisis rate. The unemployment is more of structural as workers in the older age group and those with low skills find difficulty getting available jobs in the market due to mismatch of skills. NTUC and the Government had embarked on training programmes to equipped workers with skills in the new market. The followings are the programmes implemented:

#### ***Skills Redevelopment Programme***

The Skills Redevelopment Programme or SRP aims to enhance the employability of the "not-so-young", under-educated or unskilled Singaporean workers, by equipping them with better skills to meet the standards required of them in the 21st century.

NTUC joint partners for this programme are the Ministry of Manpower, Productivity and Standard Board, Economic Development Board and the Singapore National Employers Federation. The trainings are supported and provided by the various polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education.

Employers sponsoring their employees in certifiable training courses are eligible for funding incentives to alleviate the cost of conducting training for employees. A funding support of \$8 or \$6 per trainee-hour depending whether it is

classroom-based by external training provider or in-house training is granted to employers upon application. In addition an absentee payroll grant is given if training is conducted during company's time, and upon completion of training and fulfilment of the SRP criteria. SRP has been endorsed by the government and is now a National Programme. The programme is opened to both male and female employees. Up-to-date over 700 companies have applied for funding support under the SRP.

### ***National Skills Recognition System***

The National Skills Recognition System (NSRS) - a national system to facilitate skills acquisition and upgrading was officially launched on 5 September 2000. The NSRS provides a national framework for establishing job skill competencies and alternative skills acquisition routes, and certifying workforce skills. It is industry driven to ensure that the skills standards developed are relevant to the workplace. Jointly developed by the Productivity and Standards Board (PSB) in collabo-

ration with industry bodies associations and unions, the NSRS has the support from the Ministries of Manpower and Trade and Industry. The system has already been piloted in 27 companies.

### ***Conclusion***

Singapore is but a small island with no natural resources but that of human capital. Foreign investment is therefore important to the creation of jobs for workers, males and females. NTUC recognized that if workers are to have a better quality of life, then there is a need to strengthen the economic competitiveness and enhance the employability of workers. Without this, there can be no full employment and well paying jobs for both the males and females.

Instead of legislating employment equality, the government has taken the approach in providing equal access and opportunities to education, vocational training and employment to meet the objective of enhancing the status of women.

## Rita Morena Preciado

### CC.00, Trade Union Centre Spain

#### ***Objectives of gender politics in collective bargaining***

Since several years the CC.00. gender coordinators' offices are working on a system, which observes gender aspects in collective bargaining processes and offers non-discriminative job evaluation. Some substantial research was performed, based on the disparate realities in the companies and industries analysed. Representatives of different trade unions and companies - and in some cases groups of employees as well - took part in the studies.

I placed some material about the two most recent investigations at the disposal of the organisers of this conference. They focus on the disclosure of discrimination in wage agreements and in particular on the fixing of wage levels. The first of these studies conducted by the CC.00 is called PRISMA, a best-practice-guide about job evaluation; the second study is called CODEX and was carried out by the metal workers' union. CODEX is a system for a neutral evaluation of professional qualifications and contains a guidebook for the assessment of wage agreements from a gender perspective. Both of the studies gain currency on the union's level, in women's organisations and other institutions dealing with gender policy. The study CODEX includes didactic material as well which is used in numerous training courses for trade unionists who take part in collective bargaining.

The completion of the studies became necessary, because there were no signs for a revaluation of women's work, although the Spanish women made huge efforts to reach their complete integration within education and job market. Within slightly more than 22 years, ever since the Spanish constitution came into effect and guaranteed men and

women equal political, social and labour rights, the situation for women changed dramatically. Women used to live in a state of legal inferiority and complete economic, social and personal dependence on their husbands. Nowadays equal rights are acquired by the book, but the actual equality has to be challenged, because the majority of the population - particularly most of the women - do not put to use their social rights (labour, social security, housing, health, education) in a qualitatively sufficient and equal way.

If the under valuation of women's work matters, the unpaid work, which is traditionally performed by women is even more important. The upbringing of children and the care for elderly or sick people as well as household work are still neither considered socio-economically nor socially accepted or even financially rewarded in any way.

This situation is not only unjust, but it prevents the integration of the majority of women above 16 within the labour market. It follows that the number of unemployed women of 64 % is the highest in the European Union. This made us put forward an indisputable claim to the public administration, the government, the autonomous municipalities and regions as well as local authorities to take urgent and comprehensive measures for establishing care centres<sup>2</sup>, which - in our opinion - should be integrated as part of the social rights within the public social system.

Spain brings up the rear of the European Union not only in regard to the unemployment rates. The social services are not up to standard and far below the European average. Recently the CC.00. conducted a survey about "care centres" and found out that approximately 1.000.000 new jobs could be created in this field, in order to lift Spain to the European standard. Above that the costs

<sup>2</sup> For example for people in need of care and children (ed.)



could be covered by public budgets without problems. The Government's attitude towards this claim could not be less approving, because public budgets contain only minimal funds for social services and social security.

In regard to the organisation of working hours and the reconciliation of work and family life the situation is not much better. Although a law was launched in 1999, which regulates maternity and parental leave, it is still insufficient from a social and trade unionist's perspective. Nevertheless, the Government is thoroughly satisfied with the regulations achieved, because the measures and their official presentation in the public are just about enough to ensure a compatibility of functions and partially allow men to do their duties as fathers. However, both objectives are merely achieved on paper, yet the actual promises made in the law are still far from turning into reality.

The new Spanish law deals with regulations and granting of funds and has improved significantly in some aspects compared to the previous legislation. Still it contains two fundamental shortcomings: first, parental leave for men is not accepted and, second, for the majority of permissions and leaves - apart from maternity leave and adoption - there is no subsidy. As a result, they are not made use of very often and in most of the cases by women. They take up the opportunities for social reasons and in many cases, because they earn less than their husbands.

Apart from a few exceptions, there is no obligation or more recent tradition, for Spanish companies to arrange for childcare facilities. The existing childcare facilities are largely under private management and are usually located in conurbations, which leads to high costs and poor quality. Usually the few public facilities have an income limit included in their terms of admission, which regularly denies access for families with double income. Lately a couple of private and political initiatives came forth to establish company childcare facilities. A major supermarket chain set up free childcare facilities in areas of low unemployment in order to connect their employees more strongly to the company. They also announced to expand the project to other branches. In addition, the conservative party "Convergencia y Unió",

which governs the Autonomous Region of Catalonia, introduced a bill in the national parliament, that allows tax relief for companies, which put up childcare facilities. There is a chance for consistent regulations on the support of private or public initiatives to set up childcare facilities and even centres for the care of elderly people.

In regard to the reduction of wage differences and the improvement of the purchasing power of the lower income groups, which are mainly made up by women, the CC.00. supports a long-term campaign against wage differences, because we reckon that due to the enormous initial differences and the decentralised collective bargaining system, no substantial results can be achieved on a short-term basis. This campaign is part of the "Equality Scheme" passed on the 7th Trade Union Congress in April 2000 and is in accord with the objectives of the European Trade Union Confederation.

The campaign includes various measures as for example: research and the preparation of surveys on wage differences and their reasons and consequences; examination of wage agreements; pursuit of charges and conflicts related to discrimination; sensitization of social workers, administration, authorities in charge of legal supervision, trade union representatives in companies and above all employees, in order to try not only to eradicate rules and practices, which lead to discrimination, but as well to stimulate the social conscience, which regards the gender differences in careers and wages as "natural"; compiling of criteria and suggestions for collective bargaining and trade union work in companies.

This recent campaign is supposed to intensify the work of trade unions on the field of general wage increase and in particular that of low wage groups. It aims at increasing and improving the purchasing power. In our opinion, the discussion about productivity increase should be linked with the creation and improvement of jobs as well as the elimination of discriminative wage differences. Actually, the wage agreements of the recent years brought an above-average wage increase of the lower wage groups and traditionally female work fields. Also trade unions reach their aim in some areas to set up a job evaluation system, which

adjusts the wage to the particular job. Though in other areas and numerous companies the wage gap is widening. The number of variable incomes and especially wages outside the agreed scale is growing extraordinarily and as a result the possibilities of gender discrimination are increasing too.

In Spain we have officially fixed minimum wages, which many thousand - mainly female - workers can refer to, not only with regard to their income, but also to social insurance benefits (e.g. unemployment benefits, pensions, etc.). Over the last years this minimum wage lost purchasing power.

The reasons for that are mistakes made in the calculation of the annual consumer price index and the rejection of the government to apply a revision clause in case of negative divergence.

Additionally, the minimum wages are well below the average union wages, wherefore the trade unions demand massive raises in order to get closer to the European trade unions' objective of fair minimum wages in relation to the average wages. Obviously the Government refuses the unions' claim and gains support from the employers' association.

