



International Development Matters



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Articles for inclusion in International Development Matters should be sent to Tanya Warlock at twarlock@tuc.org.uk

Millions of people stand up worldwide against poverty

On 17 October, the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, GCAP members and supporters, united by wearing white wristbands, were standing up to protest against the massive levels of poverty and inequality still persisting today. Last year, on October 17th, 23 million people took part in the call to action against poverty. This year again, the ITUC has asked its

affiliates and partner organisations to take action as a way to demonstrate workers' solidarity with hundreds of million of women and men who have to survive on less than a dollar a day. Many trade unions and organizations all around the world took part in the action.

The ITUC insists that global and national policies must be fundamentally transformed to ensure that all people have a fair share of the vast wealth currently in the hand of a small minority. The trade union' view on how to end poverty and inequality can be summed up with two words: decent work. Unions around the world are united in their fight for more and better jobs enabling each woman and man to live in dignity and to enjoy the benefits of social protection and social dialogue.

Call to Action on Decent Work, Decent Life

Lisbon, 31 October 2007: Half of the world's workforce earns less than 2 \$ a day. 12.3 million women and men work in slavery. 200 million children under the age of 15 work instead of going to school. 2.2 million people die due to work-related accidents and diseases every year. Add to this massive global unemployment, the lack of social protection for the majority of workers employed in the "informal economy", and the violation of trade union rights and the consequences of the lack of decent work are clear.

The urgency of ameliorating this situation will be underlined by the launch of the Call to Action for Decent Work, which Decent Work, Decent Life campaigners will use to call on governments and global leaders to implement the promises made in the July 2006 UN Ministerial declaration 'to create an environment at the national and international levels that is conducive to the attainment of full and productive employment and decent work for all'.

In launching the Call in front of an audience of leaders from governments, trade unions and civil society from throughout the world, ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder will call on global

institutions to re-orient their policies towards the achievement of decent work.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?rubrique1&lang=en>

Realising People's Potential through respect for Workers' Rights

The Commonwealth Trade Union Group (CTUG) of the International Trade Union Confederation will hold a trade union seminar in collaboration with the National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU) on Realising People's Potential through Respect for Workers' Rights at the Africana Hotel, Kampala, Uganda, on 20 November 2007 as part of the Commonwealth People's Forum. A number of prominent trade union leaders and ministers from the Commonwealth will be addressing the Seminar to be chaired by Lyeimo Otong Ongaba, NOTU General Secretary.

The CTUG Seminar will focus on the state of human and trade union rights in the Commonwealth and explore effective ways and means of realising people's potential through protection and promotion of their rights. The publication of the ITUC Annual Survey of violations of trade union rights in the Commonwealth will turn the spotlight on some countries with poor human and trade union rights records.

The Commonwealth People's Forum is a prelude to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held from 23 to 25 November 2007 in Kampala, Uganda.

Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), in a letter to the UK Foreign Secretary, has asked the UK Government to take a lead in delivering social justice and sustainable development for the 51 countries of the Commonwealth. See

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-13855-f0.cfm>

Oxfam analysis of World Bank Development Report on Agriculture

While praising the Bank's renewed emphasis on agriculture, Oxfam underlines that "the Bank's report does not consider the quality of the jobs it says can be created from rural labour markets, nor the impact on women workers". An analysis of the WDR is available on Oxfam's web site

http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bn_what_agenda_for_agriculture_WDR_0710.pdf/download

Unions call on EU to prolong EPA negotiations

In a letter

(http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf_240907_JointLetterETUCITUCMandelson.pdf) addressed to EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have urged the European Commission to extend the negotiation period of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the 77 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) beyond the end of December 2007.

"The reality of many ACP countries today is that they are being required to negotiate simultaneously a regional custom union, a bilateral deal with the EU and a multilateral negotiations process through the World Trade Organisation (WTO)," said John Monks, ETUC General Secretary. "Very few countries in the world would be able to successfully take up such a challenge in five years, and the poorest countries are certainly not in a position to do so."

Burma: EU falls short on sanctions

The ITUC and the European TUC have described the European Union's new sanctions policy on Burma, announced in October, as a step in the right direction, but falling well short of what is needed to put the Burmese military junta under real pressure. The exclusion of oil

and gas from the scope of the new sanctions means that the major source of foreign finance for the junta will remain basically intact. The previous EU bans have been extended to include a ban on European exports to Burma of equipment for the metal, timber, minerals and gemstone sectors, as well as import and investment prohibitions covering these sectors.

