

# Skills for Bargaining

## Introduction

We have seen that collective bargaining can take place at different levels:

- at department or section
- at the workplace
- at company level
- at national level within an industry.

So union representatives from local to national level must be involved in collective bargaining, to press to advance and defend the interests of members, and resolve conflicts and make agreements.

*This unit gives you some guidelines to help you handle bargaining activities more effectively.*

There are clear stages in the process of collective bargaining:

### 1. Preparation of a claim

- consultation with members
- research
- deciding priorities and strategy

### 2. Presentation of the claim

- collective bargaining tactics
- using trade union pressure

### 3. Making an agreement

- making a deal with management
- consulting members
- implementing and enforcing an agreement.

## Preparing for Collective Bargaining

### 1. Consulting members

Collective bargaining is not won just by the side with the best arguments. It is necessary to have some power and influence if you want management to make concessions to the workers' demands.

In the old system, power and influence came from party connections and individual deals and obligations. Independent trade unions get power from the active support of their members. The source of this power is the right of workers to strike if they are not satisfied.

So you must be able to show you have enough workers in your union, and that they understand and support the union case. Don't try to bluff management about how members feel. If you don't have real support you will lose credibility.

Some ideas to help you build support are:

- hold regular meetings to consult workers. Ask them about their problems and priorities before you draw up a claim to put to management
- prepare workers carefully if you think it may be necessary to take action in support of your claim
- a vote to show that members are prepared to take action may help you put on pressure, even if you don't take action.
- make sure you prepare and circulate leaflets and bulletins explaining the union case, and telling members why they should support the union.

### 2. Research

It is normal to submit a written claim to management, with evidence to back up the union case.

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## Collective Bargaining Guidelines

### Aims

To help you:

- consider key points for bargaining
- share ideas and experience with other participants

### Task

Working in a small group, make a list of suggestions and points for union officers involved in collective bargaining.

Think about what must be done:

- a) Before meeting management.
- c) During discussions with management.
- d) If agreement cannot be reached.
- e) After an agreement has been made with management.

There are normally three types of argument you must use to support a claim for improved pay and conditions:

#### a) Prices

Use government figures on inflation to show how much wages must rise to preserve workers' living standards. If you don't have reliable figures, do your own research and calculations to show how much workers have to pay for essentials.

#### b) Ability to pay

Try to get figures from the company to show trends in sales, profits and turnover. If your company is doing well then workers should share in the benefits. At the moment it will not be easy to show this. In the longer term it will be important to ensure that details of company performance are published and made available to workers. Unions will need to employ researchers to collect such information, analyse developments in collective agreements and to provide technical information to negotiators.

### 3. Planning

Negotiators need to be clear on the following points before meeting management:

#### • Aims

What is the union hoping to achieve?

#### • Priorities

What are the members' wishes and priorities among the different unions' aims?

#### • Fallback

What would be the minimum management offer that the union would be prepared to accept?

#### • Arguments

What evidence and arguments will the union use to back up its claim?

What arguments will management use, and how can these be countered?

#### • Sanctions

What sanctions and action is the union prepared to make? Are these credible? Will they help convince management?

#### • Tactics

Decide who will present the case, how the union team will work, who will come in with extra arguments, how to keep the initiative in the discussion. Always have a preparatory meeting of the union negotiating team.

### 4. Meeting Management

It is very important that the following points are kept to by the union side during discussions with management:

#### • United Front

Decide who will be the main spokesperson. Others must only come in when invited by him/her.

Never disagree in front of management.

#### • Notes

Someone on the union side must keep notes of the main points.

#### • Adjournments

Ask for a short break if the union needs to consider a management offer, or sort out a potential disagreement.

#### • Control

Try to keep the discussion on your best arguments and emphasise the strong points of your case. The management side will try to expose weaknesses in your arguments and put you on the defensive.

#### • Settlements

The aim of the discussion is to agree a deal with management which will be acceptable to members. This will normally mean a compromise. You should be clear in advance how far you are prepared to compromise (the "fallback position"). You must also watch out for management concessions and offers. They will often be phrased in a guarded way.

Be prepared for give-and-take. It will be easier to get a settlement if neither side feels they have been completely defeated.

#### • Put it in writing

Never leave a negotiating meeting without a clear written record of what has been agreed, if possible signed by both parties. Keep your own notes, and don't rely on management's records only.

### 5. After negotiations

#### • Report back

You will need to consult members, and inform them of the results of the discussion. Normally the members should be asked if they accept the offer. In important negotiations they may be asked to vote on this. You should get facilities from management to report back in working time.

#### • Publicise the agreement

Make sure that copies of the agreement are available for members, and that local representatives are briefed to inform members, answer questions, and see that the agreement is observed by the management.

#### • If you don't get an agreement

You will have to consider the next steps. The choices will be:

- asking for further negotiations
- referring the case to a higher level of negotiations
- taking some form of industrial action
- referring the case to conciliation, arbitration or a government tribunal.

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## Collective Bargaining Guidelines

### Aims

To help you:

- practice the skills needed for collective bargaining
- discuss guidelines for bargaining.

### Task

- 1) You will be asked to work in a group, to prepare for negotiations, either as a trade union member, manager or observer. You will be given details of a case or grievance.
- 2) The groups will meet separately to plan and prepare their case.
- 3) The union and management groups will meet to negotiate on the case or problem. The observers will watch and take notes.
- 4) The whole class will meet to consider the main lessons, and evaluate the roleplay. The observers will be asked to give a report to start this discussion, and highlight the good and bad points of the union approach.

## Introduction

"Women have been an important force in the emergence of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe.

However, there are signs that the economic and social situation of women in these countries is rapidly deteriorating.

Urgent measures must be taken by governments and trade unions to ensure that the transition to a market economy does not disproportionately affect working women and that social benefits and infrastructure which allow women to reconcile work with family responsibilities are maintained.

Measures promoting equality of opportunity and treatment for working women must be integrated into economic and structural adjustment programmes. These emerging economies must be based on the real equality of women."  
ICFTU Conclusions of Women's 5th World Women's Conference, Ottawa April 1991

Women need trade unions to fight to improve their pay and conditions of work and to fight for their rights. For women everywhere, any activity in a trade union means added work to fit into an already overburdened work load. Nevertheless, women have been working to make low pay, equal opportunities, sexual harassment, childcare and health issues a higher priority in trade unions.

This section will help you to:

- be more aware of the problems facing women workers at work and in the union
- consider what unions must do to fully reflect the views and needs of women members

## Problems of women workers

### 1. The double shift

Although it may be accepted that men should work more at home, women still bear the main responsibility for domestic work and childcare. Most women, whether they have children or not, have two jobs, one unpaid and one paid.

Supplies of reasonably priced goods are scarce. Poor shopping and poor transport facilities make women's domestic work more time-consuming and tiring. How many hours of unpaid work do women carry out at home?