## Deise Aparecida Recoaro

### CUT, Trade Union Confederation Brazil

#### *About us*

The National Commission on Working Women (Comissão Nacional Sobre a Mulher Trabalhadora) was founded in 1986, at the 2nd National Congress of the CUT, to offer a forum for joint reflections of committed male and female trade union leaders on the issues of workers in general and their particular effects on the working woman. Quite deliberately, the name chosen was not "Women's Committee", but "Committee on the working woman", because the aim was not simply for women alone to discuss "women's problems", but instead to tackle a social problem that affects both women and men. The concept of gender puts the problem into a greater context in which, for example, issues such as the inequality between men and women is discussed as the problem of the social domination of one group over the other. This also offers new sets of solutions: solutions can only be found in common and necessitate a change in attitude by men and women, leading to a better division of responsibilities and opportunities.

At the 6th national plenary session of CUT in 1993, a minimum quota of 30 % and a maximum quota of 70 % for both sexes was established for the Board of the CUT. These quotas were recorded in the Statutes of CUT and hence are binding for CUT, though not, however, for the vertical structure, for the industry-wide and regional confederations and for the member trade unions. Some of the industry-wide confederations adopted the quotas into their Statutes as well, e.g. the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG, Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Agricultura) and the National Confederation of Bank Employees (CNB, Confederação Nacional de Bancários). At the National Congress of CUT in August 2000, a draft quota for the decision-making organs (congresses and plenary sessions) was proposed, and this will be debated at the

forthcoming plenary session in August 2001. The Congress also resolved to establish quotas for further training events. However, there is no control mechanism.

#### *Campaigns and actions towards more equality of opportunity*

In 1995, at the 7th plenary session of CUT, the campaign for equality of opportunity in life, in the Employment and in the trade union movement was launched. The following subjects formed the focus of attention: enhancing the status of women's work, vocational training in the context of the restructuring of production, equal pay for equal work and the unionisation of women in CUT at federal level and at state level according to the industry. In order to take account of the various industries, the Comissão Nacional sobre a Mulher Trabalhadora of CUT elaborated a Draft on Minimum Standards with clauses, which incorporate the various questions of gender.

In conjunction with the other trade union umbrella associations in Brazil (Força Sindical and CGT), CUT took part in 1998 in drawing up and implementing studies on gender issues, the so-called "Gender Map". The project was based on studies and questionnaires among male and female trade union leaders from various federal states and was elaborated by the team from the Trade Union Institute for Statistics and Socioeconomic Research (DIEESE, Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos) with the support of the Funds for Gender Equality of the Canadian International Development Agency. The map presents social and economic indicators, which directly affect women in the working world and points to possible reasons and necessary measures for the solution of the problems.

In 1999 the CNB made equal opportunities the focal point of wage negotiations for the first time,

i.e. equal opportunities were considered a priority in comparison to other demands. Through special issues and regular publications on the subject, the subject was discussed at the grass-root level of the union, leading to the setting up of a specific negotiations group. In 2000 equality of opportunity is again focal point of the collective agreement negotiations. 100,000 booklets on the subject were distributed to 25 % of bank employees throughout the country.

The CNB now acts as the yardstick and point of reference for other sectors when they make equal opportunities the focal point of collective agreement negotiations. In addition, the CNB is carrying out a national project over a period of three years in conjunction with the Trade Union of São Paulo Bank Employees (Sindicato dos Bancários de São Paulo) and with the support of the above-mentioned Funds for Gender Equality of the Canadian International Development Agency. The project consists of three campaigns: 1st year - Equal opportunities; 2nd year - Campaign against sexual harassment; 3rd year - Responsible paternity. In summary, the most important actions of the Comissão sobre a Mulher Trabalhadora of CUT aiming at an equal rights wage policy involved the following:

National campaign for equality of opportunity of CUT for the trade unions

- Draft of Minimum Standards by the Comissão Nacional sobre a Mulher Trabalhadora
- Launch of the Gender Map
- Equality of opportunity as the focal point of collective negotiations in the banking sector.

### ***Gender-specific clauses in collective agreements***

Almost 30 million women (40.1% of the workforce in 1995) are actively employed in Brazil today, in particular in the following sectors: services 29.8 %, agriculture 22.5 %, commerce 12.8 %. In the negotiations special emphasis is given to the question of maternity/paternity and maternity protection: 85% of all women-specific clauses refer to this subject. In particular, services prescribed by law are considered here, such as the right to child-

care facilities for 65% of the professions, paternity leave for 35 %; maternity leave for 20 % and child-rearing benefits for 17 %. Some of these agreements, however, extend beyond the legally prescribed limits, e.g. for childcare facilities, paternity leave and lactation periods, in particular by extending the validity periods for these rights.

The Labour Code states that "those workplaces at which at least 30 women aged over 16 years are employed, must be offered a suitable room in which the children of the employees can be supervised and looked after during lactation period." Alternatively, businesses can pay the expenses for a children's nursery school, something which is used in most cases instead of the business providing the facility itself.

### ***Coloured women***

The situation of coloured women in the working world requires special attention, as they encounter twice as many problems as white women do. According to studies made in 1999, black women in São Paulo receive on average 33 % of the wage of a white man. Hence the problem of ethnic affiliation must be included in the question of gender. One example is the campaign for equality of opportunities for bank employees: on the campaign material, i.e. posters and the covers of booklets, one can see a coloured woman next to a white man with an equal opportunities symbol between them.

### ***Neo-liberal politics and the social right to maternity***

The resistance to neo-liberal politics of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government directly concerns women as well: arguing that it was reducing public spending, the government tried to set a ceiling of 1200 Real (600 US Dollars) on maternity pay. In conjunction with the women's movement, the trade union movement has succeeded in beating off the Government's draft bill. As a next step the grants process was made more bureaucratic. Pregnant women were henceforth compelled to accept poor quality of care. There were delays of up to 90 days in paying out the money.

The trade union movement now requires that businesses sign individual agreements with the social insurance carriers in order to make this right accessible again without going down bureaucratic paths.

***„Only what you yourself have experienced... ”***

You can only effectively judge "what you yourself have experienced...": hence the presence of women on collective agreement negotiating committees is indispensable. White men, however sensitive and supportive they may be, occupy a privileged place in our society, which they are only very reluctant to give up to women. On the other hand, women cannot accept concessions and conquer this place at the same time, which is the place of power. We must continue with our campaigns of education and persuasion, which show that we are all winners from equal opportunities. We should not duck out of the responsibility to negotiate on behalf of women of the working class in the fight for a better and fairer society.

# The Panel Discussions of the Conference

## SESSION 3:

### Strategies in Equality Bargaining

#### Panel Participants

Presentation: *Raja Nejedlo*,  
DGB, German Trade Union Federation

*Riitta Partinen*, SAK, Trade Union  
Confederation of Finland

*Sinead Tiernan*, ETUC, European Trade  
Union Confederation

*Graciela Retamoso*, PIT/CNT, Trade Union  
Confederation, Uruguay

*Barbara Nauditt*, IG Metall, German Metal  
Worker's Union

Opening by *Raja Nejedlo*

Raja Nejedlo started off by emphasising, that the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming approach in the collective bargaining processes is going to be a long-term project. At this point, we should concentrate on the outline of operational strategies and the exchange of different methods, which were used in different countries.

#### Graciela Retamoso

The participant from the Trade Union Federation of Uruguay set off by sketching the historical and political background of her country. The number of three million inhabitants of Uruguay is comparable with that of Singapore or the city of Berlin. Uruguay is characterised by its multi-cultural citizens, who immigrated from Spain, Italy, Germany and elsewhere. The black population makes up 5%.

In Uruguay the women's level of training is rather high (four to five years) and the majority of university students (60 %) are women, too. Nevertheless, the employment of women in quali-

fied jobs is low. Trade unions focus on ILO agreements in their national negotiations. These international regulations have been exceptionally helpful in pushing demands in Uruguay. In general, there is no need for new laws against women's discrimination. Already existing laws simply have to be spread and actually applied.

How do Uruguayan women put Gender Mainstreaming into practice? They make use of meeting places and political gathering places, where trade unionists, politicians and women from the countryside can come together. *Also* they work together with female parliamentarians.

What are the objectives of Gender Mainstreaming? A national equity scheme, to put Gender Mainstreaming on the agenda of the Commission for Labour and the consequent use of quotation in all areas, which are negotiated in Employment Commissions.

For the implementation of the objectives the following tools were recommended: Qualifying women for leadership and negotiating practices; training of women for all-purpose competence in politics, who are able to penetrate into the inner circle of organisations; cooperation with businesswomen, who are able to influence the regional job market. In order to develop a sound integration of women and men, Retamoso advises to cooperate with men, who are obliged by law to collaborate. Furthermore, she paid tribute to the international cooperation with Argentina and Brazil.

#### Riitta Partinen

Since approximately 15 years Equity Officers are in charge on high level. They work closely together with the ICFTU and other colleagues outsi-

de Finland. Finland developed a particularly strong partnership with the other Nordic countries. The issue of Gender Equity is on the agenda for more than 60 years.