"These new restrictions are welcome, but they don't go far enough. The oil and gas sector is the single largest source of revenue for the military regime, and we are extremely disappointed that the EU has left this huge revenue stream untouched," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. With some 400 foreign companies having business links to Burma, European companies in the oil and gas sector have come under particular pressure to sever their links as part of the global campaign for all companies to disinvest. While those in the new sectors covered by the revised EU sanctions will need to sever their links, the international trade union movement will continue to press for comprehensive global sanctions covering all sectors.

Preliminary Key Findings of a Joint FIDH-ITUC Mission on Burma

After the September crackdown on peaceful protests in Burma, the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) decided to send a joint international fact-finding mission on the Thai border with Burma to collect first-hand information on the wave of repression. The objective was also to discuss with Burmese pro-democracy and human rights groups about possible international strategies to contribute to the democratization of the country. The mission, composed of four members from Australia, Belgium, and Thailand, stayed in Bangkok and on the Thai-Burma border from October 13 to 21. The mission did not travel to Rangoon or central Burma as the risks involved for the people interviewed would have been too high.

"We interviewed 13 persons who participated in the protests in Burma and subsequently had to

flee to Thailand. They could not live safely anymore in Burma as they had been followed, their homes raided, and their pictures distributed", said Alison Tate, mission delegate representing ITUC. "While no accurate and verifiable number of deaths or wounded can be given at this stage, we can assert that the repression was brutal and systematic. Most of the participants witnessed people being shot dead, as well as persons beaten to death", said Gaëtan Vanloqueren, FIDH mission member and Actions Birmanie spokesperson. It is the first time that the monks have been a direct target of repression. "Arrests are still taking place. The regime is now taking family members in hostage when the searched persons are not at home. SPDC is conducting widespread arbitrary arrests in Rangoon and elsewhere", he added. People and organisations met by the FIDH/ITUC mission believe that the SPDC is not genuinely committed to a process of political dialogue. "The regime is trying to save time in order for the media attention to phase down. This is the stalling tactics the regime has played over the years."

China holds key to Burma's freedom, says MEP

China holds the key to freedom for Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma, Euro-MP and Burma Campaign patron Glenys Kinnock said as she marked the democracy leader's 12 years of detention.

Speaking from Strasbourg, Glenys Kinnock, who has previously travelled to Burma to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, the only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, said:

"Aung San Suu Kyi symbolises the Burmese people's struggle for freedom. She is isolated, denied her liberty, her voice stifled and her communications cut. Yet for 4,384 days she has stood in firm and brave defiance of Burma's brutal military junta, refusing to leave her country until democracy and human rights are restored. Her detention is illegal, as is the rape, torture and brutality the Burmese regime engages in. The international community must act to secure her release and the release of all political

prisoners in Burma. I welcome the EU's strengthened sanctions and its serious threat of an investment ban if the regime does not engage with reform. Now China, which has blocked previous UN Security Council actions, must step-up to its global responsibility. China funds the Burmese regime, arms the regime, and protects it from international pressure. It is China that holds the key to Aung San Suu Kyi's freedom and the freedom of the people of Burma."

Thailand's Poultry Workers Show the Way

When representatives of the Thai workers' movement wrote an open letter to US President George Bush, demanding that the free trade agreement between nations should be based on the ILO conventions on union rights, their fight was a vital reference point.

Centaco is currently the only organized factory in Thailand's enormous poultry sector, which includes large export companies such as CP Group, Betagro, Narai Interfood, Saha Farm and Grampian Foods. Centaco produced ready meals that are sold all over the world,

<http://www.iuf.org/den4584>

Peru: Adoption of new labour law fully complying with ILO standards urgently needed

A new ITUC report on core labour standards in Peru has been released to coincide with Peru's trade policy review at the WTO on 17 and 19 October.

The report argues that the extreme flexibility of labour markets combined with serious legal obstacles faced by workers seeking to form or join a union has led to a sharp decrease in the number of collective agreements signed in the country. Many aspects of the current Peruvian labour legislation contravene ILO standards and for more than six years, a draft general labour law has been under discussion by the social partners without reaching consensus.