#### Women's domestic work in Poland

Women do:

- 82.4% of the cooking
- 78.5% of the washing up
- 85% of the house cleaning
- 90.9% of the ironing

Source Solidarnosc 1990

Women are supposed to be the natural carers of children and older people and it is

sometimes considered that they should not work outside the home. Others say that there is no reason why women should limit their lives to working at home. In any case, most women have to work to get enough income.

### 2. Women and unemployment

The number of women in paid jobs has been growing since the 1970's but in times of economic crisis, it is women who are the first to lose their jobs and who suffer most from cuts in social services and health care.

In Eastern and Central Europe, there is a high proportion of working women. In Poland, women represent 45% of the total labour force and only 7.6% of women are working in part-time jobs. The transformation of centrally planned economies into market economies has created a previously unknown level of unemployment and women are more affected than men. Many enterprises are making women redundant and have also cut social services.

### Unemployment & Childcare

For every vacancy there are 18 unemployed men and 46 unemployed women. The scarcity of affordable day care may force more women, particularly single mothers, out of the labour force. Source UNPA Report Poland 1992

It is women who do most of the paid jobs related to cooking, cleaning, laundering, childcare, nursing, and teaching children, which is presumed to be an extension of their "natural" caring role. These jobs are generally regarded as low status and so are underpaid and under-valued.

### 3. Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

#### Women in Romania

In 1990, female workers constituted 42% of the total workforce.

Women predominate in the following activities:

- 88% in the clothing industry
- 62% in commerce
- 54% in food production

Source UNPA Report Romania 1992

Women's average earnings are still about two thirds men's earnings in most European countries. Men and women still tend to do different jobs and often work in different industries. Where women work in the same area as men, women tend to be lower paid and be in lower grades. Many women with families are reluctant to take on extra responsibility at work, especially if it means working overtime.

In many countries, there are now laws compelling employers to pay equal pay for work of equal value. However, it is often difficult for women to compare their wages with men because they are working in jobs performed only by women. "Job evaluation" can often be discriminatory and undervalue the skills and experience of women.

### 4. Low Pay

Many adult workers earn so little that their wages fall below the minimum they need to live on. Many workers can only make ends meet by working overtime, or taking extra

jobs. This affects their health and their social lives. Most of the low paid are women, because women's work is low graded and undervalued.

Some trade unions campaign for a national minimum wage. Trade unions also have to ensure that the minimum wage is actually paid and that is reviewed on a regular basis. Trade unions can present pay claims which favour raising the wages of low paid workers and reducing the differentials in pay between groups of workers.

### 5. Part-time work/temporary work/short-term contracts

Women often prefer part-time work outside the home because it gives them more time to carry out their domestic work. Over 80% of part-time workers are women. As the economic crisis bites, more and more employers are turning to part-time, temporary and short-term contracts. Such working arrangements are useful for employers who can then respond more easily to peaks and troughs in demand. But it can leave the worker with no job security.

Trade unions need to fight to improve the pay and working conditions of part-time workers and other contract workers.

Trade unions can seek to negotiate with employers to include agreements on:

- written contracts of employment for temporary and casual workers, which should give the workers the same rights as other employees and the same benefits on a pro-rata basis
- an agreement that wages and conditions of sub-contracting employers should be no less favourable than those of the original company
- opportunities for training and promotion
- job security

## 6. Women and Training

With changing patterns of work, there are many opportunities for trade unions to improve the position of women workers through increased training. In particular, women need access to training in "non-traditional" areas of work. There are many ways in which women are indirectly discriminated against in access to training, through for example, limiting training opportunities to persons on particular jobs or grades.

Trade unions need to take up issues which will make women feel confident about attending training, such as women only training courses, and offering adequate childcare facilities or childcare allowances. Trade unions need to be involved in planning training programmes and monitoring women's access to them.

## 7. Sexual Harassment at Work

Sexual harassment at work should not be tolerated. Trade unions should seek to ensure that there are effective and swift procedures for dealing with harassment cases. In 1990, a European Council Resolution was passed which states:

"working conditions or conduct in the workplace which on grounds of sex adversely affect the physical and psychological integrity of workers or thereafter their dignity, privacy or self respect, constitute discrimination on grounds of sex..."

Sexual harassment of women workers is frequent in all countries. It is the responsibility of unions to defend women workers against this serious problem.

## 8. Childcare Facilities

Many women with young children work because they need the income and would rather stay at home and be with their children. Others would prefer to combine a job with the care of their children. Both men and women should be allowed to combine caring

responsibilities (for the sick, elderly and disabled, not just children), with a job, including training, further training and re-training.

Publicly funded services are often insufficient and inadequate. As subsidies for infant and child day care centres are cut, female unemployment will grow. Trade unions should seek to campaign for improved quality services and for a range of childcare options, including paid parental leave for both men and women.

### Childcare Facilities in Poland

During 1980-1985, only 48 new creches were opened in Poland. In 1985, for every 100 children under the age of 3, only 5.1 children had a place in a nursery

Source: Solidarnosc 1990

Trade unions should support the right to childcare provisions and plan for improved childcare facilities for their members. Trade unions can seek to negotiate with employers and press for:

- adequate social security benefits for both women and men to look after infants and young children
- parental leave for fathers so that more value is placed on women as workers and men as fathers
- provision of low-cost quality childcare, including creches and nursery schools.

## 9. Integration of Women Into Trade Unions

Women's needs and problems are not always viewed as priority trade union issues. Women are under-represented at all levels of influence and spheres of life, including trade unions.

"There are still many obstacles to the full integration of women into trade unions - as members, in leadership, in policy-making, and in collective bargaining.

The major ones are:

- lack of free time due to family commitments; traditional roles and stereotypes
- negative male attitudes and unwillingness of men to give up power
- negative images of unions and unsupportive environments"

ICFTU Conclusions of Women's 5th World Women's Conference, Ottawa April 1991

Women find it hard to get involved in trade unions for practical reasons. Also trade unions may not take up issues of concern to women. Union democracy should mean representing and involving all members.



Some changes which could encourage women to get involved in your trade union are:

### Meetings

- *access to meetings:* meetings in working hours help women and all members. If these are not possible, provide a creche or pay childcare allowances to encourage women and single parents to attend. Help organise transport facilities.
- *encourage women to attend:* explain procedures to women before they attend their first meeting; make sure that new members are introduced
- *less formal meetings:* meetings can be off-putting. Try and make them less formal and encourage as much participation as possible.

### Women Representatives

A woman representative can encourage greater involvement of other women and it may make it easier for others to discuss their difficulties.

Women may then view the trade union as a more receptive and concerned organisation. It is easier for a woman to discuss childcare difficulties or sexual harassment for example with another woman.

### Union Structures

Many unions have considered or set up special structures and appointed women's officers.