In 1987 new equality laws came into force, which put the legal responsibility for equal chances into the hands of the employers. They have to look after equal opportunities and working conditions in their companies. The media pays a lot of attention to gender equality and covers the issue well. Gender Equality has turned into a subject, which allows distinguishing oneself positively in public. The law provides for penalties in case of offences. For that reason, employers are anxious to avoid costly and lengthy court cases. Hence, the issue turned into a win-win-situation, employers are generally satisfied with. Trade unions put together so called "equality packages", which deal with such matters as: women on the job market, wage guidelines, solidarity, pay adjustments and low wage groups.

In 1988 the term Gender Mainstreaming entered collective bargaining for the first time. In that instant a so-called "equality pot" was introduced - funded by employers - from which employers can receive financial support for equal wages. At the same time, gender equality is on the agenda at the regular wage adjustment talks. So on the one hand, nation-wide pay agreements are settled and on the other hand, the "equality pot" can level out pay disparities in certain sectors.

Concerning the question of job evaluation, Partinen emphasised the necessity of new evaluation systems for abolishing pay disparities. Gender Mainstreaming requests an extraordinary coordination between government, employers and employees. In order to generate gender-neutral ways of evaluating labour, the following steps have to be pursued: Checklists, guidelines for gender-neutral evaluation and instructions for behaviour at the work place.

#### **Barbara Nauditt**

The statement dealt with the East German wage agreements, which are separate from the Western areas and face high unemployment rates.

Wages and working hours are lower than the Western German average. A struggle for adjustment to the Western standard has been going on for years. The present pay agreements go back to the 50's, therefore a reform is due to be dealt with. The trade union started an initiative to modernise the pay agreement, simplifying and balancing out the various income systems. Generally speaking, distinctions are made between unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled work. Within these categories, the deployment of male physical strength is higher estimated as equivalent work by women.

A regional women's committee started to deal with the question of fair pay agreements and started off by accomplishing a list of criteria. The women were in a remarkable position, in that they could rely on a decision of the European Court of Justice. The list of criteria demanded transparency, impartiality, equal potential for pay, same decisive factors for all and the same, fixed minimum wages for all. Furthermore, level of training, responsibility for humans and materials, psychosocial factors of the work, communication performance etc. Based on a judgment of the European Court of Justice, they claimed for the consideration of muscles, senses and nerves.

The women's working group presented their catalogue of criteria to the ongoing debate of a reformed wage agreement. Was that the chance for the first non-discriminative wage agreement in Germany? The proposal was submitted to the general commission. The employers' side delivered an alternative plan and insisted on the withdrawal of the women's proposal. In the female unionists opinion, not only women but men as well would benefit from a non-discriminative wage agreement. The conclusion was drawn that male partners are vital for a successful implementation; they have to realise what is in for them. Another important aspect is the connection with the European level and the constitutional status, which includes the right to take the case to court.

How is labour going to be regulated in the future? This question will no longer only concern

feminists, but will include both women and men. Therefore, collective bargaining teams have to be put together carefully. They ought to have a women's quotation. Finally, it had to be admitted, that the initiative could not be implemented so far. However, everyone who was involved in the work experienced a whole new way of dealing with the problem and at the same time the women involved demonstrated their competence in collective bargaining.

#### **Sinead Tiernan**

In 1999 the ETUC carried out a survey, which found out that women hold less than 1/4 of its affiliates' senior positions and only two women were among the General Secretaries. In some cases the General Secretaries' deputies were women, seemingly as an excuse. Women experience discrimination on all levels of the trade unions. Women departments - for example - do not always have their own budget line, although all other departments have. Although women make up more than 50 % of the population, trade union's politics is a strictly men's only domain.

On the basis of these results, the ETUC drew up an Equality Plan, which main focus is (1) Ensuring that women are properly represented on

all levels proportional to the number of women members and (2) Achieving equal pay. Tiernan claims for (a) centralised minimum standards, (b) increasing information flow of facts about gender discrimination and (c) a high level of transparency of the measures and actions. In connection with the "Equal Pay Campaign", she demands a catalogue of measures on which basis the fifteen European governments should draw National Action Plans. These have to work towards equal chances between women and men and should include criteria for wage assessment.

Additionally, the EU should only grant those job market projects with EU-funding in which gender discrimination is being tackled. Thereby, men should be encouraged to work in typically female occupations and women should be encouraged to take on male dominated jobs. As a result low-income jobs will be estimated higher and the wages will rise.

#### ***Summary and discussion***

The contributions of the panellists reflect the different levels of practical experience with Gender Mainstreaming in collective bargaining. Whereas in some countries statistical data and



surveys are yet being called for, others are already in the position to evaluate and improve their systems of information and surveys on Gender Mainstreaming.

Some of the long-established work evaluation systems were clearly in need of transformation. Various methods to deal with the discrimination were presented, ranging from abolishing the low wage groups to so-called equality-pots, from which low wages receive supplements. Minimum wages were regarded as useful tools by some countries, others were **not** eager to let the government restrict their right to free collective bargaining.

There were different opinions about the future role of female trade unionists in collective bargaining. One side argued for the alliance with men, who were indispensable in the implementation of equality, for which reason equality plans have to aim at both women and men. In contrary to that, another part regarded the advance of women in trade unions in general as vital for the survival of the labour movement. Everybody unanimously stated that women ought to train themselves in the field of collective bargaining, which used to be at the heart of men's supremacy.

## Barbara Nauditt

### IIG Metall, German Metal Worker's Union

In the metal and electronic industries a nationwide reform of the major wage agreements is due. A modernisation is urgently needed, because the current wage agreements date back to the 1950's and 60's and do not reflect today's working world. Additionally, women are indirectly discriminated against.

Take the example of Saxony: unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled work with low strain is rated in the wage groups 1 to 3, whilst the same work with high strain is rated in the wage groups 4 to 6. Traditionally, physical strain is evaluated far too high compared to mental and nervous strain. Therefore, men gain profit from this practice and women's work remains underrated.

This is also true for more qualified work, according to the few statistics on wages in this branch, which differentiate between men's and women's salaries. Apart from lower basic wages, women gain fewer supplements, bonuses and less pay in piecework.

Against this background, the Brandenburg-Saxony regional women's committee held a workshop together with scientific support, which elaborated on a catalogue of criteria for evaluating discriminative features in wage settlements. For the most part, this catalogue encompasses the requirements for gender-neutral wages, which have been developed by the European Court of Justice, the Federal Constitutional Court and the Federal Labour Court of Germany. According to these requirements, the pay distinctions made in wage agreements have to be:

transparent

based on objective criteria

& cover the essence of the work

- include common features for all workers
- which means: use the same criteria for women and men, white-collar and blue-collar workers

criteria have to be suitable for women and men

- if it is not, an equal substitute has to be found
- ensure that different aspects of the work are only valued once
- criteria have to guarantee equal chances on similar wages for women and men
- an on the whole gender-neutral wage system has to be warranted by these means

This catalogue of criteria enabled us to uncover and criticise the potential discriminations within the reform plans drafted by the regional trade union so far. We presented a new draft wage agreement called MEDEA, which meets the requirements mentioned above.

In the group of job characteristics labelled Knowledge and Skills, MEDEA includes apart from specialized knowledge, organisational demands and constraints through interruptions.

In the group of job characteristics called Responsibility MEDEA also includes the responsibility for the work of others, in a sense of top-down leadership and bottom-up assistance. Moreover, responsibility for human life is rated, e.g. also in a training situation, as well as responsibility for materials and finances and the protection of the environment.

In the group of Psycho-social characteristics new aspects are covered, like oral communication, cooperation, sensitivity, restriction of communication possibilities and scope of action, consciously controlled manners and duty of serious decision-making.

The group of Physical characteristics remained in the job evaluation system, because physical demand is still a decisive factor of labour in the metal industry. Singular features of this group are for example: muscular strain, demand for precision movement, forced body positions, mental and nervous strains and environmental influences.

The emphasis we posed on the different groups of job characteristics and the point system for each singular feature, according to the intensity of the work, lead to a transparency of the entire classification. Equality between the sexes, but as well between white and blue-collar workers will be acquired, by rating Responsibility, Psycho-social and Physical characteristics with 20 % each and Knowledge and Skills with 40 %.

We choose an analytical job evaluation system rather than a summary, in order to meet the legal requirements concerning transparency. Nevertheless, we can picture less discriminative summary systems, as we know at present.

To facilitate equality at the workplace, not only a non-discriminative job evaluation system is necessary, but also improvement of workers' participation rights, like e.g. reclamation rights and a compulsory procedure for finding solutions in conflict situations at the workplace. Moreover, employers have to be forced to regularly monitor and publish the salary structures of their companies, differentiating between sex and wage groups. This is also included in the suggestions of MEDEA.