The report also finds that the sanctions applicable in cases of employers discriminating against trade unionists or interfering in trade union activities are not tough enough to be effective. In addition the slowness of judicial procedures to deal with complaints related to these issues represents another major obstacle to trade union activities in the country.

The report further highlights the fact that the six export processing zones of the country are governed by special regulations which allow for greater flexibility in labour contracts, the widespread use of temporary labour and the setting of wages on the basis of "supply and demand", all of which restrict the ability of unions to organise and bargain collectively.

The report further tackles child labour. With more than 2 million children working in the country, many in particularly hazardous jobs such as mining, or exploited as domestic servants, child labour remains a serious source of concern in Peru.

Finally the report highlights the findings of an ILO study which shows that 33,000 persons mainly belonging to ethnic groups are victims of forced labour throughout the country, particularly in work related to the unlawful extraction of timber.

To read the full report: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/WTO_Peru.oct-2007.finalEN.pdf

Migrant remittances and development

The Inter-American Development Bank has released a study carried out jointly with a UN agency on the global importance of remittances from migrant workers living in industrialized countries to their home developing countries, and found that the amounts far eclipse development assistance and foreign direct investment. The IDB considers that the development impact of remittances is limited however, since they are mostly spent on consumer goods. It also deplores that because

they often consist of cash transfers, the financial system cannot get "leverage" out of them.

This is a web link to the IDB page that gives access to the study.

<http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/articledetail.cfm?Language=En&parid=2&artType=PR&artid=4077>

Global trade union body calls for International Convention to protect Domestic Workers

The ITUC has asked trade unions world-wide to seek governmental support for an International treaty to protect domestic workers. The question of a possible International Standard for the tens of millions domestic workers in the world will be discussed next month at the Governing Body of the ILO.

"Domestic workers lack protection under both international and national laws" says the document tabled for discussion by the ILO Governing Body. "They represent an important and growing segment of the labour and their work is enabling others to improve their living standard" it adds.

Domestic workers are a vital link in every country's economic chain, carrying out essential tasks for millions of households. Domestic work is often not recognized by national legislation. Domestic workers therefore do not enjoy the protection of the labour rights laid down in such legislation, so the door is open for all kinds of abuse by their employers. A large number of domestic workers are migrant women. In their countries of origin, many of them hold qualifications that are considerably higher than those required for domestic workers but the social reality and the obvious need of money to survive push those women to accept to travel and to work as domestic workers.

The ITUC is seeking action by its affiliates worldwide to obtain support by their governments to develop an international instrument. The ILO Governing Body will have to decide whether to put this on the agenda of the International Labour Conference in 2010

with the prospect of having a treaty adopted in 2011.

Organising domestic workers in South Africa

Esther Stevens has been a domestic worker for 45 years and is the President of the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers' Union, SADSAWU. In this interview, she talks about how difficult but also how important it is to organise these workers, who are among the most exploited.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1483>

UK trade unionists welcome increase in development assistance

The Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK has welcomed the increase in funding for official development aid contained within the October Pre-budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review. It keeps the UK on target to reach the UN target for aid of 0.7% of Gross National Income. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber stressed that this increasing amount of aid could make a real difference to poverty reduction if it was put to good use in building free education and health services. For further information, please, click on

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-13818-f0.cfm>

UK union Prospect CSR initiative

To raise awareness on the Millennium Development Goals as part of their overall Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, Prospect have produced a web video clip (1:55 minutes). This may be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WQEW812sXI>

Prospect have also produced a "Stand up – speak out" poster and a "Think global, act union"

poster and leaflet. Copies are available from Beverley.hall@prospect.org.uk

ITUC report on workers' rights in Cameroon and Gabon

The ITUC has released a new report on core labour standards in Gabon and Cameroon. This report coincides with both countries' trade policy reviews at the WTO. The exercise of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining is poor in both countries. The ILO's expert committees have been urging these governments to comply with the principles of these standards for a considerable time but to little effect.

Women and minorities suffer open discrimination in the workplace and very few measures are being taken to tackle the situation. Once again, the ILO, through its supervisory bodies, has called on the governments to implement programmes and national policies to promote occupational equality, including the prohibition of sexual harassment at the workplace.