These include:

- *women's committees:* women's committees can ensure that the special interests and needs of women are taken into account by the trade union; these committees need to be adequately serviced and funded and report to decision-making bodies
- *women's officers:* a national elected or appointed post with responsibility for the needs of the female membership and to encourage their involvement in the trade union
- *reserved seats on decision making bodies:* to make sure that women's views are represented.

### Trade Union Education

Women's issues and equal opportunities policies should be discussed in all trade union education programmes. Both men and women need to understand issues that affect women at work.

Trade union training for women helps build confidence and integrate women into negotiating teams and leadership positions. Many women prefer to start with a "women only" course and then join a mixed course later on.

Trade unions should encourage more women to be selected for their mixed trade union courses. They can also consider setting targets or quotas for the numbers of women participating in their trade union education programmes.

Training courses need to focus on issues such as:

- negotiating equal opportunities agreements with employers and how to monitor such agreements
- leadership training for women at different levels
- training of women educators and facilitators
- training for all full-time officers, both men and women on equality issues.

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*Women at Home, at Work and in the union*

**Aims**

To help you:

- think about the difficulties women face as paid and unpaid carers
- work out arguments to use when talking to trade union members about women at work
- consider the steps unions should take to defend the interests of women members

**Task 1**

Working in small groups, consider the following statements. How would you respond to each comment if it was made to you by a trade union member?

"It's not natural for women to go out to work. They should be looking after their families. Now that communism is over they can go home."

"Women shouldn't earn the same as men, they don't have a family to provide for, and their work is normally less skilled".

"When unemployment rises, women should be the first to lose their jobs".

**Task 2**

What should the union be doing to improve agreements with employers, to protect the interests of women workers? Make a list of your priorities.

**Task 3**

What should the union do to ensure that women are properly represented at all levels in the union?

## Introduction

"Informed commentators and observers of the centrally 'planned' Central and Eastern European countries have long known that both workplace and environmental conditions were disastrous for all concerned -whatever the claims to the contrary.

This is a matter of record. The exact nature and extent of the problem were more difficult to assess because of the obsessive secrecy of previous regimes, and it is only recently that the enormity of the situation has become apparent"

ICFTU, "Occupational Health and Safety and the Environment." 1990

The protection of the safety and health of workers is a priority task for trade unions.

This is particularly important in the construction and wood industries, which are among the most dangerous sectors. And it is doubly important in Central and Eastern Europe where the legacy of neglect and secrecy has created a disastrous situation in workplaces and in the environment.

The role of the trade union must start where the damage occurs, in and around the workplace. The union must be able to identify problems and threats to health and safety, and have the information and influence necessary to press management to make improvements.

It is common for victims of accidents and disease to be blamed for their problems. Management often say that carelessness is the biggest cause of injuries. Trade unions must resist this analysis, which tries to make workers responsible for the problem.

The problem is the dangers which exist in the workplace, and the responsibility rests on management and the owners of enterprises to make sure that health and safety is given a high priority.

In the market system, profitability comes first. There may be a real conflict of interest for the employer when money needs to be spent to improve health and safety.

So a set of strong laws is needed to ensure good standards, with enough government inspectors to see that the law is obeyed, and a tough policy to punish those who break the law.

This must be backed up with strong trade union organisation, with local union representatives who are able to spot the problems, inspect the workplace, raise issues with management and liaise with the government inspectors.

So this Unit should help you to:

- understand the importance of health and safety and environmental questions for trade unions
- consider the main safety, health and environmental hazards in the construction and wood sectors
- have a clear idea of the trade union approach to tackling health and safety problems
- consider what needs to be done to improve health and safety and environmental policies of employers and the government
- know more about international standards for health and safety, including ILO Conventions and IFBWW policy.

## ACTIVITY 15



## Health and Safety - the problems

### Aims

To help us:

- consider the main problems for workers and the community
- discuss the basic trade union approach to health and safety at work and in the community

### Task 1

Work in a small group to prepare a report. Make a list of the main health and safety problems in your work.

Think about:

- accident risks and safety problems
- risk to workers' health
- damage to the surrounding environment and community

### Task 2

Consider the following statements. Indicate whether you agree or disagree, and explain your reasons:

1 "Most accidents at work occur because workers are careless and negligent."

2 "Health and safety at work is a technical question, which trade unions and local representatives are not qualified to deal with. It is best left to the experts."

3. "We would all like to see better provision for health and safety, but this is a luxury the country can't afford at the moment. It will have to wait."

### Task 3

What kind of information do you need about health and safety at work, and environmental questions? Do you have any ideas about where you could get it?



## Health and Safety - the trade union approach

### 1. Hazards of Construction and Wood work

Unfortunately construction and wood industries are among the most dangerous sectors to work in. And often the dangers are hard to control because people do not work in fixed locations, and worksites are constantly changing. Some of the main problems you may have identified are listed here:

KEY  
POINTS

#### Hazards and Problems

##### Physical hazards

Trips and falls  
Falling objects  
Machinery  
Vehicles on the worksite  
Transport arrangements  
Poor lighting  
Confined spaces  
Earthworks and trenches  
Fire  
Hoists, lifts and cranes  
Defective scaffolding and ladders  
Electricity  
Defective tools  
Inadequate protective equipment

##### Health Hazards

Vibration  
Noise  
Chemicals, solvents, fumes  
Dusts, asbestos  
Temperature  
Radiation  
Biological agents  
Stress and harassment  
Long hours  
Poverty  
Poor accommodation  
Poor sanitation  
Poor welfare facilities  
Poor diet

##### Environmental Problems

Pollution by dust, chemicals, asbestos  
Noise from worksites  
Destruction of forests  
Environmental damage of badly planned construction projects

##### Organisational problems

Poor management  
Bad management attitudes  
Lack of trade union strength  
Lack of education/awareness  
Lack of first aid/medical facilities  
Lack of maintenance  
Lack of information  
Poor law and law enforcement  
Sub contracting and poor management control  
Workers' attitudes and expectations  
Lack of training and information

*All these problems need to be tackled by the union. But first it is vital to develop the right approach, and ensure that unions tackle the right priorities in the right way.*

### 2. Carelessness and accidents

Very often when an accident happens, the victim gets blamed. "He wasn't paying attention", or "She should have been more careful".

Management often take this approach, because they want to argue that they are not responsible, and they don't want to pay for improvements. Many workers also take this simple view because they take the hazards of the job for granted.

But the real cause of accidents at work is the dangerous conditions which exist. The way to make work safe is to "control the hazards at source". This means removing or controlling the dangerous conditions, to ensure that accidents can't happen, not relying on workers to take care.

Workers do need to be trained and educated to make them aware of the dangers at work, but that doesn't make them responsible for the problem. Also many dangers are hidden, particularly health damage from dusts and chemicals. Workers may not be aware of the danger until it is too late.