There were some preconditions, which helped the MEDEA wage agreement being accepted by all collective bargaining teams in our region:

- women quotation in the collective bargaining teams
  - sound, legally and scientifically safe positions
  - a certain threat we could put on our opponents, because we were able to bring a claim against any other wage agreement, which contained discrimination
- † winning of all male trade union members involved in collective bargaining in our district as partners
- the fact that our plan helped demolishing the "old" objective of bringing white and blue collar workers on a par
  - thereby, we managed to bring the male blue-collar workers on our side, who are the most important within the metal workers union to go on strike with

With all this on our minds, we hoped to set off a trend within the union that would lead to an equality analysis of all draft wage agreements and ongoing negotiations in other union districts. Unfortunately, this became only partially true, so that we now have the following disappointing situation:

In the trade union districts of Baden-Württemberg and North Rhein-Westphalia, where the negotiations for modern wage agreements are most advanced, gender equality is a marginal point on the agenda. Therefore, we have to take the trouble to evaluate their negotiations with an eye to discrimination, hoping to start off a debate in the entire organisation.

Our negotiation team, which has a women quotation, set off collective bargaining negotiations with a Berlin employer's confederation of the metal industry. The employer's side came forward with a draft agreement based on a summary system, which roughly speaking corresponds with the - not equality oriented - proposal from Baden-Württemberg. Simultaneously, they asked us to drop MEDEA. This goes to show, that they fear a debate about wage agreement-based discrimination at the workplace and we have to look into making these fears come true.

I would finally like to mention some thoughts that evolved from our practical experience:

Wage agreements can help to promote equal pay for equal work. However, they do not immediately help women gaining access to higher positions

- The political discussion about equal work and equal value work as well as the political decision, which jobs are valued equal, can also promote the chances for employment and promotion for women

The decision about the question, which work is to be valued and paid equally, may be judged scientifically. Yet science cannot give an answer. Trade unions and employers can only make a political decision.

- Female unionists have to be equipped with specialised knowledge in collective bargaining and gender quality, if they want to successfully eleva-

to the discussion and decision-making in a field of male predominance

Further, they need tools to locate discrimination in wage agreements and to present alternatives

They have to enter the collective bargaining process as early as possible in order to articulate and implement their demands for equality

The female unionists need male collaborators. Wage settlements which male workers take no advantage of, stand no chance of implementation.

The discussion about non-discriminative wage agreements has to be led out of the hands of collective bargaining experts, into a workplace-based, public debate.

The aim is to shape and regulate labour to make it more just in the future.

Let us develop a vision from this that makes us ready to fight and achieve our aims.

## Riitta Partinen

### SAK, Trade Union Confederation of Finland

#### ***Income policy has been the politics of equal opportunities policy***

In Finland there is a long history (from the end of 1960's) in national income policy agreements. On national level trade union confederations, employers organisations and government have negotiated a framework agreement on wage increase, other working life issues and governmental policy, for example on taxation, social policy, family policy issues for one or two years period.

Income policy agreements have been a way of both promoting equal pay and reducing the wage differences between men and women. In its own collective bargaining strategy the SAK has stressed solidarity in income policy, which has entailed greater wage increases for low earners. Gender became an influencing factor in wage increases when central organisations agreed for the first time on an equality package as part of an economic and income policy agreement in autumn 1988. The first equality package was only directed at areas of female predominance. Subsequently, equality packages have been determined both on the basis of high female representation and low salaries. The equality package per se has helped somewhat to diminish wage differences between different branches.

#### ***Renewal of job evaluation schemes***

Within the branches and work places SAK strategy has been to develop gender-neutral job evaluation schemes and create gender awareness processes to implement schemes at work places. The work for development of job evaluation systems was initiated on a broad basis in the beginning of 1990's. It came up in the discussions as a method for furthering equality in pay. A working group has launched a guide "From illusion to real world" - for developing a job evaluation scheme. Now it is the task of the working group of the labour mar-

ket partners to follow up what kind of schemes have been used within various branches. It is also intended that the results be followed up from the point of view of equality.

A job market monitoring committee on wage statistics follows wage developments between men and women (impact of equality packages has been monitored). It has carried out research on wage discrimination. Now a new ongoing research work is based on wage statistics and done together with the Equality Ombudsman's office, the social partners and an economic research institute ETLA.

#### ***Several working groups and projects by social partners on equality***

In the end of the 1990's and in the beginning of the year 2000 the labour market parties in Finland have agreed on and initiated several concrete long-term equality projects. They aim at renewing the system for evaluating the degree of requirements in various jobs, at breaking the sex segregation of the labour market, at developing criteria for a good and equal work place, at combining the working and family life, at coordinating the equality work at the work place as well as at examining the differences in wages and salaries. These projects are often carried out at work places, and they will be reported in writing. Often the projects are realised on a tripartite basis, and the role of the government/state is to finance them. Ministries can also act as initiators and insist on labour market parties to participate. Also research institutes and universities participate in the realisation of the projects.

#### ***Reconciliation of work and family life***

Trade union activity has had a central role in family policy reforms, which have sought to strike a balance between work and family life. The income agreements of the 1970s repeatedly agreed

on increasing the duration of maternal leave, on paid leave for looking after a sick child and the organisation of a paternal leave system. Labour market partners were also influential during the mid 1980s when legislation was extended to facilitate sharing parental leave and caring for small children between fathers and mothers. This issue has been repeatedly in the income policy negotiations.

### ***Round table - on equality***

So-called "round table" negotiations on equality are also organised between the social partners. The income policy agreement has led to the launch of a research and development project on workplace. Its aim is to achieve equality in working life and good practices for equal opportunities in work places. A list of criteria for a good and equal workplace has become a tool for development. This work is continuing with 12 workplaces.

### ***Sex segregation on the labour market***

The social partners will carry out a project that concentrates on breaking the sex segregation on the labour market on the local level. It will start next year (2001) as a part of the NAP for the year 2000. Local schools, pupils, parents, workplaces, employment authorities etc. are supposed to participate. This project will be very practical one and the aim of it is to encourage girls and boys to choose non-traditional professions.

### ***Good and equal workplace - creation of equality standards***

According to the standards, the state of equality in a workplace can be evaluated. In this frame of reference, equality is understood as gender equality and also equality between different age groups, ethnic groups, and persons with different cultural background. Diversity management aims to benefit from human differences, to transform these differences into richness, which is beneficial to both staff well-being and productivity.

By further developing these standards, a comprehensive system can be formed. The idea is that workplaces can use the standards as a self-assessment system for the promotion of equality, well-being and productivity. The project also examines the impact of the utilisation of diversity and of equality management on organisations.

### ***Summary***

As to promoting of equality, the labour market parties have initiated practical measures on labour market level. They are seeking and creating good practices and methods by joint projects. One could say that promotion of equality and utilisation of diversity are considered important on both sides of the table, and they are considered to be worth developing, yet challenging. Equality in working life does not progress through wishes and positions but through a concrete cooperation between social partners at all levels.

It can be stated that the preconditions for equality exists in Finland. Among them can be mentioned an atmosphere that supports the realisation of equality, the fact that women's degree of participation in working life as well as their educational level are high, the wide and advantageous day-care network and the equality legislation. Laws and regulations form the necessary framework but equality is not realised only through these measures. What is needed is action at the workplaces.

## Graciela Retamoso

### PIT/CNT, Trade Union Confederation, Uruguay

#### *1. Economic Change and its Effects on Men and Women Workers*

The latest economic developments can be defined as complex, dynamic and contradictory and there is no doubt of their influence on the labour force. In our country, the private sector has been the most affected due to unemployment, especially in the industrial sector where a significant number of jobs were lost, even though, in the public sector a considerable loss of jobs was also registered. On the other hand, we have seen an increase in the number of precarious, informal and part-time jobs which are the sectors where women usually work.

Labour flexibility can be considered as one of the most important changes of the last decade<sup>3</sup>. It has become commonplace thanks to legal measures such as the lack of regulation, as we can see in subcontracting<sup>4</sup> and the absence of the State and its regulating role in areas that are important for workers as was the case when it withdrew from collective bargaining. In some cases, the forms of flexibility are agreed upon within the companies themselves, especially when rationalization processes are taking place.

The effects of these processes upon working women have not been sufficiently researched up to now since the studies that have taken place - some of them in Latin America - usually do not make a distinction between their effects upon women or men. Some of the women who have written about this topic (Abramo 1997, 1999, Espino 1997, 1999, 2000, Hirata 1998) have pointed out two main aspects of the labour situation of working women: (1) the kind of jobs they have access to in

the labour market and (2) the need to evaluate new opportunities.

(1) In regard to the first aspect, women in Uruguay basically work in the personal service and social sectors and have a strong participation in the labour sectors that are characterized by precarious, part-time and informal jobs. The labour market imposes a horizontal segregation on women, (according to some studies, there are 11 professions for women vis-à-vis 151 for men), and a vertical one, too (they only have access to the lowest salary brackets and they are seldom represented in management or executive positions, especially in the private sector.) On average, their salaries are lower than those paid to male workers. Women usually have more years of schooling, they make up the majority among technicians and other professionals but they still do not have the same job opportunities as men and the higher the level of work they do, the wider the gap between the salaries. Unemployment among women, especially among young women, is higher than among men.