Child labour is an extremely serious problem, due to weak enforcement of the law and the many displaced children that are vulnerable to exploitation as child labourers. Trafficking and forced labour take place in both countries, with children, women and minorities such as pygmies most at risk.

The report ends with a summary of recommendations and conclusions addressed to the governments of Gabon and Cameroon.

To read the full report:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TPR_final_report_cam_gab.pdf

Organising the Informal Economy in Rwanda

Spotlight interview with Dominique Bicamumpaka (COTRAF-Rwanda)

Dominique describes the union's goal to support,

mobilise and defend the workers and raise their awareness about the need to organise into unions. They have a particular focus on co-operatives in the tea and coffee sectors, where many workers have no employment contract. There are estimated to be as many as 80,000 in this situation. Informal workers without a contract can also be found in the cooperatives of small planters. They try to organise them into unions and inform them about their social security rights, for example.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1518>

TUC delegation to Tunisia

A TUC delegation visited Tunisia in July to strengthen relations with the Tunisian trade union organisation the UGTT. The delegation was led by Sally Hunt for the General Council, and was funded by the FCO. Because of its generally secular and modernist approach, Tunisia is a country of key strategic importance in the Arab Mediterranean, and the TUC has had a long history of friendship with the UGTT, which is itself one of the leading Arab trade union movements and a major force for secularism in Tunisian civil society. The delegation and the follow-up work agreed represent a major step forward in that work. The talks focused on the effects of globalisation and how to best train the workforce to stand the competition of a global market.

A full report of the visit is available on <http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-13728-f0.cfm>. The key outcomes (among which a twinning arrangement between the Tunisian Ben Arous region and Yorkshire and Humberside) will be pursued by the TUC and UGTT with further support from the FCO.

Egypt: prison sentence for defender of worker's rights

Kamal Abbas, General Coordinator of the Center for Trade Unions and Workers Services (CTUWS) and his lawyer, Mohamed Helmy, have been sentenced one year's imprisonment by an Egyptian court. A law suit for alleged "slander

and defamation of character” against Kamal Abbas was filed by Mohamed Ibrahim, chairman of the board of directors of a youth centre in 15 May City and member of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

According to Kamal Abbas, this is no coincidence. “It is all part of the government’s general crack-down on civil society” he said. Abbas and his lawyer were taken to court after publishing a report in the CTUWS magazine Kalam Sinai’ia (Workers’ Talk) about an investigation into financial and administrative irregularities in the running of the youth centre. The allegations of corruption against Mr Ibrahim were in fact corroborated by an internal investigation conducted by the Youth Centre, whose Board of Directors was subsequently dissolved by the Governor of Cairo.

The ITUC and Solidar strongly condemned the prison sentences that follow a long tradition of repression of the CTUWS, an independent civil society organisation committed to defending trade union and other workers right in Egypt.

In a letter to the Egyptians authorities, the ITUC and Solidar urged President Hosni Mubarak to ensure that the CTUWS is not persecuted in its work and ask that he review this particular case.

Trade unionists discuss workers’ education in symposium

An international symposium on the role of trade unions in workers’ education organised by the Workers’ Activities Programme of the ILO in collaboration with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) held in Geneva from 8 to 12 October 2007 was attended by some 170 participants including trade union trainers and educators. Sir Leroy Trotman, Chairperson of the Workers’ Group of the ILO Governing Body chaired the opening session.

In his address to the Symposium, Juan Somavia, ILO Director – General, said that the ILO Decent Work programme had become a global agenda recognized by the UN, that consensus existed to build support for it at local level and that it was necessary to do away with the neo-liberal ideology in favour of a fair globalisation. Guy

Ryder, ITUC General Secretary, drew attention to the state of education and culture of learning at workplace and stressed the importance of the interaction between the national and international education experiences. Dan Cunniah, Director of ACTRAV, said that it was crucial to review, update and modernise labour education in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the trade unionists in the 21st century. The participants discussed a broad spectrum of issues relating to workers’ education including identification of educational needs, innovative pedagogical methods, good practice in internal education structures, sustainability, dissemination of information and experiences, partnerships and promotion of ILO Decent Work Agenda through workers’ education.

TUC welcomes globalisation report

The TUC has welcomed the report on globalisation produced by the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee. The Committee received evidence from the TUC and others, and called on the government to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs of globalisation, publicising the issue through an annual stock-taking. The TUC stressed that "trade deals being negotiated by the European Union need to protect the rights of people at work in Britain and promote those rights in poorer countries"

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-13834-f0.cfm>

Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education for All

The second newsletter from the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education for All has been published. The newsletter provides an opportunity to help disseminate information on new research and publications relating to child labour and education. The bulletin can be accessed electronically at

<http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/index.htm>

Trade unionists insist on respect for human rights as condition for development assistance

In its Submission to the International Development Committee Inquiry into the World Bank and the Department for International Development, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK has demanded that official development assistance be conditional upon respect for human and trade union rights. The TUC, while criticizing the failure to promote Core Labour Standards by international financial institutions and the DFID, calls upon them to ensure that recipients of their assistance fulfil their obligations to uphold workers' rights.

The TUC Submission also calls upon the DFID and the international financial institutions to collaborate more closely to dispense with onerous economic policy conditions and focus on a few mutually agreed outcome-based conditions and financial accountability essential for the achievement of objectives of their development interventions and on the respect of human rights. The TUC also argues strongly in favour of radical reforms in quota systems, voting, representation, access to resources and selection of heads in international institutions in order to enable low-income countries to take part effectively in decision-making structures. The full Submission can be found in

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-13867-f0.cfm>

SoliComm: A Labour Search Engine

SoliComm is a specialized Web search engine which focuses exclusively on labour web sites. When you enter a search term in SoliComm you focus your search exclusively on the content of over 400 labour and labour related sites including the ITUC, the WFTU, the Global Unions, TUAC, GURN and the ILO.

For example: Let's say you're looking for training material, or other information, on labour's policies and action plans about

HIV/AIDS. If you enter "HIV/AIDS" into Google you will get 25 million hits and it will be very difficult to find material produced by the labour movement because it's scattered through all the hits. However, if you enter the same search term into SoliComm you are automatically focused exclusively on labour sites. This makes finding labour's views, policy papers, training material, news, and other content much easier to find and use.

You can search SoliComm at:
www.soliconn.net

New publication: 'Exploited: Migrant Labour in the New Global Economy'

From cleaning to construction, from agriculture to domestic work, every day migrant labourers are exploited and enslaved. Extra hours are squeezed out of Polish food packers, and trafficked African children are used for forced labour. Low wages are used to drive down prices from the oil industry to airport services.

In this book, Toby Shelley shows that current unprecedented flows of migrant workers are a direct result of economic liberalization. The appalling conditions and legal abuses, which confront these workers, are not a pre-modern aberration, but an integral part of the global economy. Shelley argues that even governments, keen to protect big business, are complicit in this exploitation; their 'law and order' approach on immigration being part of this complicity.

Available now from Zed Books
www.zedbooks.co.uk/exploited

Events

Sandblast Festival: 3-4 November, London

The TUC and affiliates are backing the Sandblast Festival celebrating the culture of the people of Western Sahara on 3-4 November 2007 at Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1

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6LA. The TUC has long supported the Saharawis' struggle for independence and welcomed the current UN efforts to find a just and durable solution.

You can find more details here

www.sandblast-arts.org

Wednesday 7th November: Party for Public Services - 7pm-11pm The Scala, Kings Cross

LMHR are helping PCS to organise a "Party for Public Services" gig in central London's prestigious Scala venue, designed to bring together activists from PCS and other public sector unions with concerned members of the public and music fans to highlight the union's campaign in defence of jobs, pay, conditions and public services.

A brilliant eclectic bill includes The Specials' Neville Staples, amazing gospel singer Adelaide McKenzie, MOBO-nominated grime/rap crew Roll Deep, and all-women rockers The Priscillas.

£5 general admissions and £3 for PCS members

Tickets are now on sale from the Scala box office (open between 10am and 6pm Monday to Fridays for people to buy them for cash at face value) or buy them through

www.ticketweb.co.uk

IFWEA Conference 1-5 December

IFWEA Conference on workers' education in the informal economy, Ahmedabad, India.

1 – 5 December 2007

<http://www.ifwea.org/conference/index.htm>

Useful websites

There are a number of websites with useful information for trade unionists, policy makers and campaigners. Details [here](#).