Trade unions need to be careful about the use of protective clothing and equipment worn by workers as a solution to health and safety problems.

Very often protective equipment is a cheap second-rate solution which is uncomfortable to wear, and shifts the responsibility for protection back on to the worker.

Remember, trade unions want control at source:-

Noise control	not	earplugs
Dust control	not	facemasks
Safer cleaners	not	gloves and masks
Machine guards	not	warning signs

### 3. A technical question?

Sometimes trade unionists are reluctant to raise health and safety issues because they feel they are not properly qualified. And management may prefer to limit trade union involvement and attack union arguments.

But often the people who know most about the problems are the workers directly involved, who suffer the accidents and health problems. Trade unions have a vital role in giving voice to workers problems, so that hazards can be identified. Management may not be keen to do this, it may cost them money. And normally there are not enough government inspectors to monitor every workplace.

Experience in Western Europe has shown that with the right training and support, workplace representatives supported by their members can play a vital role in detecting problems, proposing solutions and making sure improvements are made. They don't have to be scientists or technical experts to play this role. They need basic information, common sense, membership support and a trade union view of the problems.

### 4. Is health and safety a luxury/low priority?

Workers often feel that an unsafe job is better than no job. Management may threaten that proper health and safety arrangements would cost too much and close a factory down.

Trade unions cannot accept this approach. For a start, the argument could always be used to postpone improvements. Secondly health and the right to live are just as important as the pay packet.

New investment and equipment will be needed to modernise and make industries more competitive internationally. Unions should demand that new equipment meets international safety standards from the start.



Not tackling problems now will cause more problems and expense later. Control of pollution is an urgent necessity for the long term health of the people and the economy.

Lastly, if there is a conflict of interest between profit and health and safety, it is the job of the union to speak up for the workers, and make sure that their interests are not disregarded. This will also mean pressing the government to take action when it would prefer to do nothing.

#### 5. Information and standards for health and safety at work

One frequent problem is that unions need information about the precautions needed to ensure proper health and safety arrangements. They need to know what laws and rights exist to make sure that employers design and manage work in a safe way. There are many different sources of information and standards, which can answer questions such as:

- how much noise will damage your hearing?
- how often should a crane be inspected?
- how should a scaffold be constructed?
- how should a saw be guarded?

There are many sources of answers to these kind of questions, and unions will need to ensure that they can get access to the information they need. Often the information will not be available in simple easily understood language, and so unions may have to take responsibility to summarise and present the information for workers in a useful way.

Some of the sources to consider are:

#### Government

Your government will have departments responsible for health and safety at work and environmental questions. Very often they

may lack resources. But it makes sense to identify relevant departments and individuals, and to try to get information from them and to press them to provide relevant information to unions.

You will need also to get hold of relevant national laws relating to these questions. It is common that such laws may look good on paper, but be totally unenforced in reality. Unions nationally will need to study these laws, compare them to international standards, identify improvements that are needed, and press for adequate enforcement arrangements to see that these laws are obeyed.

#### Academic organisations

There may be university departments with specialists in health and safety. If possible, unions should approach them, and try to identify sympathetic individuals who can help and offer advice. There is a danger that overdependence on academics will reinforce the belief that health and safety is for experts only. They need to be pressed to make sure that their advice is provided in simple non-technical language.

#### Employers

Most employers and employers' organisations will not be well informed on working environment questions. But they must be pressed to employ relevant specialists, to compile information and to make it available to trade unions. Without some trade union pressure they are unlikely to see this as a priority.

#### International union links

One most important source of information is the international trade union network which exists through the IFBWW. IFBWW affiliates in many cases have long experience of these problems and have developed effective policies. These policies and experience also contribute to the work of IFBWW, through its role in pressing for better international standards, and in the formulation of IFBWW policy, such as the IFBWW Bern Manifesto which calls for a worldwide ban on the use of all asbestos in construction.

IFBWW is increasingly developing health and safety publications, and more work must be done to make translations of key sources available in relevant languages for Central and Eastern Europe.

#### The International Labour Organisation - ILO

The ILO is the arm of the United Nations responsible for employment issues including health and safety. It is a tripartite body, representing governments, employers' associations and unions.

It publishes extensive information on health and safety, and also works to improve the standard of national health and safety legislation.

This is done by the creation of Conventions, Recommendations and Codes of Practice which set standards for national laws, and provide guidance on good practice. It is up to governments to "ratify" (say they accept) these Conventions, and then to ensure that national laws reflect the ILO Standards.

There are many ILO standards relevant to the construction and wood industry, and trade unions must study these and develop campaigns to get these accepted and applied in their own countries. IFBWW is represented on the ILO committees that develop these standards, and has been able to play an important role in developing standards for health and safety.

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### Health and Safety Action plan

#### Aims

To help us:

- identify priority issues for union action on health and safety
- consider the next steps that unions must take.

#### Task

Working in a small group, consider the following questions and prepare a report to the class:

- 1) What do you feel are the most important health and safety issues for the union to take up? What should the union be aiming to achieve.
- 2) Make a list of action points for your union on health and safety and environmental issues.

Think about:

- getting information
- trade union education and training
- strengthening union organisation at workplace and national levels
- demands to put to government
- demands to put to employers
- increasing the awareness of trade union members.

## Introduction

Trade Unions are independent organisations, relying for their strength on the voluntary participation of their members. This principle also applies to how unions are financed.

To achieve a strong union, it is vital that membership contributions are enough to pay for the activities of the union, and are collected regularly and efficiently.

To attract members, unions must have enough money to provide good services to them. To have power in negotiations, unions must have the ability to put on pressure. This means not only the right to strike in the law, but also the financial means to support striking workers through strike funds.

This unit looks at how unions can organise their finances, and ensure that they are able to operate effectively.

## Union Finances

### 1) Why is union finance important?

Unions need to be able to function independently of government and employers, and to be seen to be independent of outside influences. They also need enough money to carry out their functions, and provide a good service to members. So they need a secure income, and to build up funds such as strike funds which will give them the resources they need to handle conflicts, and the credibility to put pressure on employers when this is needed.

### 2) How much should workers pay?

Workers need to pay what is required to enable the union to operate. But the subscriptions also have to be affordable, and not a serious deterrent to winning new members. In Western European countries, subscriptions of around 1% of wages are normal, though some unions, particularly those for skilled and professional workers collect more. In unions where there are many competing unions, like Great Britain, competition keeps union dues down to less than half a percent of workers' income.

Some unions calculate their fees as a percentage of salary, or have different rates for different grades of worker. Others have a flat rate fee, with special lower rates for young people and unemployed people.

### 3) How should the money be collected?

The most common system now is the "check-off" system, where employers take the money from wages, and pay it direct to the union. The alternative is where local union representatives collect the money by hand.