(2) The new job opportunities are strongly influenced by this reality. Some of the studies carried through in this region (Abramo, 1997) show contradictory results and stress the need for a more profound research since it has become apparent that the presence of women in the labour market has to be brought to light and emphasized together with all the other factors in the lower echelons of the production process.

Furthermore, there should be a more thorough analysis of their opportunities in enterprises that are being modernized due to technical or organizational changes. Some studies (Valenzuela, 1997)

<sup>3</sup> This concept can be dealt with by using various approaches. In this case we are referring to the external labour flexibility that is based upon certain forms of deregulation of labour policies, norms and regulations that are external to the company and to the internal flexibility such as working hours, salaries, polyvalence or subcontracting.

<sup>4</sup> There are no legal norms regulating the subcontracting of third companies or working force.

<sup>5</sup> Aguirre, Rosario. Recent transformations in the urban labour market. DIEDUR. 1997

show that there is a strong tendency for women to have mostly access to the lowest-paid jobs due to the fact that they are either not included in the training programmes for new jobs, or in the rationalization processes or simply because their acquired skills either in the domestic sector or in other sectors of industry are not valued properly whenever new job opportunities arise.

### 1.1 Collective bargaining in Uruguay

The challenge of dealing with a series of reflexions concerning the inclusion of the gender perspective in the collective bargaining is, without doubt, an extremely interesting task. At least in Uruguay this would mean dealing with a topic suffering from extreme deficiencies both concerning the possibility of negotiating collectively as such and that of including the gender issue into the collective bargaining.

The limitations that characterize collective bargaining<sup>6</sup>, the lack of policy that would guarantee equal opportunities which could have a transversal effect upon employment policies and the deficiencies of the trade union movement when it comes to raising awareness towards women and in promoting them are elements that might later play an important role in the outcome of the negotiations.

Collective bargaining was consolidated in our country following a model of development that was based on the substitution of imported goods which was supposed to stimulate the industrialization of national raw materials. Accompanying this was a strong government presence that implemented the adoption of protectionist measures.

In this regard, certain forms of protection for the worker were specified through protective and regulative measures of industrial relations which led to very significant progress for the working class on the following issues: the extension of Social Security benefits and the approval of a Salary Council Law' in response to a very important

demand of the Central Association of Trade Union Organizations and their trade unions. Various issues became part of the negotiations which turned into a forum where the agreements and disagreements between the industrial partners could be discussed.

This model suffered a strong drawback in the aftermath of the collapse of democracy in the decade of the seventies when the possibility of collective bargaining disappeared, among other losses that affected the working class.

## 2. Gender Prospects in Collective Bargaining

### 2.2 Proposals for the Women's Committee of the PIT-CNT

While studying this issue, a fundamental aspect of our national reality must be borne in mind, that is: the continuous decrease of collective bargaining. All the sectors that register a strong female participation are among those in which there is no collective bargaining nowadays. In the public sector these include specifically the fields of education, public health and central administration, and in the private sector this applies to the garment and textile industry and domestic services.

Collective bargaining has always been considered an instrument to ameliorate women's conditions of employment, among other possibilities, either through the setting up of better conditions of access into the labour market or through better salaries, by discussing salary brackets or through the establishment of training and promotions policies.

In the last few years, there has been a decrease in the number of clauses related to women's work. The clauses that are more often found are those related to maternity' such as leaves for nursing mothers and day-care centers.

In 1998, during its Second National Meeting, the PITCNT Women's Committee launched the initiative of promoting equal opportunities in collective bargaining.

6 It is estimated that only 20% of the working force is encompassed by collective bargaining nowadays.

7 This law was approved in 1943 and enabled the establishment of tripartite bodies made up of delegates from the trade unions, the business community and the Executive Power, in order to basically set up salaries and salary brackets. They existed until 1968, year in which salaries were automatically frozen. Collective Bargaining was introduced again in 1985 after the reinstatement of democracy.

8 Márquez Garmendía, Martha. Compared Legislation of the Mercosur and Chile. ILO. Santiago de Chile, 1998.



This meant trying very hard to include a clause into the negotiations that would reflect Law 16.045<sup>9</sup> concerning Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities and Agreements Nr. 100 (Equal Pay for Similar Labour of Female and Male Workforces) and Nr. 156 (Equal Treatment of Men and Women Workers with Family Responsibilities). These Agreements have been ratified by Law 16.063.

There was a heated discussion about the need of introducing a clause that would not add any specific elements to an agreement but would encompass legal provisions that are binding. The political significance of their inclusion was assessed as an element that would reassert a company's commitment and would open up the possibilities of following up on its compliance.

### **3. Regional Integration: New Challenges and Possibilities**

The creation of the Mercosur has become a great challenge for the trade union movement. This challenge must be tackled in order to participate in it and incentivate proposals that would include other dimensions in a process whose main priorities are rather the political and commercial aspects of the market.

The setting up of a Coordinating Organization of Trade Union Federations of the Cono Sur (CCSCS)<sup>10</sup> was a significant step that confers on the trade union movement the role of a fundamental partner in this process. Following a very positive approach it has launched a "Social Dimension" that should be part of the integration scheme where politics geared towards producing solutions for the workers and the whole of society should be carried out.

The specific results of the CCSCS demands are, among others, the creation of the Employment Subgroup Nr. 10<sup>11</sup> which is responsible for employment issues, employment and social security, the

signing of the Social-Occupational Protocol and the creation of the Employment Watch Group which is a tripartite body that deals with technical issues, information and consultation pertaining the labour market.

The Social Occupational Protocol includes a chapter about Collective Rights which includes the commitment towards collective bargaining:

"(1) Herewith, the right for collective bargaining at all levels, including the international level is recognized. The territory covered by this agreement can be national, regional or international.

(2) This right applies both to the private and to the public sector of the economy.

(3) The negotiating parties shall determine when negotiations should be carried out, what they should cover, the procedure to follow in order to reach collective agreements and when the norms that were agreed upon shall cease to apply.

From this perspective, the possibility of making trade union's activities more international - including collective bargaining - becomes essential in the context of globalization and regionalization<sup>12</sup>

The role played by the CCSCS in the first institutional body should be highlighted. This is the Economic and Social Forum which together with other social organizations is one of the six institutions of the Mercosur. Its creation could be a very important step in a process that has been characterized by a lack of democracy. It will enable other sectors of society to become a real part of this process.

#### **3.1 Women's Committee of the Coordinating Body: Formulation and Strategies of Women Trade Unionists.**

The Women's Committee of the Coordinating Body was established on April of 1997. At that time, a platform was created that was to come up with

<sup>9</sup> Law 16.045 of 6/2/89 and Decree 337/97 of 2/5/97 prohibit all discrimination that violates the principle of Equal Treatment and Equal Employment Opportunities.

<sup>10</sup> The CCSCS was created in 1991 even though it had already been a consultation and coordination body since 1987. It is made up of CGT of Argentina, and its most recent members are: Brasil, s CTA, CGT, CUT and Forza Sindical, Paraguays CUT, and Uruguayls PNTCNT. The Chileis CUT Chile and Bolivials COB participate in some issues.

<sup>11</sup> It began as the Subgroup for employment relationships, employment and social security.

<sup>12</sup> Ermida Oscar. Collective Bargaining is a Basic Right. Work and Utopia. Year 1. Nr. 1. 1999.

proposals in order to cope with the economic effects of integration. This platform stressed the following: These processes are having a negative effect on working women because the conditions of employment of those who find work in the less privileged sectors are getting more precarious. In order to cope both with the effects of these processes of economic change as well as with the inequalities on grounds of gender, the workers's organizations shall play an important role in defending the rights of women workers in order to improve their situation in the labour market and to mitigate the disadvantages that they have to suffer."

An initiative of the Coordinating Body's Women's Committee was included in the Social-Occupational Protocol. It was the introduction of a Clause on Non-discrimination and of Equal Treatment and Opportunities in Art.1, and of Non-discrimination in Art. 3 concerning the promotion of equality, where the following was stated: "Based on the regulations and labour practice, the Partner States shall commit themselves to ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for men and women".

The Labour Market Watch has considered the introduction of gender indicators<sup>13</sup> in order to have a better display of the situation of working women. During the most recent<sup>14</sup> meeting of the Managing Board of the Labour Market Watch, it was decided that a gender approach should be introduced into the data bank. The "capacity of the statistical systems that are being used should go through a critical analysis". The results of this process shall be evaluated in December of the current year."

### **3.2 Women's Committee of the Coordinating Body and its Proposals for Collective Bargaining.**

The importance of collective bargaining has been the guideline of all analysis and proposals made by the Committee. Part of the Platform's lines of action is the need of: "adopting measures via collective agreements in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women at work".

At the Summit of Women Trade Unionists of the CCSCS30 this position was reaffirmed and: "the need to incorporate into all supranational or sectorial collective agreements explicit clauses that sanction discrimination and promote equal opportunities between men and women" was added. Furthermore, an extremely important idea was formulated which was to include the equal opportunities clauses at the very onset of the negotiations of the supranational and sectorial collective agreements.