The advantage of the check-off is that it assures a steady flow of money to the union. It saves the time of local representatives, and cuts down on any possibility of local corruption. Payments are automatically increased if union subscriptions rise.

On the other hand, it can cut down contact between representatives and workers, and can make workers feel that their union dues are like a kind of tax. With the check-off system, the employer knows who is in the union, and this can be a problem in some cases. Also the employer has the power to cut off the union income in a dispute.

Despite these disadvantages, most unions on balance prefer the check-off system.

Where workers' incomes are higher, and most have bank accounts, it is possible for union subscriptions to be collected by regular bank transfers from workers' accounts. This overcomes most of the disadvantages of the check-off system.

## ACTIVITY 17



## Trade Union Finance

### Aims

To help you:

- think about how union subscriptions should be collected
- look at how union finance should be managed

### Task

Prepare answers to the following questions:

#### 1) Collection of subscriptions

How much should workers pay in union subscriptions?  
Should everyone pay the same amount?

Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of:

- Collection of union subscriptions by hand
- Collection of subscriptions by employers from pay (check-off)

#### 2) Allocation of union income

How should trade union income be shared between national, regional and local structures?

What safeguards are needed to make sure that union finances are properly handled?

#### 3) Strike funds

Do you think your union should have a strike fund?  
How should it be financed and controlled?

#### 4) Other income

Should your union take money from other sources than the members, such as government funds for training?

#### 4) Allocating union income

There are three main possible patterns for where the monies and dues are paid:

##### ... to local structures

These then pass on a proportion to the union regional and national structures. This normally means that the bulk of the money stays at local level, and power in the organisation is decentralised. It also means that local organisations with strong membership have good finances, but those in weaker areas have big money problems.

##### ... to the union's national centre

This then allocates a proportion to lower structures. This normally means that more of the money is spent centrally, which can be appropriate if the bargaining system is also centralised. Professional management of the money is usually easier in such cases.

##### ... to the national union centre

This then allocates resources to national federations for different industries. This can lead to under-financing of industrial and workplace structures, and places a lot of control in the centre of the organisation. It does allow for cross-subsidy between strong sectors, such as metal workers, to weaker sectors such as agriculture.

#### 5) Safeguards

Workers need to have confidence that their money is looked after, and is being well spent. Unions need to account for all income and expenditure, and should have financial procedures to ensure this is done. Regular financial reports to members must be made. Most countries have laws which require trade unions to keep annual accounts, and have them checked by the Government.

#### 6) Strike Funds

Most unions have a separate strike fund as a reserve to help when they are in conflict. Normally the strike fund is used to alleviate

hardship of strikers and their families if they are deprived of income, and is used only for strikes which are properly authorised under union rules. Some unions make additional levies for the strike fund, others collect money for the fund as part of normal union subscriptions.

Having a strong strike fund adds to the credibility of the union, even if the money is not used!

#### 7) Other sources of income

Unions have to safeguard their independence, so they have to be careful about asking for money from outside sources. For example it would be difficult to take money from employers without being compromised. Some unions feel the same way about taking money from their Governments. On the other hand unions in some countries take money for specific purposes, for example trade union education or overseas aid. This can be a useful supplement to dues income.

Many argue that workers are taxpayers too, so why shouldn't the unions benefit also from government funding, as employers do. One problem is that the money may not be secure, and could be withdrawn if a government changes. This happened recently to the Swedish unions, who lost their support for trade union education activities.

#### 9) Union assets and property

One of the most pressing issues in Central and Eastern European unions is the disposal of property controlled by the unions under the previous government. In some cases the new government has claimed buildings and other assets as state property. In other cases there are disputes about how the property should be shared between different trade union forces. In the long run, the issue of self-reliance is relevant. Unions should be seen to exist on their own resources, and should be capable of maintaining their assets on the basis of the income they get from their members.

## Introduction

The international trade union movement exists to:

- bring unions in different countries together, to support each other, and to share ideas, information and experience
- provide solidarity assistance to workers and unions facing particular problems, and involved in disputes or attacks on trade union and human rights
- represent and defend the interests of workers before international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation, or the European Community
- defend the right to organise into trade unions in particular trade unions in countries where economic, social and legal conditions are less favourable
- campaign for the establishment and implementation of international labour standards
- provide a channel for economic and education assistance to support the development of trade unionism in all countries.

## The Role of the International Movement

With the increasing regional and international integration of economies, the role of the international trade union movement has become more vital.

Trade unions at international level have formed two types of associations:

- for National Centres of trade union movements, for example the international Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
- for national unions from the same industry or sector, such as the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, (IFBWW).

Until recently, the international trade union movement has reflected the political, economic and social divisions created after Second World War.

There are three international confederations of trade unions.

They are:

- 1) the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
- 2) the World Federation of Trade Unions - Communist orientation
- 3) the World Confederation of Labour - Christian Orientation

There are similar groupings of international federations by industrial sectors.

Following the second world war, it was hoped to create a united international trade union movement but political differences resulted in a division.

With the recent political transformations, there are renewed possibilities of creating a single united international force for the trade unions in the world.

## What is the IFBWW?

The IFBWW is one of a group of International Trade Secretariats (ITS), which organise trade unions on an industrial or trade basis at international level. The IFBWW is associated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and shares the same principles.

The IFBWW includes within its scope the organisation of building, forestry and wood workers. At the end of 1991, there were 153 member organisations in 75 countries. Total membership stood at 5.5 million workers. Unions which affiliate to the IFBWW remain autonomous in their activities, while at the same time subscribing to the fundamental principles of the Federation. With the development of a new world order, there are increasing numbers of organisations in Central and Eastern Europe which are making contact with IFBWW and becoming affiliates.

The IFBWW seeks to promote better living and working conditions for workers in the building, wood, and forestry sectors world wide. It defends the right of workers to organise into trade unions, elect their own representatives and enter into collective bargaining. It seeks to further fundamental human rights, including social and economic rights.

The IFBWW works to build a strong international trade union movement, capable of effectively representing and promoting workers' interests against a background of growing national and world-wide concentration of capital and the regional integration of economies.

The IFBWW is an autonomous body and independent from governments and employers. It is financed through the regular subscriptions of its member organisations. It also receives some additional funding from trade unions in Europe and other donor organisations for its education programmes.

## What is the IFBWW structure?

The IFBWW has a democratic structure, similar to many other trade unions. The highest authority is the World Congress, which meets every four years, and which is composed of delegates from all affiliate trade unions.

Between Congresses, the IFBWW is governed by an Executive Committee of 21 members, elected on a regional basis. The World Congress also elects the President and the General Secretary. IFBWW celebrates its 100th Anniversary Congress in 1993.

The Executive Committee meets on an annual basis and is responsible for over-seeing the implementation of policies and making decisions concerning the running of the organisation. The Management Committee meets twice a year and has the responsibility of supervising the detailed work of the IFBWW Secretariat. There are also specific Industrial Committees for building and wood.

Regional conferences of all affiliate trade unions have elected regional executive committees with between 14-20 members in each region.

These Executive Committees meet once or twice yearly. There are also regional offices in Africa (Lomé), Latin America (Panama) and Asia (Kuala Lumpur). IFBWW appoints regional representatives to take responsibility for coordinating activities, who are assisted by a team of education staff.

## IFBWW Structures in Europe

The IFBWW Committee for Europe was launched at a Conference in Berlin in November 1990, which was attended by over 200 trade union representatives. The Committee is open to all affiliates in Europe and neighbouring countries to act as a forum for discussion, cooperation and coordinated action.

**Terms of Reference of IFBWW Committee on Europe:**

The IFBWW Committee on Europe should:

- 1) promote the exchange of information, coordination of contacts and cooperation with trade unions in Eastern and Central Europe;
- 2) carefully monitor developments with regard to establishment of the internal market in Europe in 1993 which have implications for all countries in Europe and for all trade unions. Consultations therefore are needed between unions in all European countries and some countries outside Europe;
- 3) follow the negotiations between EEC-EFTA, which make necessary consultations between unions in these two groups of countries;

The Committee on Europe works in close cooperation with the European Federation of Building and Wood Workers (EFBWW) and the Nordic Federation of Building and Wood Workers (NBTF).

*The IFBWW's main tasks*

Among the main tasks carried out by the IFBWW are:

**Solidarity:**

- assistance to trade unions facing conflicts with employers or governments
- exchange of information concerning the problems and campaigns of member unions.

**Human and Trade Union Rights:**

- protests to governments and the ILO about attacks on trade unionists and their organisations
- humanitarian assistance to victims of repression.

**Education:**

- funding of education programmes, particularly in developing countries
- technical support to ensure the quality and effectiveness of trade union education programmes

- organisation of trainers, visiting speakers and study visits.

**Research and publications:**

- investigation into issues of concern to building and wood workers
- organisation of conferences and seminars on key issues
- publication of booklets and information papers
- regular bulletins and news service.

**Influencing International Labour Standards and Policies**

- regular participation on appropriate ILO committees
- work to influence relevant labour standards
- close links with the ICFTU and the EFBWW to influence relevant bodies.

**Multinational Companies:**

- monitoring activities of multinational companies in the sector
- assistance with exchange of information between unions dealing with the same multinational companies.

**Equal Opportunities:**

- activities to promote the involvement of women workers in trade unions and to
- secure equal treatment by employers
- action to protect the interests of minority groups and migrant workers.

*The International Labour Office**History*

The International Labour Office was founded in 1919, as an outcome of the Peace Conference following the First World War.

Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles establishes the ILO. The Preamble to the Constitution of the ILO declares that universal and lasting peace can be founded only on the basis of social justice.

Between the two World Wars, the ILO was an autonomous part of the League of Nations. In 1946, the ILO became the first specialised agency of the United Nations, recognised as having special responsibility for social and labour questions.

*Structures*

The ILO is composed of a general assembly, the International Labour Conference, which meets every year, an executive council, the Governing Body, and a permanent secretariat, the International Labour Office.

The organisation also has other structures, including regional conferences, industrial committees and panels of experts.

At present there are 150 member States compared to 45 at its foundation in 1919.

The International Labour Conference elects the Governing Body, adopts the ILO's annual budget, financed by contributions from Member States; sets international labour standards; passes resolutions which provide guidelines for the ILO's general policy and future activities, decides to admit new member States and acts as a world forum for the discussion of social and labour questions.

Each national delegation to the Conference is composed of two government delegates, one Employers' delegate and one Workers' delegate, accompanied as necessary by technical advisers. The ILO is therefore known as a tripartite organisation in which governments, employers and workers are represented.

Four international trade union organisations have full consultative status with the ILO.

These are:

- the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
- the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)
- the World Confederation of Labour (WCL)
- the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

They have the right to attend but not to vote at the conferences or meetings of the ILO and have an important advisory role to play in all ILO bodies, in particular through the Workers' Groups.

IFBWW is recognised by the ILO as a specialised body representing the interests of construction and wood workers on appropriate ILO committees. IFBWW helped to create ILO Convention 167 on Health and safety in the Construction Industry.



The work of the ILO consists of international standard-setting and monitoring of the application of International Labour Standards. These conventions are then "ratified" or accepted by governments.

This process is not compulsory, and many important conventions remain unratified in many countries. States which have ratified ILO conventions must report regularly on measures taken to ensure they are implemented.

These reports are reviewed by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. Problems identified by the Experts are discussed each year by a special tripartite committee of the conference.

Special ILO procedures exist for examining freedom of association complaints. The Committee on Freedom of Association is composed of an independent chairperson, and three government, three employers' and three workers' representatives.

Complaints may be submitted to this Committee whether or not a State has ratified the Conventions No. 87 and 98 relating to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining.

Major cases of non-compliance with these two conventions may be referred to Fact-finding and Conciliation Commissions.

### Important ILO Conventions

#### ILO Convention No. 87

*Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention 1948*  
Establishes the right of all workers and employers to form and join organisations of their own choosing without prior authorisation, and lays down a series of guarantees for the free functioning of organisations without interference by the public authorities.

#### ILO Convention No. 98

*Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention*  
Provides for protection against anti-union discrimination, for protection of workers' and employers' organisations against acts of interference by each other, and for measures to promote collective bargaining.

#### ILO Convention No 29

*Forced Labour Convention 1930*  
Requires the suppression of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms. Certain exceptions are permitted, such as military service, convict labour properly supervised, emergencies such as wars, fires, earthquakes etc.

#### ILO Convention No. 105

*Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957*  
Prohibits the use of any form of forced or compulsory labour as a means of political coercion or education, punishment for the expression of political or ideological views, workforce mobilisation, labour discipline, punishment for participation in strikes or discrimination.

#### ILO Convention 111

*Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958*  
Calls for a national policy to eliminate discrimination in training, access to employment and working conditions, on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

#### ILO Convention 100

*Equal Remuneration Convention 100*  
Calls for equal pay for men and women for work of equal value.