In Mercosur the first supranational agreement was reached with the Volkswagen company<sup>15</sup>, which applies to their branches in Argentina and Brazil. Other possibilities such as the negotiations with SCANIA and proposals concerning vocational training in the graphic sector are now in process. There were no equality clauses included in the agreements that were reached, however, there is enough margin for action and women workers must try to push forward the proposals and resolutions that were adopted within the CCSCS.

In the last meeting of the Women's Committee" it was decided to analyze the situation of collective bargaining in all countries, to organize training activities and to coordinate the follow-up activities with the Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunities in order to assess the level of compliance vis-à-vis equality clauses and the ILO Conventions.

### ***4. Collective Bargaining: Deficits and Possibilities***

At the end of this review of the various approaches, proposals and expectations related to collective bargaining, one thing is very obvious: its importance. It is considered a fundamental instrument towards the formulation of agreements that will translate into an amelioration of the conditions of employment for men and women workers.

Upon a profound study of the situations of discrimination suffered by women workers, making use of this possibility in order to bring about signifi-

<sup>13</sup> Espino, Alma. Proposals for Gender Indicators to the Labour Market Watch. CIEDUR. Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Montevideo.

<sup>14</sup> Meeting held in Buenos Aires on May the 23th, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Took place in Montevideo on December the 6th, together with the Mercosur Trade Union Summit.

<sup>16</sup> Agreement signed on April the 16th, 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Took place in San Pablo between the 21st to the 23th of May.

cant changes in labour relationships becomes paramount. It is necessary to include the gender issue in the training given to men and women workers in order to help them become aware of the specific difficulties encountered by women workers.

The low representation of women at the higher levels of the trade unions, in trade union federations and at the negotiating tables are obstacles that must be dealt with. The proposal of discussing these deficiencies and the possibilities of adopting positive action plans within the trade union movement itself are the main topics of discussion at this moment on the eve of the VII Congress of the PIT-CNT.

Affirmative action and measures towards the creation of better time conditions in order to di-

minish the disadvantages encountered by women both at work and in the trade union movement are some of the possible measures that should be promoted.

The role of the State in order to incentivate and coordinate the possibilities of negotiation and the role of the Employers who should participate in the negotiations instead of using them as a means of reaching further cuts in the conditions of employment are of paramount importance.

A better understanding of this issues by the whole of the trade union movement and a stronger commitment on its part towards pushing forward the specific demands of women workers are indispensable elements in order to step ahead in all proposals, especially those related to collective bargaining.

## Sinead Tiernan

### ETUC, European Trade Union Confederation

Good morning colleagues and friends and let me begin by thanking the organisers of this event for inviting the ETUC to share some thoughts with you on a topic which is very close to our hearts and one on which we are devoting a lot of energy to: Gender Mainstreaming in Collective Bargaining. This topic exactly mirrors and reflects what the ETUC through the work of our Women's Committee is currently focusing attention on.

Last year, as part of our preparations for the ETUC Congress, we commissioned a very detailed, in depth study to be carried out. The study was entitled the Second Sex of European Trade Unionism. The purpose of this study was to examine and analyse the situation of women in the trade union movement, vis-à-vis their role in the collective bargaining process as well as the decision making process. The study was carried out on the basis of a very detailed questionnaire which was completed by almost all ETUC affiliates. Needless to say the results did not surprise us!

Firstly, to be optimistic, there are indications that some slight progress has been made in women's participation in the decision-making process, but this has not improved their under-representation in relation to their rates of membership. Much therefore remains to be done. Today there are still few women involved in collective bargaining at national level; this remains true at sectoral and company level too. The proportion of women to men in European level negotiating teams seems to have improved a little, but there is still considerable room for improvement.

There is also a long way to go in bringing a gender perspective to trade union actions and policies (gender mainstreaming or incorporating the gender dimension) and there is still a wide gap between women's and men's pay levels.

1. The Membership rates for women in the trade unions stands at an average of 40% - with variations from u-20% to over 60% in different unions,

which is not bad, but there is still room for improvement.

2. Yet, less than 1/4 of senior management positions are held by women (i.e. General Secretary, Deputy Gen Sec, Pres or VP)

3. Most of the national confederations who responded to the questionnaire do have a women's committee or a women's department, which is positive, but, only 1/2 of the women's committee and only 1/3 of the women's department have their own budget and so therefore are restricted in what they can do and how to do it. A degree of autonomy in these bodies is, I think you will agree, equally as necessary as it is in any of the other bodies we have in the unions.

4. A small majority of trade unions have included equal opportunities in their constitution, but few have any action programmes or policies in place to implement this.

Collective bargaining is one of the most important tools we have to promote gender equality in the workplace. It is clear that we urgently need more women to be involved in this - the presence of women in the bargaining process is important not only because there is a link between their presence and collective bargaining outcomes, but also because it tends to have a positive influence on the equality awareness of male bargainers too. Sadly, according to the responses given to the questionnaire, the participation of women in the collective bargaining process does not appear to be very strong and our study observed a definite weakness of gender mainstreaming in collective bargaining in general.

From all of that we can see that in spite of women making up the majority of the population across Europe, in spite of the fact that more and more women have joined the work force and in spite of the fact that women account for approx 40% of Trade Union membership, the trade union movement in general is still run by men for men.

On the basis of these results, the ETUC drew up an Equality Plan, which was adopted by all ETUC affiliates. This Equality Plan is divided into 3 pillars as follows:

Ensuring that women are properly represented in bodies for collective bargaining and decision-making

Increase the number of women in decision-making bodies in such a manner that the percentage of women involved is proportional to the number of women members (which might also be termed "parity")

Increase the number of trade union women in the collective bargaining process, i.e. in the preparation, negotiation and implementation stages.

Incorporating equality between women and men in all areas of trade union policy (gender mainstreaming)

- New mechanisms and procedures should be established allowing the systematic inclusion of the gender dimension in all trade union policies and actions.
- Achieving equal pay
- Measures to be taken, particularly through collective bargaining, to reduce the difference between women's and men's pay levels.

I think that in the course of this conference we have heard quite a lot about the need for women to be better represented in the collective bargaining and decision making process, and about the need for gender mainstreaming in all areas of trade union policy.

What I will therefore concentrate on for the remainder of my presentation is on the 3rd objective of the ETUC Equality Plan - Achieving Equal Pay. Let me introduce this section by telling you that when we started to draw up this action plan, many people wondered why we were focusing on such a topic and asked questions like:

The pay gap - does it really exist? Are women still being paid less than their male colleagues for doing the same job? Are there not laws and legis-

lation across Europe to prevent this from happening?

The answer to each of the 3 questions is yes.

Yes, the pay gap still exists, which means that yes, today women are still paid less than men for doing the same job. And yes, all this, in spite of the fact that there are laws in place both at national and European level to prevent this.

We decided to devote this an entire objective to Equal Pay, even though it is certainly not a new topic, nor is it the first time that it has been discussed. However, the problem persists across Europe, and it has even been suggested that it is worsening. Efforts, which have been made in the past, have not been enough and more is urgently needed. Our aim with this objective is to raise awareness of the problem at all levels among our affiliates and together to try to develop strategies to deal with the problem.

This objective is important to us too in the sense that it links the first and second objectives - the first calls for more women in decision making and collective bargaining, and the second calls for gender mainstreaming. We hope that with this objective, the 2 are combined, and that by having more women involved in collective bargaining and by mainstreaming the process, the issue of equal pay will be dealt with effectively.

Some facts and figures about the wage gap in Europe:

The average hourly pay of women employed full time is some 27% lower than that of men across Europe. The gap is narrowest in the German new Lander at 12%, and Sweden at 17%. The gap is widest in the UK with 34%, followed by Greece (32%) and the Netherlands (31%)<sup>18</sup>.

The situation worsens the higher up the corporate ladder you climb. At managerial level, on average, female pay rates are only around 2/3 of those of men in some countries (France, UK and Luxembourg) and only around 60% in the Netherlands.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Findings from the SES - Earning Differentials between men and women - October 1998

<sup>19</sup> Findings from Employment in Europe 1998

A sizeable body of research has been carried out on the topic of equal pay. Some of these studies have put forward different theories as to what factors have an impact on the wage levels for women and men.

1. One theory argues that gender equality in pay is related more to the payment structures and practices than to the specific implementation of equal pay policies.<sup>20</sup> Three particular dimensions to the pay structure, which are likely to influence gender pay equality, were found.

The size and ranking of pay differentials - by industry, occupation and type of organisation.

The second factor is the system of job grading.

The third factor is the form of payment system - payment systems often provide scope for varying pay beyond the range implied by the basic job-grading system e.g. overtime, performance-related pay, seniority rewards, bonuses etc.

As a corollary, the study found that three characteristics of pay determination systems could be said to be generally favourable to gender pay equity according to the context in which they are introduced. They are centralised or universal minimum standards, narrow pay dispersion and transparency of pay structures.