#### ILO Convention 167

*Health and Safety in the Construction Industry*

### ACTIVITY 18



### Your union's international links

#### Aims:

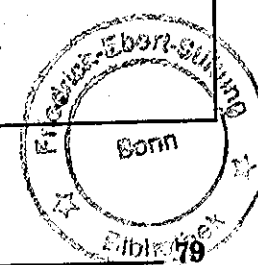
#### To help you:

- consider the aims of the international trade union movement
- think about the international activities and links of your union

#### Task

Working in small group, consider the statements below and prepare a brief group report, saying if you agree or disagree, and summarising your discussion:

1. "Our problems are unique, and we have to find our own solutions. Trade unions in other countries can't do much to help us"
2. "Belonging to an international trade union organisation will undermine our independence, and allow others to interfere in our affairs, and divide us"
3. "International trade unionism is just a travel club for union leaders. It doesn't help ordinary workers much, it's a luxury we can't afford"
4. "In an international economic system, we can't afford not to have strong international links with unions in other countries"
5. "We should know all about ILO Conventions, as they are an important source of standards for basic trade union and workers' rights"





## Summary of ILO Standards on Occupational Health and Safety

### C.13 White Lead (Painting)

The use of white lead, sulphate of lead and all products containing these substances is forbidden in the internal painting of buildings. The employment of young persons under 18 years of age and of all women in painting work of an industrial character involving the use of these products is prohibited. Permitted uses are regulated in accordance with principles provided for by the Convention, which enumerates various hygiene measures to be taken in such cases.

### C.81 / R.81 Labour Inspection

This Convention provides for a system of labour inspection to secure the enforcement of the legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers in industrial workplaces (Mining and transport may be exempted) as well as in commercial workplaces if the ratifying state accepts this extension. It deals with the organisation and functioning of inspection services, the responsibilities of a central authority, their cooperation with other public and private services and with employers and workers or their organisations, the recruitment of qualified staff in sufficient numbers (including women) and with appropriate status, material means and facilities (office and transport), the thorough regular inspection of workplaces, and the publication of reports and annual statistics on the work of the inspection services. The Convention defines the function and powers of labour inspectors.

Inspectors are required to respect certain obligations: they are prohibited from having any direct or indirect interest in the undertaking under their supervision and shall not reveal manufacturing or commercial secrets of the workplaces they inspect or the source of any complaint.

### C.89 Night Work of Women employed in Industry (and the Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention)

Women without distinction of age shall not be employed during the night in any public or private industrial undertaking. The Convention does not apply to women holding responsible positions of a managerial or technical character (or to women employed in health and welfare services).

The 1990 Protocol has enlarged the flexibility of the Convention. Thus national laws or regulations may introduce exemption from the prohibition within certain limits after consulting the organisations of employers and workers. During a period of eight weeks before and after childbirth, as well as during pregnancy and a specified period afterwards exemptions are prohibited.

### C.90 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) (revised)

Young persons under eighteen years shall not be employed or work during the night in any public or private industrial undertaking (including the building and civil engineering sector and repair, maintenance and demolition work). Every employer is required to keep available official records, showing the names and dates of birth of all persons under eighteen years they employ.

### C.115 / R.114 Radiation Protection

No worker under the age of 16 shall be engaged in work involving ionising radiations; nor shall any worker be employed where he or she could be exposed to ionising radiations contrary to qualified medical advice. Effective protection for all other workers shall be ensured in the light of current knowledge. Every effort shall be made to reduce to the lowest practicable level their exposure to ionising radiations, and any unnecessary exposure shall be avoided.

The Convention sets out various provisions concerning measures to be taken by the state, the fixing of maximum permissible doses of radiation, warning of hazards, the instruction of workers in the precautions to be taken, the notification of work involving exposure, monitoring of workers and the workplace, and the appropriate medical examinations.

### C.119 / R.118 Guarding of Machinery

The Convention applies to all power-driven machines, new or second-hand. It prescribes that the sale or hire of these machines shall be prohibited if specified dangerous parts of them are without appropriate guards. The obligation to ensure protection, regarding the sale and hire of machinery, rests on the vendor or person letting out on hire, or their agents. Responsibility during use rests on the employer. The Convention also determines the obligations of employers regarding information of workers about the danger arising in the use of machinery. No worker shall use or be required to use any machinery without the guards provided being in position or where such guards have been made inoperative.

### C.121 / R.121 Benefits in the Case of Employment Injury

Each ratifying country shall prescribe a definition of "industrial accidents" and prescribe a list of occupational diseases. The Convention outlines the medical care and other (financial) benefits in case of such accidents and diseases.

The Convention covers the following contingencies due to an employment injury:

- a morbid condition
- suspension of earning due to incapacity for work
- total or partial loss of earning capacity likely to be permanent
- the loss of support suffered as the result of the death of the breadwinner.

### C.127 / R.128 Maximum Weight

The Convention lays down the general rule that no worker shall be required or permitted to engage in the manual transport of a load which, by reason of its weight, is liable to cause injury. For women and young workers, their assignment to manual transport of loads other than light loads shall be limited and the maximum weight shall be substantially less than permitted for adult male workers. While the Convention does not mention any concrete weight limit the Recommendation requests that where the maximum permissible weight which may be transported manually by one adult male person is more than 55 kg, measures should be taken as speedily as possible to reduce it to that level.

### C.135 / R.143 Workers' Representatives

This Convention is not directly linked to OSH but is basic for any trade union activity. Effects may be caused by the Convention through national laws or regulations, collective agreements or in any other manner. Workers' representatives shall be protected against any prejudicial act, including dismissal, based on their status. They shall be afforded facilities in the undertaking to enable them to carry out their functions.

### C.136 / R.144 Benzene

The Convention applies to all activities involving the exposure of workers to benzene and to products whose benzene content exceeds 1 per cent by volume. It provides that, whenever harmless or less harmful substitute products are available, they shall be used instead of benzene (with the exception of motor fuel). The use of benzene and products containing benzene shall be prohibited in certain work processes.

If this cannot be done, occupational hygiene and technical measures and adequate monitoring (such as inspection) shall be implemented to ensure effective protection of workers exposed to benzene, especially to prevent the escape of benzene vapour into the workplace air. The Convention specifies a number of these measures.

Pregnant women, nursing mothers and young people under 18 years of age shall not be employed in work processes involving exposure to benzene or products containing benzene.

The Recommendation says in addition that benzene or products containing benzene should not be used by workers for cleaning their hands or their work clothes. It also says that no food should be eaten (or stored) in areas where benzene or products containing benzene are handled or used.

### **C.139 / R.147 Occupational Cancer**

The Convention obliges the ratifying state to determine periodically the carcinogenic substances and agents to which occupational exposure shall be prohibited or regulated and to make every effort to have carcinogenic substances and agents replaced by non-carcinogenic ones, to prescribe protective measures, supervisory measures (such as through labour inspection), information requirements and the necessary medical examinations, tests or investigations. The Recommendation requests competent authorities to draw up educational guides for both employers and workers on substances and agents that may cause cancer.

### **C.148 / R.156 Working Environment (Pollution, Noise and Vibration)**

This Convention applies to all branches of economic activity. It stipulates that the working environment shall be kept free of any hazard due to air pollution, noise or vibration. To achieve this, technical measures shall be applied to new plant or processes, or added to existing plant or processes. Where this is not possible, supplementary organisational measures shall be taken instead.