Another theory found that women's pay was affected both by their position in the pay hierarchy relative to men and by the overall width of the earnings gap. Thus the low gender gap in Sweden and Norway resulted not from a high position for women relative to that of men, but from the overall narrow spread of earnings, which reduced the penalty of being situated at the bottom of the pay hierarchy. In contrast, women in the US held a relatively higher position in the hierarchy, but suffered from wide pay dispersion, which increased the wage penalty<sup>21</sup>.

What is striking in all of the studies and research we have seen is that, regardless of the different working conditions experienced by women either in the high skilled, senior positions, or in casual,

low paid positions, or anywhere in between, none are exempt from the pay gap - all categories of working women are confronted with it. To a certain extent, since we have re launched our work on the subject of equal pay, there seems to be a general trend also moving in this direction by other relevant bodies. The European Commission is focusing quite some attention on the issue and through its statistical body EUROSTAT is trying to improve and develop the data, which exists.

The NAPS have also been very helpful in that they identify the need to tackle the gender gap and as a result many national governments are commissioning research and studies into the extent at national level as well as looking at possible factors, which add to the problem. All of this is helpful to us and we are urging our affiliates at the national level to work with their national governments and to push them where necessary. At the European level, we are lobbying the Commission hard to ensure that they take the issue a step further each time. In our mind, there are a number of things, which must be dealt with if we are to make any real progress with the pay gap:

The first step is more and better information:

We need better information on women's and men's pay in all sectors. It should not be confined to the company level but should allow for comparison by sector to be made. This info should focus not only on the hourly and weekly pay, but should take account of annual and lifetime hours too.

We also need much greater information regarding the wage determination criteria.

We would very much welcome a European legal obligation that at national level the collection of detailed statistics and data on wage levels especially at sectoral and inter-sectoral levels is required. Such information should be monitored and analysed and published on a regular basis and be available to the European Commission, the social partners and equal opportunities agencies as well as to the European Women's Lobby.

<sup>20</sup> Payment structures and gender pay differentials: some societal effects, Rubery et al, International Journal of Human Resource Management 8 3 April 1997

<sup>21</sup> Blau and Kahn 1992

Many of the pay inequalities continue to persist as a result of continuing occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical in the labour market, evidenced by the over-representation of women in the low-paid sector, or employed in atypical contracts.

We therefore want to see this changed - we would like to see more women in traditional "male" jobs and vice versa, and we would also like to see the value of women's jobs increased.

The National Action Plans have given us some room to manoeuvre, which we must make maximum use of. We've noted that a number of countries have made commitments to gather information on pay, in the new NAPS. As social partners, it is important that we influence this in ensuring that the type of information we want is gathered as well as insisting that concrete targets, timetables and budgetary commitments are met in an effort to reduce the pay gap. We also have a responsibility as regards monitoring and evaluating any such actions.

We also believe that equal pay should be seen as part of a strategy for economic growth and employment creation. If women had higher wages, this could lead to an increase in consumption, thereby influencing economic growth and possible job creation. Simultaneously, their partners would be more able to reduce their working hours, thereby promoting employment and reconciliation of work and family life between women and men.

As mentioned before studies have shown that centralised systems of collective bargaining are more effective in tackling unequal and low pay and conversely dismantling centralised bargaining or mechanisms can have a negative effect on the wage gap. Yet despite this, there is little evidence that collective bargaining is really taking on board the issue of how to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value

With this equality plan we are calling on all affiliates at European, national, sectoral and branch level to increase efforts to tackle unequal pay via

the collective bargaining process. This could include any or all of the following in order to find a way to upgrade low pay:

- 1) Examining centralised vs. decentralised bargaining
- 2) Analysing the pay structure
- 3) Carrying out job evaluation exercises

Because the whole issue of equal pay is embraced in our Equality Plan, which has, as I already said, been adopted by all ETUC affiliates, we will be carrying out a review of how this has been implemented and taken on board at national and confederal level. We plan to carry out a mid-term review next year

Finally to close, let me tell you that as part of this, ETUC has just launched an Equal Pay Campaign, funded by the European Commission. With this campaign, we plan to identify strategies and innovative collective bargaining agreements, which have been used by trade unions to tackle the pay gap. Some of the key elements will be trying to identify possible solutions / tools for tackling the pay gap. This will include looking at:

*Collective Bargaining:* Good examples, innovative agreements, numbers of women involved in the collective bargaining process + negotiations

*Legislation and legal instruments* - examining national and European case law on equal pay

*Job Evaluation and Job Classification exercises*

*Wage Formation Mechanisms* - whether this is centralised or decentralised; what impact minimum wage has on the pay gap; impact of financial participation (stocks and shares) on the pay gap etc

The campaign will take the form of an ETUC website on Equal Pay, where we will give information on strategies and efforts carried out by affiliates in this respect. We hope to have the web site up and running by Christmas, full of useful information and data and we would invite you all to log on and check it out.

Public Panel Discussion in the Willy-Brandt-Haus

**"Equity through Collective Bargaining? -  
Equal Chances for Women and Men in the  
Working World"**



## Opening by Anke Fuchs, MP

Deputy Chair, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,  
Deputy Speaker of German Parliament

I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung to our discussion. Tonight we came together to talk about the role of collective bargaining for gender equality, following the international conference "Gender Mainstreaming in collective bargaining". The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the DGB (German Trade Union Federation) invited trade unionists and experts from all over the world to Potsdam, to discuss for two days about how collective bargaining can help achieving equal working conditions for women and men.

Including claims for gender equality in collective bargaining negotiations, has been and is still an important tool of women politics. "Equal Pay for Equal Valued Work" is one of the core demands of the women's rights movement ever since the 1970's. There are some areas where - luckily so - this became normality for women today. Yet we know that there is no end to this struggle just now.

I have myself negotiated about wage agreements: abolition of low wage groups, equal pay, e.g. for male and female choir members; better pay for packing of coloured TV sets. The packing of coloured TV sets used to be a male job and was better paid than the packing of black and white TV sets. Only the Federal Constitutional Court put in end to it by proving this practice unconstitutional. If one looks closer at it, one quickly realises that on the one hand there are far more aspects to collective bargaining than wages, which are relevant to gender equality and that on the other hand, women still earn less than men.

However, it is not all about the equal distribution of wages, but as well about the equal distribution of chances on the job market, chances for promotion, the equal distribution of child upbringing and household work and finally the equal evaluation of women's and men's work. And these are just some of the aspects, which have to be con-

sidered in wage agreements. Also not only the social partners carry responsibility, but the legislation has to implement them. If collective bargaining should improve anything for women, there have to be good equality policies in place. In Germany we have some preliminary initiatives from the legislation.

Tools and strategies of the trade unions on this field are already tried and tested. There is a long list of best practices for wage agreements, where the interests of women were explicitly on the agenda and were successfully implemented as well. I would like to mention just two examples:

In the UK, a comprehensive agreement attempted to tackle pay discrimination for local authority manual workers. A team drew up 540 job descriptions based on six factors: skill, responsibility, initiative, mental and physical effort, and working conditions. About 90 % of the work places were analysed on this basis by a group of union representatives and employers. The resulting rank order of jobs differed from the previous structure, which had been criticised as discriminatory. In particular some predominantly female jobs, such as care workers, were more highly evaluated than they had been previously and some male jobs, such as refuse collectors, moved down the pay hierarchy. (From: "Exploring the situation. Report 2 of Equal opportunities and collective bargaining in the EU." UK report. Paragraphs 131-140)

Another example for family-friendly wage agreements comes from Denmark. A 1995 agreement in the Danish insurance sector provides for full or part-time leave with pay to care for sick children, and if they require hospitalisation, up to 8 days on full pay. If there is serious illness full or part-time leave of up to 13 weeks may be granted on full pay, including holiday entitlement, pension contributions and seniority entitlement.

These two little highlights can only dimly outline the positive effects of trade union work. I am sure tonight we will hear more about it. However, there is criticism as well. One of the arguments critics are in favour of is that trade unions and wage agreements have no massive impact any longer. In the age of globalisation, production and distribution structures change, as for example in the textile industry. Large western corporations dictate the rules, by which production has to move into low wage countries, where in most of the cases trade unions are not worth mentioning. This puts an end to traditional trade union work. Their make-up does not relate to the international production structures.

Moreover, growing wealth comes along with an individualisation of society. The egoistic spirit is more and more perceivable on the labour market: belonging to the employees of a particular company can no longer be taken for granted and even less natural comes the membership in a union. The collective framework of the working world seems to get lost.

Growing parts of the economy are not involved in trade union activities at all: the booming computer industry and the information technology sec-

tor almost completely pull themselves out of trade unions' influence. This is a new trend on the labour market: a merciless demand for flexibility of the workers. For many young women and men flexibility means to do without open-ended work contracts, union wages, fixed working hours, stable work locations and regular pensions. On top of that flexibility includes for women, to do without reliable childcare facilities, parental leave regulations and a guarantee for equal pay, which a wage agreement could offer.

Obviously, there is no room for trade unions in this world of flexible individualists. A start-up-company in the IT-industry demands freedom and does not want to be restricted by wage agreements. The well-paid workers dream the dream of the big success together with their employer and do not want to perceive themselves as employees or even as members of a works committee. Those are the challenges we face, they have to be tackled by the governments, especially those in Europe with a social legislation and there needs to be pressure on the WTO, ILO and IMF.

Again women are the loser. First, the absence of wage agreements does more harm to them than it does to men, because they lose an important

tool to promote their claims. Second, they miss out on support on a field, where despite of the benevolence of a new beginning, women are already a minority and men hold the key positions of a promising young industry. Why do young well-educated women put up with that?

Moreover, women in particular reproach trade unions for the male predominance of their structures. I was a member of the executive committee of the IG Metall (German Metal Workers Union). The question is left unanswered: "How can we reach the women as members and comrades-in-arms?!" Two major tasks for the trade unions emerge from this situation. On the one side, the interests of women have to be considered more seriously in collective bargaining processes. On the other side, trade unions have to become more attractive for women once more, in order to make up ground and raise the number of their members.

The strategy of Gender Mainstreaming would provide a solution for both aspects. The method is already operating as a EU-Guideline and as we speak, federal ministries in Germany are preparing Gender Mainstreaming guidelines as well. But what exactly is Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender Mainstreaming aims at sensitising decision-makers to check their own actions and considerations at any time for gender equality. By this means, the concern for gender aspects is to be secured on all levels of a decision-making process.

To give you an example, this can mean that the reconciliation of work and family life, firstly, contains adequate regulations for working hours and parental leave or a wide range of child-care facilities and all-day-schools. And secondly, the option has to become natural not only to mothers but also to fathers. As long as colleagues turn their noses up against fathers who go on parental leave, Gender Mainstreaming is still necessary.

Hopefully, this strategy will help men to come to the realisation that women's claims actually are gender-related claims and therefore concern both women and men. I notice nowadays that young fathers are very open-minded. But as long as the woman earns less or does role-specific part-time work, the reality will be that the mother stays at home.

The second task for the trade unions can be tackled with Gender Mainstreaming as well. Let's assist trade unions recruit and promote more women. We need equality, modernity and assertiveness. - I hope you will have an interesting discussion and would like to thank you for your attention.

## Summary of the Discussion

The panel discussion took place in the atrium of the Willy-Brandt-Haus in Berlin and was presented by the journalist Barbara Wesel. The following participants made up the panel: Marjolijn Bulk from the International Department of the Dutch Trade Union Confederation, Irmgard Meyer member of the Executive Board of the German Building Workers Union and at the same time Head of the Women's Committee of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IF-BWW) and Elsa Ramos Head of the Department for Equality and Youth of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The keynote speaker Anke Fuchs gave a positive answer to the question in the title "Equality through collective bargaining?". Collective bargaining could turn out as a very useful tool indeed, to get a move on gender equality in the working world. However, legislation and the social climate have to be appropriate at the same time. Presently both are advantageous in Germany and the former trade unionist welcomed the politics of the current government and that of the Federal Minister of Family Christine Bergmann.

She started by directing the attention of the audience to one of the most urgent problems, which trade unions have to face these days: globalisation. Distribution and production structures have changed in a globalised economy and manufactures are moved into countries where the influence of trade unions is marginal. In this manner, trade union's power dwindles away. In addition, western countries suffer from an individualisation of society, which leads to a decrease of trade union's influence as well, because young, flexible individualists do not consider the membership in a trade union as particularly attractive.

Yet, to Fuchs globalisation is the main challenge politics and trade unions face today. According to her, this means now more than ever to keep on fighting, to campaign for new members and to shape the future rather than to let it just come about. In a globalised world this implies as well

to take on the trouble to put through criteria in the ILO, IMF and ICFTU. She predicted good chances for the Gender Mainstreaming strategy to be successful in changing the attitude within the trade unions and thereby hopefully attract more young women.

The panel discussion took up the question of globalisation. Elsa Ramos described how the international trade union's movement refused to accept globalisation first and warned of its effects. The differences of technical standards between developing and industrialised countries grow larger and along with it the gap between poor and rich. However, the only reaction of the trade unions to this development can be to keep up with the globalisation and to promote solidarity and networking among the trade union movement around the world. At the same time, the convincing and recruiting of members can only be done at a company level. Yet the trade unions can jointly exercise their power, enhanced by better communication among each other.

After all; the effects of globalisation are quite similar in the North and in the South: In the industrialised countries mainly (apparently) self-employed and employees in the computer industry are not organised in trade unions. In the developing countries the workers in the "informal

sector" are also self-employed, often working part-time and home based and are not organised in trade unions. According to Elsa Ramos, these workers should be viewed as a great potential, both in the developing and the developed countries. The extension of their influence should be one of the union's key objectives, especially in times of decreasing numbers of union members, because this is a main factor for success in collective bargaining. Moreover, the international trade unions confederations have to see to frame works and means of exerting pressure in particular with the help of minimum standards and minimum demands.

Furthermore the improvement of women's situation has to be a main ambition of the trade unions. In spite of Beijing +5 we are still far from gender equality. The ICFTU has reached a major goal with the increase of women members to 40 %. Yet women have not the position they deserve and especially in trade unions, women still have too little power. Gender Mainstreaming presents itself as a tool, which can be used universally and might therefore be successful. "Gender" is not an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon although the term might not easily translate into all languages. It nevertheless names a problem, which is the same all over the world and which needs to be fought against with the joint strength of all women.

Marjolijn Bulk's home country the Netherlands has been introduced as a "Best-practice-example" on more than one occasion. Surely Dutch women had to struggle for equal rights as well but nowadays

satisfying laws and regulations are in place. The famous Dutch "Poldermodel" is known as a successful cooperation between employers and trade unions, which combined wage adjustments and demands for education and childcare facilities. Thanks to the model, unemployment was reduced successfully to 3 % today. Meanwhile childcare facilities and minimum wages are regulated in such a way that women find a friendly environment on the job market.

The situation was not always like this in Holland: Up until the 1960's women were not allowed to work without their husband's permission and even after the abolishment of such openly discriminating laws, women have not reached an equal standing in the working world and often merely earn a little extra to the male main earners' wages. Despite of the exemplary laws some facts about the Dutch reality will bring us down to earth. Most of the women work in part-time jobs (1997: 59 %) and the traditional role model is still prevalent. Nowadays women can go to work but still the majority of them is not economically independent. Also chances for promotion are far better for men than they are for women. Women mainly work in the lower wage groups and are hardly found in leading positions. Finally, the wage gap between women and men is still very large in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a country with relatively small income disparities. Bearing that in mind it is rather a disgrace that the wage gap between men and women is the third largest in Europe.

At least the social climate in the Netherlands supports joint action of women and men and despite all failures there is a broad consensus about gender equality. Specific regulations make sure that in collective bargaining gender equality is taken into account: a commission checks the agreed contracts for gender equality and thereby acts as a legal corrective. In March 2000, the Dutch government introduced a new approach to emancipation, in which the goal was set at an employment participation of women of 65 % in 2010, combined with the goal to increase the percentage of male participation in unpaid (domestic) care to 40% in 2010. Therefore the government finally deems it necessary to increase the childcare facilities and to increase the facilities for (paid) care-leave.

Irmgard Meyer pointed out that there is no direct discrimination in German wage agreements too. But what is far more challenging to overcome is the indirect, subtle discrimination against women, which is very widely spread in Germany and in fact all over Europe. Also the absence of minimum wages in Germany is a source of discrimination as well as the large parts of the economy, which are not reached by trade union activities. Collective bargaining is an important tool for fighting women's discrimination at the workplace and wage agreements' effects on the life of the workers should not be underestimated. At least there are no low wage groups for women anymore in Germany and trade unions as well as collective bargaining commissions have introduced women quotations.

One of the top priorities is the need for new, fair job evaluation systems. The job evaluation systems commonly used in Germany are up to 50 years old, have the main focus on physical work and take a male main earner for granted. The example of in-house and outside cleaners illustrates that similar work is paid differently, because one of the jobs is typically female and the other typically male. Therefore, transparent, gender-neutral job evaluation systems are overdue, which will make clear that evaluation structures are distribution structures as well. Consequently, re-evaluating means to re-distribute, which will most probably let the solidarity of male colleagues dwindle away rather quickly.

New concepts and ways have to be found to face the problem of shrinking influence on parts of the new economy. The traditional structures of trade unions are not practical any longer. By the way, this is not always the fault of the unions: although companies of the IT industry are eligible for a works committee they do not always vote for one. The unions are actually trying to reach the workers of such areas as the IT or computer technology by means of open forums, project work and interest groups. In particular the recruitment of young women will be necessary in the future in order to let the trade unions survive. For that reason trade union work has to take into account young women's needs and desires to be attractive to them. Gender Mainstreaming can be a good concept for doing so, as long as it is brought about in a comprehensible manner.