To this end, national laws or regulations shall prescribe that measures be taken for the prevention and control of, and protection against, occupational hazards in the working environment due to air pollution, noise and vibration.

Provisions concerning the practical implementation of these measures may be adopted through technical standards, codes of practice, and so on. The Convention provides for associating representatives of employers and workers in this task and for consultation with their respective organisations generally.

Employers are responsible for compliance with the prescribed measures. Workers shall be required to comply with safety procedures. Supervision shall be ensured by inspection services.

The Convention describes various measures for prevention, co-operation at all levels, the information of all concerned, the notification of authorities and supervision of the health of workers. It gives workers or their representatives the right to present proposals, to obtain information and training and to appeal to appropriate bodies so as to ensure protection against occupational hazards due to air pollution, noise and vibration in the working environment.

The Recommendation requests in addition the provision of medical examinations of workers exposed to air pollution, noise and vibration.

### **C.155 / R.164 Occupational Safety and Health**

The Convention, which applies to all branches of activity and to all workers, provides that each ratifying state shall, in consultation with the most representative organisations of employers and workers, formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent, national policy on occupational safety, occupational health and the working environment.

The aim of the policy shall be to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with, or occurring in, the course of work, by minimising the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.

The Convention defines the main spheres of action of such a policy. It lays down a series

of quite detailed provisions concerning action at the national level, and at the level of the undertaking.

In this context, it provides in particular for the adoption of laws or regulations or any other appropriate method (including training), for the operation of a system of inspection and for measures to be taken from the design stage onwards, that is even prior to the introduction into occupational use of machinery, substances, and so on.

It specifies, among other things, that employers shall be required to supply protective clothing and protective equipment and to ensure that the workplaces, machinery, equipment, processes, substances, and so on, under their control, are safe and without risk to health.

Furthermore, it stipulates that co-operation between management and workers and their representatives in the undertaking is essential in order to pursue the aim of this Convention.

Some of the additional provisions made by the Recommendation cover the work organisation (such as hours of work and rest breaks) that should eliminate excessive physical and mental fatigue which are an important factor for unsafe and unhealthy work. It also protects workers' representatives or worker members of safety and health committees from dismissal and other prejudicial measures while exercising that function.

### **C.160 / R.170 Labour Statistics**

The governments should regularly publish labour statistics covering following issues:

- economically active population, employment, unemployment, underemployment
- structure and distribution of the economically active population
- labour costs, wages, average earnings, wage rates, hours of work
- consumer price indices
- household or family expenditure, and income

- occupational injuries and diseases
- industrial disputes.

The Convention provides for close cooperation with the ILO and with employers' and workers' organisations.

### **C.161 / R.171 Occupational Health Services**

Occupational health services with essentially preventive and advisory functions shall be developed (by laws and regulations or collective agreements) progressively for all workers, as part of a national OSH policy and in consultation with the most representative organisations of employers and of workers. The authority responsible for supervising and advising occupational health services shall be designated by national laws or regulations. Their personnel shall enjoy full professional independence and be properly qualified.

The services may be arranged by a single or several organisations, by public authorities or social security institutions, or by any other competent body. Employers, workers and their representatives co-operate and participate in their implementation. The surveillance of workers' health in relation to work shall be free of charge and shall involve no loss of earnings for workers.

The task of the services shall be to identify and assess risks from health hazards in the workplace by surveillance of the working environment and working practices, as well as workers' health in relation to work. They give advice and promote the adaptation of work to the workers as well as information, training and education. They organise first aid, participate in the analysis of occupational accidents and occupational diseases and contribute to measures of vocational rehabilitation. Occupational health services shall be informed of any known factors and any suspected factors which may affect the workers' health, such as incidents of ill health among workers and absence from work for health reasons, but they shall not be required to verify reasons for absence.

The Recommendation stipulates in addition that personnel providing occupational health services should have free access to all workplaces and installations and have access to information concerning work processes and materials and substances used. They should also be allowed to take samples of products, materials and substances for the purpose of analysis.

### **C.162 / R.172 Asbestos**

The Convention applies to all activities involving the exposure of workers to asbestos in the course of work. National laws or regulations shall prescribe the measures to be taken for the prevention and control of, and the protection of workers against, health hazards due to exposure to asbestos. The employer is responsible for compliance, and enforcement is ensured by inspection.

The Convention specifies various detailed measures for protection and prevention, as well as for monitoring of the workplace and of the workers' health.

Certain types of asbestos (such as crocidolite or blue asbestos) and certain uses of asbestos (such as spraying all forms of asbestos) should be prohibited by the governments. Demolition of buildings containing asbestos should only be undertaken by companies recognised by the competent authorities as qualified and providing all necessary protection to workers.

All workers who are or have been exposed to asbestos shall be provided with medical examination. The competent authorities shall monitor a notification system of occupational diseases caused by asbestos.

The Recommendation provides for consultation and co-operation between employers and workers through workers' safety delegates, workers' safety and health committees, joint safety and health committees or other workers' representatives.

### **C.167/R.175 Safety and Health in Construction**

Vital set of standards, including detailed Code of Practice, laying down extensive guidelines for all aspects of health and safety in construction. Unions need to get hold of the documents from ILO, and IFBWW has published a simple guide to these standards.

### **C.170 / R.177 Chemicals**

The Convention applies to all industries in which chemicals are used. The state shall formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent policy in this field. Employers' and workers' organisations concerned shall be consulted.

The Convention provides for detailed regulations concerning the classification systems of chemicals, their labelling and marking, chemical data sheets, the responsibilities of suppliers and those of employers (identification of chemicals; the exposure of workers, as well as information, training and cooperation with workers).

The duties (notably cooperation and precautions) and the rights of the workers (notably to information and to remove themselves from danger) are also stipulated.

When in an exporting country, all or some uses of hazardous chemicals are prohibited for reasons of safety and health, this has to be communicated by the exporting member country to any importing state.

### **C.171 / R.178 Night Work**

This Convention lays down that specific measures shall be taken for night workers in order to protect their health and safety, assist them to meet their family and social responsibilities, provide opportunities for occupational advancement, compensate them appropriately and protect maternity. Workers have the right to health assessments (without charge) before assignment to night work, at regular intervals and in case of problems afterwards. Workers who are unfit for night work shall be transferred to another similar job. Special measures of protection

are provided for in case of maternity. Compensations are granted to night workers as well as special services in their favour.

Before introducing night work schedules the employer shall consult the workers' representatives.

### **Other ILO documents on OSH to be recommended:**

ILO Training Manual on Safety and Health in Construction  
1987

ILO/UNDP Training Manual on Safety, Health and Welfare  
on Construction Sites (Asian Regional Edition)  
1990

ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Construction  
1991

ILO Code of practice on Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work  
1992 (will be published End of 1992)

ILO publications can be obtained through ILO regional or local  
offices, or directly from:

**ILO Publications  
International Labour Office  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland**