

Heinz Bendt

# **Worldwide Solidarity**

**The Activities of  
the Global Unions in the  
Era of Globalisation**

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

## The Author

*Heinz Bendt*, born in 1929, worked as miner and factory worker while attending evening school; he enrolled in correspondence courses and earned a degree in business administration. After serving on the staff of the Labour Director of a steel company for several years, specializing on personnel organization, he became head of its department for data collection and statistics. For almost 20 years he served as Trade Union Adviser and Representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Africa and South-East Asia. As early as 1948 Heinz Bendt joined the trade union movement and acted as a works councillor for several years, while working as union lecturer in his free time. He retired in 1994 and has since specialised as a consultant in support and promotion of international trade union activities. He now lives in Cairns/Australia.

Publisher: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,  
Erwin Schweishelm  
Coordinator, Global Trade Union Program  
Division for International Development Cooperation  
Godesberger Allee 149, 53170 Bonn

© Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Author: Heinz Bendt

Editing: Sabine Gürtner

Translation: Annette Brinkmann

Cover Photos: ILO International Labour Organization, Global Unions

Photos: Trade Union Rally – May 1, 1989 Guatemala

(Photo: IUF-Archive)

ILO International Labour Organization, Global Unions

Layout: Pellens Kommunikationsdesign, Bonn

Production: Gerd Ernst

Printing: Toennes Druck und Medien GmbH, Erkrath

First published in Germany 1996

Second impression in Germany 2003

ISBN 3-86077-561-8

We are very grateful to the Global Unions for the many photos which they have allowed us to publish in this brochure.

# Contents

4	Preface
7	Introduction
9	Who are the Global Unions
19	Historical Survey
26	How They Work – Tasks and Activities of the Global Unions
39	Problems and Challenges
46	Individual Descriptions
47	Education International (EI)
52	International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW)
58	International of Chemical, Energy, Mining and General Workers (ICEM)
65	International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
69	International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF)
74	Public Service International (PSI)
80	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation (ITGLWF)
83	International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)
87	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Luxury Goods Workers (IUF)
93	Union Network International (UNI)
97	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
103	European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
109	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)
111	Addresses
112	Abbreviations

The term “Global Unions” refers to the ICFTU, TUAC and the Global Union Federations.

## Preface

Trade unions have a long history. They were and are organisations founded to represent the interests of the workers. By means of joint and carefully directed actions it is their aim to protect the interests of the many who are disadvantaged from powerful interest groups, above all from the employers. They give workers a chance to participate in the shaping of their working and living conditions. By creating and experiencing solidarity, it is their purpose to create democratic power and to safeguard not only the economic interests, but equality of opportunity and prosperity for all groups in society. Implementing and protecting human rights, trade union organisational rights, social security, education and training for all, together with a democratic system are the foundation stones upon which the work of the trade unions is built.

At an early stage trade unions recognised that these problems could not be solved solely at a national level, but that external political, economic and social factors influence a country's development. That is how the former International Trade Secretariats – today the Global Union Federations – as the first workers' international organisations came to be established about 100 years ago. From the beginning they were, of necessity, essential elements of international trade union activities and have lost none of their importance up to the present day.

Since then, they have had a chequered history. Their work underwent many changes and, although successful, suffered setbacks as well. They were banned, persecuted and broken up, they quarrelled with each other and found together again, but in all this they grew and became strong. Today they are more necessary than ever, and they are facing the greatest challenge of their history.

Globalisation and privatisation are the buzzwords of our time. The fact that with the end of the East-West conflict there was an almost complete global acceptance of the principles of the market economy nurtured this trend. New communications and transport technologies have turned the world into an almost boundless economic area. There is ever greater differentiation in the production of goods and services, and in some sectors they are even moved around from one part of the globe to another in an attempt to make use of political, social and economic advantages. According to estimates there are, worldwide, 37,000 international enterprises with more than 170,000 dependent firms in action today. Their real influence, in fact, goes further. The system of franchising and production under licence without the need for capital investment gives the large multinational corporations a dominating economic power everywhere.

This global entrepreneurial force maximizes economic advantages, but cuts out to an even greater extent areas with huge social or political costs, causes structural disruptions in many countries and through international competition pushes down wages and income, while at the same time demanding state subsidies with increasing frequency. National policies are becoming less and less effective. We already speak of the „powerless state“ which has been defeated by internationally-operating businesses. In many countries of the Third World, structural adjustment programs increase economic subjugation, concomitant with growing hunger and deprivation. Many parts of the world are in the throes of radical exploitation; there is child labour and working conditions akin to slavery.

Furthermore, workers and their organisations are at present faced with a universal attack on

democracy and human rights, indeed in many cases the very existence of labour organisations is being questioned. Animosity towards trade unions is increasing – even through terror and murder, because economic power is to be forced upon the market without let or hindrance.

The battle against political suppression and social distress begins with the building-up of a body representative of people's interests, which has the power to act. This mission is not restricted to the national level. Today, solidarity and international trade union cooperation are the answers to this new internationally-determined economy which even governments are increasingly powerless to restrain. National sovereignty in economic and social questions no longer determines what happens in the world economy. The world is in turmoil, it is slipping from the grasp and possible influences of the individual and of forces operating at the national level. It is becoming increasingly obvious that without the cooperation of all societal forces it is no longer possible to cope with global crises.

The bodies responsible for the coordination and promotion of international activities on the labour side are the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the Global Union Federations. The opportunities open to them in spite of all the difficulties can best be seen from the example of trade union activities in Europe. What has been achieved there proves that, in spite of the inadequacies that still exist, trade union activities are still possible and even successful in this international framework.

This is why the work of the Global Union Federations has a high level of priority. The continuing globalisation of the world economy confronts them with ever new challenges. Their situation is somewhat reminiscent of the story of David and Goliath: the underfunded and understaffed secretariats doing battle with transnational corporations which in many cases today have more power than some governments.

Side by side with these disadvantages their room for manoeuvre is determined by conditions in connection with their internal organisation.

On the one hand, high hopes in the possibilities of forming an international power counterweight are challenged by differences in interests between trade unions in industrial and developing countries. On the other, the dominance of the nationally and rank-and-file-oriented membership produces a rather hesitant willingness to hand over competences to an international organisation.

It is therefore possible that what we need is also a new definition of the international tasks and activities of trade unions in a future globalised society. Together, they need to develop effective mechanisms to meet this purpose. It is also necessary for the trade unions to grasp the initiative more firmly with regard to the changes taking place at the international level. The debate is now in full swing and to a large extent practised at the international level, but it is necessary for the national organisations to follow suit more energetically. They have the necessary specialised knowledge and this is, after all, their own domain.

In this situation it is important to give as wide publicity as possible to the work of the Global Unions. Since their areas of activities are becoming increasingly complex and thus threaten to forfeit the understanding of the rank-and-file, it is of growing importance to make clear their origins, development, structure, programs, significance and main fields of activities and the interrelations between them.

For this reason, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is issuing a revised and enlarged handbook on the Global Unions. This handbook offers a brief description of a wide range of activities. It is intended for those who are interested in what the Global Unions do and how they originated. It provides both a general overview and information. Its purpose is to awaken understanding and to prompt further questions, but it is in particular an invitation to participate in the work.

We dedicate this handbook to our dear friend and colleague Rüdiger Sielaff, who died entirely unexpectedly in the year 2000 at the age of 59.

For more than two decades Rüdiger Sielaff personified the international trade union activities of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. He was dedicated to the international trade union organisations as well as the national trade union movements in the Third World in friendship and solidarity like no other in this institution. He suggested and inspired the preparation of this handbook. It is

therefore a special obligation for us to continue cooperation with the international trade union movement in his spirit.

*Erwin Schweisshelm*  
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung  
Coordinator,  
Global Trade Union Program



## Introduction

This publication is a successor to the FES brochure under the title "One World – One Voice – Solidarity – The International Trade Secretariats" by the same author of 1995. Since in the past eight years International Trade Secretariats – today Global Union Federations – have changed in many significant ways both organisationally and in respect of their areas of activities it has become increasingly urgent to follow it by an updated version of the handbook. Three Global Unions quoted then even no longer exist in the form described.

This publication continues to be intended as a source of information about all existing Global Union Federation and the most important international trade union organisations. The size of the handbook is, of course, subject to certain limitations or a more condensed approach because of the complex nature and the growing tasks and activities of the organisations described. On the one hand, it is not possible to supply all details on the history, structure and working method of all Global Unions individually because of the limited space. On the other, the fact that all Global Unions are associations of national workers' organisations produces cer-

tain analogies in their forms of organisation and scope of activities. In this respect descriptions in summary form avoid unnecessary duplication and thus leave more space for the more specific information on the individual Global Union.

Attempts have been made to always quote the latest data and facts. The fact that we are dealing here with living active organisations which are subject to constant changes, however, creates the additional difficulty that a lot of the information is short-lived. The latest data, facts and information, however, are made available on the Web site of all Global Unions so that gaps in the information provided in the handbook are compensated for.

The handbook is structured in two parts: the first part summarizes general information which applies to all member unions of the Global Unions equally: their common roots, fundamental structures, identical areas of activities, analogous procedures and their associated problems. In the subsequent survey the handbook deals with future challenges and tendencies and outlines briefly possible responses.

The main part then introduces all Global Unions individually and in alphabetical order.





Facts and situations which are subject to unforeseen or short-term modifications will only be mentioned to the extent necessary. Not all projects can be mentioned either for reasons of space required. The text will therefore concentrate on essential items of information as regards the self-perception, the specific tasks and structure, concrete measures taken and special problems, as well as future target areas of the organisation concerned. Whenever the available material permits, attempts are made to select an approach which distinguishes that specific Global Union from the rest and to present it in greater depth.

No judgmental statement is intended even when terms like “the largest” or “the only” are at times used or if mention is made of extraordinary successes in the one or other case. Considering that this is a description of 13 complex organisations with worldwide activities and a varied history covering approximately 100 years, this handbook cannot present a critical academic analysis of the subject, nor does it intend to. However, in spite of these limitations, an attempt

is being made to describe it from a problem-oriented perspective.

The author and the editors hope that this handbook is not only read and used for occasional reference, but may also encourage the reader to request information on specific subjects (such as free trade zones and child labour) from all Global Unions and to use it for seminars or similar activities. For this purpose, a list of addresses and contacts of all Global Unions can be found in the appendix to this handbook. All the Global Unions have a wide range of information material which they send free on request to interested parties. If continuous information is required, they recommend an application for inclusion in their mailing lists.

This handbook is largely based on publications of the individual Global Unions which were available to me in large numbers. I also processed information which was willingly provided in interviews or in correspondence. And finally, some ideas and inspiration from the relevant literature was taken up in this work. If information has been misrepresented or descriptions have been incomplete, it is only the author who is to blame for such shortcomings. Statistics and other data are based on information collected mainly in the years 2000-2003. Changes may have occurred, however they do not change the substance of the descriptions.

The author would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Global Union Federations or other relevant organisations who not only provided extensive information material but also patiently explained and supplemented it whenever necessary. He continues to be grateful for the wealth of information, critical analysis and extensive explanations provided by other publications on the same subject. Without them the compilation of this handbook would not have been possible. A special word of thanks also to the colleagues of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, in particular to my friend Rüdiger Sielaff, who unfortunately died in November 2000, and to Erwin Schweisshelm, Coordinator of the Global Trade Union Program, for their encouragement and advice in every phase of the work.





## Who are the Global Unions ?

A **Global Union Federation (GUF)** is a federation of national trade union organisations which operate worldwide and whose members work in specific, clearly-defined occupations, branches, industries or other specific areas of employment. In other words, they are international federations, representing workers from a specific background, either from a specific sector or an area defined by other criteria. As they are directly confronted with the problems in the sector they represent – which offers them an immediate and effective influence – they are indispensable in complementing the activities of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), to which the national confederations are affiliated.

The Global Union Federation, together with the ICFTU and TUAC, form the group of free, i.e. independent international trade union associations. Democracy and freedom are the basic values of the Labour Movement to which all of them adhere. They are linked to the ICFTU on this basis as to a family. However, GUF is not a sub-organisation of the ICFTU; they are organisationally autonomous federations. But since they pursue the same basic objectives, they have a moral obligation to it.





## ***International Trade Secretariats become Global Unions***

In early 2000, at the ITS General Conference, there was broad support for the creation of a website which would group together news and campaign information from all of the International Trade Secretariats, the ICFTU and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC).

The commonly-owned website, designed by the ICFTU in close consultation with the GUFs (then ITS) and TUAC, was launched under the name “Global Unions” on April 6, 2000, during the ICFTU Congress in Durban. The website was the first step in the creation of a clearly understandable identity for the organisations involved. Four years later, over a thousand pages have been added to the site by the twelve member organisations.

The Global Unions name, and the logo (developed by Education International) have subsequently been embraced as a means of communicating the close and friendly collaboration which characterizes much of the common work of the international trade union organisations. Members of this family of 12 organi-

sations often refer to themselves as being part of the “Global Unions group”.

This common identity has been used increasingly as for initiatives which involve several or all Global Unions members. Recent examples include the 2003 May 1st Mobilisation, the Global Unions WTO Day of Action, and the Global Unions “Women for Unions” Organising Campaign. Many working groups, previously referred to as “ICFTU/ITS/TUAC working groups”, are now referred to as “Global Unions working groups”.

In January 2002 the ITS General Conference took a further step, when those present supported changing the generic name “International Trade Secretariat” to “Global Union Federation”. It is important to note that the Global Unions group, which comprises the ICFTU, the 10 Global Union Federations and TUAC has no formal constitution, and relations between the members of the group are governed by the “Milan Agreement”. All members of the group are politically independent of one another.

### **The Relationship with the ICFTU**

The relationship between the GUF and the ICFTU has been defined under the Milan Agreement of 1951 which stipulates that the former International Trade Secretariats – today the Global Unions – are autonomous organisations, that all parties to the Agreement see themselves as part of one single international Trade Union Movement, that they cooperate in matters of common interest and that they will follow the ICFTU-line in matters of general international trade union policy. ICFTU recognizes the General Conference of the GUF as the representational body of the GUF, but reserves to itself the right to deal with each GUF individually. Later

amendments, the last in December 1990, gave a more concrete definition of the GUF’s involvement in setting out ICFTU-policy.

Twice a year, in January and June, the Secretaries General of the 11 GUFs and the ICFTU und ETUC come together for a meeting, known as the General Conference of the Global Unions. Each Global Union is represented at the ICFTU-Congress by a number of participants corresponding to its size. These representatives also have the right to participate, but not to vote in ICFTU-Executive meetings. The same applies to the Women’s Committee and to a certain number of delegates defined by the ICFTU from the General Conference of GUF for the meetings of sub- or special committees. In turn, the GUF



have committed themselves to inviting ICFTU-representatives without voting rights to their world congresses and other meetings of common interest.

The division of activities between the GUF and the ICFTU is complex, but regulated in a satisfactorily rational manner. The different composition of membership naturally and sensibly leads to a different orientation.

The GUF concentrate mainly on:

- branch-specific questions,
- support of concrete industrial action,
- the comparative monitoring of working conditions and wages, and
- the implementation of health and safety regulations in defined areas of work.

Conversely, the ICFTU is involved in:

- mainly lobbying the inter-governmental organisations in favour of a labour-oriented economic and social policy,
- organising and coordinating a strong trade union presence within the ILO,
- speaking up for the protection of trade union rights worldwide, such as the freedom of association and the right to free collective bargaining, and
- supporting the inclusion of social clauses in international trade agreements.

The two organisations might be called the supporting pillars of trade union activities, one in the political and the other in the industrial area. As both work for the same objectives, though in different ways, it is understandable that the line between them cannot always be drawn so finely and clearly. Owing to greater interdependence of national and international problems, their tasks and the way they are handled are increasingly overlapping. Globalisation has produced a need not only for a much greater measure of mutual support, but in many cases a new division of labour. In consequence, cooperation and networking are crucial in many areas of responsibility much more than in the past.

And yet in most cases the roles have been clearly apportioned. Let us take the example of how they divide the work as regards the transnational enterprises: GUF represent workers' interests within the TNEs, while ICFTU leads the struggle for general public controls and regulations. This does not mean, however, that the Global Unions do not have a role to play in international bodies: they supply the detailed technical know-how for discussions.

The ICFTU has close links with the Global Unions and often speaks up on their behalf in international organisations. It cooperates with them in all areas of activities. In many cases



and particularly on special committees, representatives of the Global Unions might assume functions which arise directly from an adviser or observer status of ICFTU in international institutions. General aspects of international action are coordinated: frequently ICFTU starts by addressing questions of principle and the Global Unions follow up the subjects.

Of course, there are differences of opinion at times. As in any family, harmony does not always prevail, but extreme differences seldom occur. It is understandable that the GUF at times regard the problems of their members as more relevant than the more general political priorities. In such a situation people may get the impression that ICFTU perceives itself as the more prominent entity – with corresponding reactions from the self-confident GUF. However, a lot of tolerance prevails on both sides and all differences are discussed and settled consensually in a democratic manner.

The success of the Milan Agreement depends, in the final analysis, on the willingness of all parties concerned to comply with its provisions. That there have been no problems as yet which would seriously question its existence is probably in parts due to the fact that most

members of GUF are also affiliated to ICFTU through their national trade union confederations. Thus we are faced on the one hand with the basic, more or less uniform goals of their federations and on the other with the fact that the same people frequently hold leadership positions in both organisations and prevent frictions or settle disputes in negotiations and compromises.

The few times when serious disruptions occurred in the past they were caused by ICFTU's strict opposition at the time of the Cold War to any contact with those trade unions which did not want to align themselves with the free Western bloc or simply by fundamental differences of views in respect of trade union policies amongst the leading personalities and bodies. The end of the East-West conflict and the threats caused by globalisation have contributed to the ranks being closed again more firmly.

### Areas of Organisation

Traditionally, the individual GUF by and large organise specific sectors or industries. However, these days the dividing lines between the classical categories are becoming increasingly more



blurred, not least because of the tendency amongst large international corporations to dominate all stages of operations from research to production and transportation and commerce on the one hand, and of the privatisation of many traditionally public services on the other. The creation of UNI, for example, comprises both workers from the fields of communications, the media, entertainment and graphical industries and manual and clerical workers in public administration and public services, thus representing one of the largest GUF not only in terms of total membership, but one that corresponds most closely to the model of an association organised along mainly functional lines.

The name “trade secretariat” does therefore no longer apply to parts of today’s membership in all cases. But in an organisation so firmly rooted in traditions as the International Labour Movement – which also does not change the term “trade union” in spite of the different connotation it had originally – the semantically no longer appropriate name expresses exactly what is meant: the traditional name for a new changed content represents the GUF’s organisational philosophy – a corporate identity of the Global Unions in the best sense of the word.

## Membership

Even if individual GUF may have different detailed regulations concerning membership, the fundamental conditions are the same for all of them: they are all based on the principle that the affiliated unions must be free, independent and democratic institutions.

Membership presupposes a written application which is examined and voted on by the Executive Committee or a sub-committee. In the event of rejection an appeal can normally be made to the Congress. Adoption of the Statutes and of the general policy of the GUF concerned is a basic requirement for membership. Members are obliged to comply with the decisions of the corresponding bodies and to pay their membership dues in time. In exceptional cases reduced dues or temporary suspension altogether can

be negotiated on application. According to the Statutes, non-compliance will lead to sanctions, but attempts will normally first be made to find an acceptable settlement.

Membership or affiliation is in principle open to all independent democratic trade unions, irrespective of their other ideological or political orientations. It is expected, however, that all their internal affairs be regulated on the basis of democratic procedures and that candidate unions are free organisations, independent of any directives or other influence by governments, employers or political parties. As a rule, GUF is rather pragmatic in the way they select. Yet applicants from countries with previously dictatorial rule are closely scrutinized to make sure that their democratic structure and independence of parties and employers do not only exist on paper.

Moreover, applicants should normally operate at the national level, i.e. lay claim to being more than merely a locally restricted organisation. The principle of accepting only one union per country has been abandoned because several occupations, branches and industries are nowadays gathered in one Global Union Federation as a result of mergers between GUF; however, not all have proceeded in the same way. Instead, agreements were concluded in many cases according to which affiliated members have to be heard when new applications of other organisations from the same country are submitted.

The complexity of modern industrial production and the fact that many enterprises operate on a large scale in more than one industry and that many trade unions, in particular in the developing world, organise in more than one industry resulted in the affiliation of individual national unions to more than one Global Union.

Normally, membership figures of Global Unions are broken down into three categories:

- number of affiliated unions;
- number of countries in which these member organisations are represented;
- number of members registered by the affiliated unions.

As is to be expected the latter figure is not always very precise and normally gives an approximation (such as “more than 10 million”). This is partly due to the fact that affiliates include non-paying “sympathizers” in their countries or simply blow up the figure so as to appear stronger than they are and thus gain in importance. More frequently, however, real numbers are not quoted because of financial considerations: since membership subscriptions of national trade unions to their Global Union Federations are normally calculated on the basis of registered members, the obvious thing to do is to quote lower numbers to avoid excessive subscriptions, at times even with the consent of the Global Union concerned. In fact, there are cases where individual trade unions even quote a reduced number of members to their national centre with the result that we end up with three different versions of the real membership numbers.

Yet any exact quote of membership has also become somewhat illusory in recent times because of large-scale redundancy measures in the wake of globalisation. If, for example in Indonesia, 40 percent of the workers lose their jobs within a period of a few months, any information concerning the number of members in a trade union will be rapidly outdated even considering that a major part of these workers were not organised.

And even the number of affiliated trade unions alone is not a criterion for the strength of a particular Global Union. In some countries, trade union structures are still related to traditional branches and trade organisations; this applies, in particular, to Great Britain and to countries under her influence where frequently many trade unions organise one sector of industry. In contrast, the pure principle of industrial unions based on only a few large unions prevails mainly in Germany and Scandinavia, but also to some extent in other parts of the world.

## Subscription Fees and Finances

The most important source of income for the Global Unions are the annual subscription fees of the affiliates. Only in the case of the former International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW), which became part of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) in January 1994, was it necessary to supply external funds from the ICFTU for a prolonged period. This was not surprising considering that plantation workers belong to the poorest of the poor and that most member organisations came from the Third World. This situation changed as a result of the merger, which followed logically from the trade union principle of solidarity: by uniting it is easier to compensate for the weaknesses of individual organisations.

While delayed payments of affiliation fees had been treated very leniently in the past, Global Union-executive committees have recently become more rigid in enforcing the rules. If affiliates can prove that problems do exist, reductions are still possible, but only on application to the executive committees.

The method of calculating the fees and the amounts involved differ from one Global Union to the other. The easiest method, which is used by the majority of Global Unions, consists of a fixed rate per union member. This procedure works in favour of unions with high wage levels and correspondingly high revenues, with the result that frequently others are either granted special terms or quote reduced numbers of members.

The procedure based on a certain percentage of average hourly wages for assessing contributions to the Global Union is more just, but also more complicated. This method has been introduced to accommodate the difficult financial situations of unions in low-wage countries. The assessment of average wages is a critical factor in this case: as a rule, use is made of periodical collections of data which are often already obsolete at the time of assessment. This difficulty



may be overcome in future with the introduction of electronic communication systems and data bases – a project to which all big Global Unions are very much committed.

The latter procedure reduces the revenues of Global Unions and complicates the calculation and allocation of potential future income. The multi-stage procedure is a compromise between the two: on application by members, varying dues are fixed according to the financial strength of the union concerned; the system provides for up to 4 stages. In exceptional cases, extremely weak organisations can maintain membership by paying a very low subscription, but in most cases then lose their voting rights.

Difficulties arise when currency restrictions prevent payments from being made in internationally convertible currency. In such a case Global Union-affiliation fees have to be banked frequently in the country itself and can only be used in aid of the local affiliate. Further problems of payment and financial planning may arise as a result of variations in the exchange rates.

Because of the different modes of assessing dues it is difficult to draw conclusions from the number of members as regards the financial position of the Global Union. Not only has a distinction to be made between paying members and those that only exist on paper, but it is essential also to know the numbers involved in the different “contribution grades”.

Apart from income from affiliation fees, Global Unions receive a limited income from special contributions of their members, earmarked for selective tasks and campaigns and occasionally voluntary grants of their wealthier affiliates.

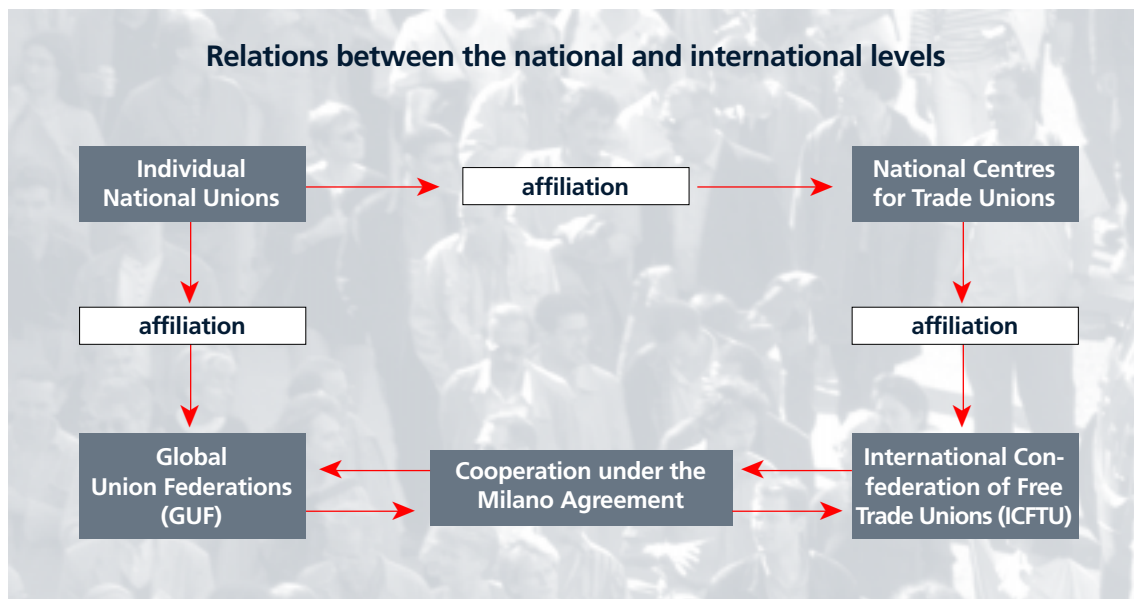
All these revenues (regular budget and grants) usually cover the current expenditure for the Secretariat and its worldwide administration as well as for publications, congresses, meetings and direct aid. A major cost factor is the translations: almost all Secretariats publish or communicate in three to five languages, in some cases even double that figure. The Statutes of many Global Unions provide for a separate fund for solidarity action or even educational pro-

grams. In most cases this absorbs all available funds; there are hardly any reserves worth mentioning.

A break-down of the annual budget shows that between 40% and 50% of all expenditure is entered under “salaries” of full-time staff. Another 10% to 20% are passed on to regional organisations to subsidize their costs. Additional unavoidable expenses are incurred for meetings of the executive committees and various committees as well as reserves for the next congress. Current office costs (rents, electricity, postage, printing etc.) are another item, while a considerable part of the budget is also spent on publications, PR activities and translations. There is often a limited budget firmly earmarked for educational programmes and the little that remains is left for the reserves and unexpected expenses.

Because money is scarce, specific programs are frequently co-sponsored by third parties. Major education and training projects and extraordinary support measures will normally be co-funded by the international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Union (EU) or the ICFTU-Solidarity Fund as well as by friendly public-interest organisations such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the regional Labour Institutes of the American AFL-CIO, the Scandinavian trade union centres, the Dutch FNV, among others. As a rule, this additional income is earmarked for specific projects and comes partly from public sources. The Global Unions therefore strictly control whether this is paid with no strings attached because it might otherwise adversely affect the content of the project concerned.

When comparing the worldwide operations and global tasks with the actual revenues of the Global Unions we realise how limited their financial scope in fact is. Globalisation presents them with an additional challenge: not only because workers who lose their jobs are largely also lost as paying members of their union, which ultimately reduces the revenues of the Global Unions, but because many Third World countries – owing to structural adjustment pro-



grams, international financial speculation and other factors – are confronted with considerable inflationary crises which cannot be made good by adjustments of wages, and thus membership dues.

In view of the growth of global tasks or opportunities we have to ask ourselves whether there is not a critical mass in the decisive financial criterion, i.e. membership figures, below which they must not fall if they want to continue to provide the necessary expertise and presence. The mergers that took place between some Trade Secretariats in recent years with the aim of forming larger entities must ultimately be regarded as a response to this situation as well.

### Organisational Structures

All Global Unions are autonomous organisations. There is no higher authority to which they are accountable. Every Global Union is managed on the basis of its Statutes and decides independently on activities, organisational policy and procedures. The authority to make decisions is left exclusively to its bodies and officers.

All Global Unions have the following bodies, even though they may at times use a different name for them or establish additional bodies:

- Congress (World Congress, World Conference)

- Executive (Managing Committee, Executive Committee, Presidium)

- President, Vice-President/s

- Secretary General/Secretariat

As a rule, Congress takes place every three or four years, normally every four years nowadays. In the past, the interval was shorter, but high costs caused by continuously increasing global membership, and thus global delegations, gradually became an almost unmanageable burden. Improved transport infrastructure also makes it easier to meet at a regional level, while modern communication technology has significantly facilitated both the exchange of information and the process of decision-making with the result that it was possible to extend the intervals between world conferences.

The composition of the congresses is to a varying degree representative of the individual industry/occupations and geographical regions represented by members. Delegates of all member organisations are represented at the Congress in proportion to the size of their local membership. All unions with paid-up dues have the right to send delegates, either in proportion to the number of members for whom dues have been paid or based on regressively increasing numbers to give a proportionately greater number of seats to smaller organisations.

The Congress is the supreme decision-making authority. It listens to and discusses the Report of the Executive, debates and decides on resolutions dealing with current political, social and economic questions, fixes affiliation fees and confirms or reviews the main areas of the organisation's activities. Economic and social problems in the industry or occupation concerned frequently become a central theme of the Congress and are, as a rule, discussed in respect of their implications for the future.

The President appointed by Congress chairs the Congresses and Executive meetings and usually holds a representative position. Almost all Global Unions have also one or more Vice-Presidents.

The Executive Committee elected by Congress is the supreme decision-making body between congresses. As attempts are made to make them as representative as possible in terms of country groups and branches, these Executive Committees are frequently rather large these days. As a result, appropriately frequent meetings are difficult to organise, as are the problem-resolution and decision-making processes. In many cases there is therefore also a Managing Committee of a manageable size. It consists of the most important representatives from the member organisations, who should be located in centres easily accessible by transportation whenever possible, i.e. frequent meetings can take place without difficulty.

Congress also elects the Secretary General who is a full-time employee of the organisation. He/she is in charge of the day-to-day business of the Secretariat. Within the framework of guidelines adopted by Congress and policies determined by the Executive Committee he/she decides on the content and direction of activities by his/her Global Union. The Secretary General is therefore the most influential figure for the leadership and effective work of a Global Union whose personality leaves its mark on all activities of the organisation; rarely does it happen that secretaries general are voted out of office; normally they are elected for several terms

of office until they resign out of their own free will.

All head offices of Global Unions are traditionally situated in Europe (Geneva, Brussels, London). There was once a secretariat of the petrol workers' organisation in the USA, but after lengthy disputes with the International of Chemical, Energy and Factory Workers (ICEF, nowadays in ICEM), it ceased to operate. The offices vary in size and financial strength: the largest employs 30 or more office staff and desk officers. All of them are equipped with the electronic hardware and software required for their work and have built up the corresponding networks and databases, or are in the process of doing so.

### Sectional and Regional Groups

At a very early stage Global Unions started to establish separate structures to concentrate on specific needs of the different sectors and occupations which they organised. The first ones were the trade groups or sectional committees. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), for instance, has had committees for seafarers, railroad workers and other groups for decades, while others such as the International Textile, Garments and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) and the IUF established them in the course of mergers; acceding Trade Secretariats became the nucleus of new trade groups or industry sections. Today all Global Unions are, with very few exceptions, multi-industry organisations and have a corresponding number of sectional committees. Sectional groups have an advisory function, hold their own conferences at times and prepare studies and strategy papers about their industry. In some cases sectional groups are also represented on Executive Committees.

Another category is formed by the special committees. All Secretariats have one for women, or at least a department for women's issues. In several cases there are special committees or working groups of young members and frequently

one for environmental problems as well as health and safety problems.

The third area concerns regional committees and offices in response to specific needs from members in economically less developed countries demanding more autonomy and better representation on decision-making bodies. Some regional committees have regional executive boards, regional offices and hold regional conferences. In contrast, other regional offices are simply sub-structures of the central Secretariat or exist as a regional branch with a regional adviser appointed by the head office. There are also differences in decision-making powers: while some regional committees take their own regional decisions which only require the final „blessing“ of the International Executive Committee, others have only an advisory status. Once an organisation has been accepted as a member of a Global Union, it will automatically receive membership status in the respective regional or sectional group as a rule.

Nowadays Global Unions are represented in nearly every corner of the world with few exceptions because of the extension of regional offices in recent decades. As a rule, they have at least one regional office each in Africa, Latin America including the Caribbean and in the Asian-Pacific region. Even though in individual cases separate institutions may exist for North America including Canada, and for the new economic communities (NAFTA, MERCOSUR, ASEAN), no deliberate attempt has so far been made to influence specifically these concrete areas. In particular in Asia and Africa whole continents or sub-continents with completely different sets of problems are part of the same regional structure, with the result that little room for manoeuvre or political influence is left to them apart from organisation, education and information.

Due to special developments at an economic and political level, separate structures emerged for regional activities in Europe, some of them acting in addition to the original European Global Union-regional committees. These European industry federations (EIF) of the ETUC are open to all European trade unions in a specific industry irrespective of whether they are affiliated to the Global Unions or not.

In the European region we were consequently faced with a structure which deviated from the other regions and the usual clearly-defined jurisdiction. In spite of some initial reservations, all Global Unions eventually agreed to cooperate with the European industry federations of the ETUC and to use their already existing structures for this purpose.

Problems resulting from this complicated organisational situation are resolved by the individual Global Unions in various administrative and organisational ways. They had in principle two options: either to establish completely independent European regional organisations or to attempt to incorporate the EIFs as much as possible in their own structure. The International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF), for example, decided in favour of the first option by establishing the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) which is also financially autonomous.

Jurisdictional problems may arise when EIFs negotiate with TNE-subsidiaries with headquarters outside Europe or when they discuss working conditions of subsidiaries in other parts of the world with company head offices in Europe. It is a tight rope to walk and may at times lead to arguments over alleged interference in international affairs. The introduction of European works councils and of EU-Directives on information and consultation in transnational enterprises may create further points of friction.

## Historical Survey

**While the power of business enterprises** originates from their capital in the form of accumulated profits, the strength of the International Trade Union Movement is founded on its tradition, i.e. the willingness of all its members to promote justice by acts of solidarity. Its current structure has developed with the help of all those who continued to struggle and made sacrifices in order to pave the way and to push ahead its development in a chequered history which was not free of errors and mistakes. A brief survey of this history full of vicissitudes is therefore indispensable in order to understand the situation today.





## Roots

The former International Trade Secretariats (today Global Unions) and the predecessor organisations of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) together form the roots of international activities by the Labour Movement. They have a long, distinguished and uninterrupted tradition. The history of the two organisations is inseparably connected and therefore is largely described here as one.

Both organisations were the product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and emerged first in Europe. They were supported and inspired by the simultaneous emergence of the Socialist Labour Movement. This influence is still more or less felt in today's Global Unions. While the international labour federations suffered in the course of time from fragmentation caused by ideological differences and then started again, the Global Unions were to a great extent spared that difficulty. They progressed by uniting and merging, but experienced no break in their traditions.

Workers and their organisations realised at an early stage how useful and necessary international solidarity would be. This dates back to times when crafts journeymen and occasionally factory workers „journeyed“ across Europe and established first ties between local societies for workers' protection. As it seemed the practical and necessary thing to do, first contacts and agreements were established across national borders as early as the 60s and 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Natural differences in language and customs, as well as arbitrary territorial barriers were soon overcome by the spirit of solidarity based on the shared experience of dependence and exploitation.

## Initial Steps

National workers' unions genuinely cooperated for occupational reasons as early as the 80s and 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When representatives of socialist parties and of some trade associations met in Brussels in 1891 for the "International Labour Congress", delegates of the

timber, metal and textile trades took the opportunity to agree on some form of cooperation, albeit modest from today's perspective, across their national frame of action. Initially, the so-called mutual agreements were intended to ensure that members received equal treatment from foreign trade union organisations and mutual support financially when on the road. How to prevent the use of foreign workers as strike breakers was another issue to be covered in these agreements.

It is interesting to note in this context that as early as 100 years ago a question was raised that still comes up now and then in discussions, notably why trade unions from the industrially more developed countries should be interested in enforcing socio-political concepts by means of international action for other unions in less developed regions, while it might be easier and more beneficial for them to simply enforce them in their own country by means of national action. Indeed, opinions were divided at the time, but workers were very much aware of the fact that they were all living in a similar situation of dependence, and firmly convinced that the Labour Movement would grow in strength with greater international cohesion.

In other words, the occupational groups started to internationalise before the national centres did. The national confederations established an international confederation only after the turn of the century, and when they did they divided the political and industrial representation of the Labour Movement. After a first meeting in 1901, representatives of the most important national confederations in Europe at the time decided to bring together national trade union confederations in one international centre which was founded the following year. Its name was changed into International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in 1913.

## Time of Foundation

The 20 years between 1890 and 1910 were decisive in so far as a large number of international organisations of various trade unions were



established. The shoemakers, for instance, united in 1889, the miners in 1890 and the tailors in 1893. Initially, some were just informal structures without permanent influence, but the majority of present-day Global Unions can trace their origins directly to them or to a forerunner.

Almost all of these first associations were strongly ideologically oriented towards a socialist or social-democratic philosophy. But their main activities were of a more practical nature from the start: exchanging information about working conditions, defending themselves against attempts by employers to use foreign workers as strike breakers and mobilizing support in large-scale industrial disputes.

When the trade union movement grew in the industrial countries there were more and more things they had in common. At the third International Metalworkers' Congress in Paris in 1900, the agenda already included such topics as:

- organisational assistance,
- supranational industrial action (strikes) or counter-measures (support fund, fighting strike breakers) to oppose employers who were operating transnationally or threatened lock-outs,
- implementation of uniform working conditions,
- training and protection of young workers,
- mutual information and
- disclosure of unfair production and trade practices.

These topics are still pressing today and continue to play a central part in the activities of Global Unions.

As Europe was the centre of industrialisation as well as the centre of the Labour Movement at the time, only a few unions from outside the continent were initially members, amongst them the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA), who joined the Miners' International Federation in 1904.

The fact that the majority of Global Unions did not have the financial resources for an office of their own was a considerable problem. The work of the Global Unions was normally taken on as a supplementary job by the Secretary General or the President of a member organisation,

as a rule from the largest of them. Before World War I, the majority of Global Unions were located in Germany as a result. Here, in the very heart of Europe, was found not only the best organised Socialist Movement of the time, but the largest and best-funded trade union organisation of the whole world. Berlin was to all intents and purposes the unofficial capital of the Labour and Trade Union Movement.

#### **From 1914 to 1945: between War and Crisis**

In 1914 there were 33 International Trade Secretariats. The outbreak of the first world war put an end to the Global Unions' development. Even though it was possible to keep up the contacts during the whole time of fighting, the activities of most Global Unions came almost to a standstill. The international contacts were not strong enough to oppose successfully national forces in favour of war action. And it is also true that at the outbreak of war some political organisations of the workers (such as the German Social-Democrats) were quite patriotically inclined and lost sight temporarily of international workers' solidarity.

When hostilities ceased, old contacts could be revived, but the new beginning took place under changed conditions. London, Amsterdam and Geneva had now become the headquarters of the Secretariats. But only very few of them had their own office. It was still the largest national union which as a rule ran the office. For a long time, the limited knowledge of foreign languages among the early labour leaders continued to prevent international contacts from taking effect more rapidly. Some Global Unions did not do much more than provide a mailbox address. At the same time, the foundation was laid for developments which contributed to the influence that the Secretariats enjoyed later.

In a first step, a number of mergers took place in the early 20s. Many trades disappeared or lost their important role, the principle of industrial unions was gradually applied more widely and unions realized that they could in-

crease their bargaining power by uniting; the result of this was that the number of Global Unions went down slowly, but steadily. Objectives and tasks remained practically the same, but they moved into new areas of activities.

This opportunity was offered with the foundation of the International Labour Organisation in 1919, which provided a platform for the participation of workers' representatives in formulating international minimum standards and norms at work (International Conventions and Recommendations). Several Global Unions seized the opportunity immediately, and particularly the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) moved in at an early stage. As early as 1921 the Joint Seafarers' Committee was initiated and in the years to come regulations concerning the transport sector absorbed a major part of ILO resolutions, due not least to the purposeful lobbying of ITF and the strong personalities at its helm.

However, all these successes could not prevent economic and political developments in the interwar period from pushing the International Labour Movement into the defensive. All labour organisations at the time were fighting with their backs to the wall against the effects of the great economic crisis which engulfed the whole of the Western world and indeed did not spare the victorious nations of the war.

The split of the movement from one which originally encompassed the whole of the unifying socialist ideology into two different wings, a social-democratic and a communist one, and the foundation of the Soviet Union meant a continuing schism in the International Labour Movement. As early as 1921 the Red International of the trade unions was founded. And about that time, too, the Christian trade unions began to unite in an international association. But both of these were more keenly in competition with the ICTU than with the Global Unions. The latter were able to ward off successfully the accession of organisations under communist influence, since these were not prepared to cooperate democratically.

The lack of unity had fatal consequences, for from the mid-1920s onwards fundamentalist ideas began to spread in some of the heartlands of Europe, which led to the rise of dictatorships of a national-socialist, fascist and falangist line. At the beginning of the 1930s these regimes began systematically to destroy the large national Global Union-member bodies in Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain and Czechoslovakia. Many of the founder organisations of the International Trade Secretariats and the important supporters of their work were thus eliminated. After 1933 it was Germany, in particular, which lost its role as the central location of the Labour Movement for good.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 again brought the activities of the international labour organisations to a standstill, particularly since the German occupation power dissolved and destroyed the offices of some of the Secretariats. A number of offices had to close altogether for the duration of the war, others operated on a limited basis in neutral countries or in Britain.

### **The Cold War and Decolonialisation**

In 1945, after about six years of war and barbarism, the old centres of the International Trade Union Movement in Europe were destroyed, discredited and some of them paralyzed by the hostilities. But immediately after the end of the war the general mood was in favour of starting anew and of rebuilding a united international trade union movement. It was not least the great influence of the Soviet Union which at that time took effect: as part of the Allied Armed Forces it had made an important contribution to the defeat of fascism. Thus the ITUC was dissolved in 1945 and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was founded. In this the American CIO, the British TUC and the Soviet national organisation of trade unions were the prime movers.

However, the conflicting opinions about the role of trade unions in society soon proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to cooperation between these most important partners in the united organisation. From the beginning, the

question of the role and function of the Global Unions, amongst other things, was at the centre of these controversies. The WFTU-wing under Soviet influence rejected independent trade secretariats and demanded complete integration. The Global Unions saw this not only as an attempt to end their existence as independent organisations, but as an attack on the principles represented by the International Labour Movement, and fought off the attack vehemently. They continued to exist as independent organisations and were supported by many of the national confederations of Western trade unions, and above all by their member organisations. During the prolonged negotiations, which in the end did not lead to agreement, a number of US-American trade unions, which had been reserved towards international trade union activities before, joined the Global Unions in the course of worldwide East-West confrontation and helped to strengthen their power of resistance.

The cooling-off process on the political scene brought about the disintegration of the WFTU. The attempt of the Soviet affiliate to dominate the WFTU led to major tensions and internal controversies. Insurmountable differences about the attitude of the trade unions to the Marshall Plan brought matters to a head. Most of the national trade union confederations of the West left the WFTU in 1949 and founded the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) as the successor body of the ICTU – with the emphasis on free. Since then, the vast majority of the GUF have again cooperated with this body.

In the following period, the members of the WFTU were recruited primarily from the trade union organisations of the Eastern bloc. In addition, the WFTU was able to attract a number of trade unions from Third World countries and also the communist-oriented labour unions from industrial countries. The opposite number of the Global Unions in the WFTU was the International Trade Departments, later renamed Trade Union Internationals. They were an integral part of the WFTU and their work was to a large extent controlled by it.

The antagonisms of the systems and the struggle for power and spheres of influence at the beginning of the Cold War had a considerable effect on the work of the international federations. Above all the emerging independent nations of Asia and Africa, but also those in the Latin American and Caribbean regions and their young trade union organisations, which had often played a prominent part in the independence movements, became a favourite battlefield for ideological confrontation. In this, the ICFTU, in particular, developed a high profile as a defender of Western democracies, although sometimes ideological confrontation became more important than its role of spearheading the Labour Movement.

After the war, the International Christian Trade Union Movement attempted a new beginning as well. In 1968 it changed into the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and established a number of so-called International Trade Federations (ITFs), following the model of the Global Unions. But by and large these remained isolated organisations with no more than regional influence. Recently some of their members have moved over to the GUF.

Decolonisation and the foundation of many new independent states brought renewed growth in members and activities. Many liberation movements had operated under the socialist banner, and the trade unions frequently formed the spearhead of the struggle for independence. In principle they constituted a large growth reservoir, but they were soon involved in the antagonisms of the Cold War. This led to some of them moving away from the world organisations. The foundation in Africa of its own continent-wide body (OATUU), however, remained relatively unsuccessful.

In the course of and as a result of this development, the Global Unions slowly grew into genuinely international organisations, comprising all continents. In the phase between 1950 and 1980, which was dominated on the one hand by the Cold War and the „cold warriors“ and on the other by the huge rates of growth in the industrial countries, they pursued a strategy which was less burdened by ideology and was in fact

quite pragmatic. They thus remained attractive for many trade unions from the Third World, wanting to hold themselves aloof from the East-West controversy, and were able to extend their cooperation with them.

### The Recent Past

The last 20 years of the last century brought unprecedented challenges and led to considerable changes for the international trade union organisations. With the collapse of the Soviet regime, the WFTU disappeared as a competitor with any claim to leadership. This body and its trade union internationals now play merely a peripheral part. The ICFTU is incontestably the universal top-level organisation, even though its strong earlier anti-stance and its pro-West proclivities have not been forgotten by everyone. The WCL asserts its independence, but has recently entered into many alliances for action purposes and many forms of cooperation. A number of its affiliates have acceded to Global Unions. In Europe the foundation of the ETUC, which admits members primarily according to geographical, i.e. non-ideological criteria, brought together organisations from formerly divided camps.

Whereas this development brought greater unity and leverage, the need for help grew with it. The opening-up of former Eastern-bloc countries made powerful demands on international capacities to organise and on solidarity. The trade unions that had existed in the East were either dissolved or transformed and new ones came into being; almost all of them sought contact and support from the Global Unions. Decisions about admission have not always been easy and continue to be difficult. Frequently old functionaries are still in office and it is difficult to believe in a genuine change of heart. New organisations frequently do not have a viable basis; other organisations are so large that they threaten to upset the balance of regional membership. But they almost all have one thing in common: because of their weak currencies they do not

have enough financial strength to pay their affiliation fees in full, and they need help in almost every field: infrastructure, material and education.

As a result of the return to neo-liberal regulatory concepts in economic policy, the Global Union Federations have concentrated again to a greater extent on questions of principle. At their most recent world congresses all the GUF discussed how to bring about solidarity, justice and social partnership under the new conditions. Moreover, there are new subjects on their agenda, such as environmental protection and sustainable exploitation of resources, new production methods and new lifestyles and at the same time a strengthening of the basis for international campaigns in favour of human and trade union rights and demands that social clauses be considered in international trade as well as development cooperation.

These days the Global Unions are not only international associations of trade unions from all parts of the world, but in the best sense global organisations with fields of activities not only in all the continents, but above all at the supranational level. The growing importance of the TNEs is forcing the trade unions to seek the conclusion of agreements to be applicable worldwide in such companies. Transnational corporate policy and the global implications of new technologies, as well as human rights, environmental degradation, discrimination against women, child labour and unemployment are very concrete fields of activity for the Global Unions because they are directly linked to individual industries; they are not just subjects for theoretical debates at international meetings.

From the beginning the Global Unions have confronted these challenges. They have recognised the opportunities and possibilities of modern communication technologies and without hesitation used them comprehensively for information to their members and exchanges of information between the organisations. Whereas initially only some Global Unions rushed ahead and did the pioneering work for this process,



they are by now all on the Internet and can exchange messages and information in real-time across the globe. This has enormously added to the punch of the trade unions.

If these days a government or an employer from any part of the world does not comply with core labour standards or violates agreed working rules, the international centres are able to appeal to other trade unions for solidarity support within hours or to direct complaints about griev-

ances to international bodies, to initiate protests and, generally speaking, to inform the public at large about these violations of the law. At the same time it is possible to coordinate joint actions in a much different, and more effective manner by making use of these new technologies. And last but not least, they are helpful in uncovering an increasing number of violations of human rights through exploitative or suppressive practices which can then be disclosed to the public.



## How They Work

### Tasks and Activities of the Global Unions

The aims and activities of the Global Unions are laid down in their constitutions and statutes and are supplemented through decisions of congresses, when required. As democratic organisations of the Labour Movement, i.e. as “trade union of the trade unions in their trade and industry sectors”, the Global Unions follow the guidelines laid down by the members. Their effectiveness in all situations depends upon the willingness of all to join together in their efforts to achieve a specific aim. The Secretariats function as a clearing house for information to be exchanged amongst the members and as coordinators and facilitators of activities which members wish to carry out. All short-term activities must be accommodated to the overall long-term objectives.

The basic inspiration for the activities of the International Trade Union Movement derives from the ideas of earlier socialist labour movements. Even though the initially strong ideological foundation of the original bodies no longer exists, the constitutions of the Global Unions still talk of the common struggle for social and equitable aims and not merely of improved working conditions and wages. As a rule, they contain a mixture of idealistic and concrete elements.





Nor do the resolutions of the world conferences concentrate solely on practically achievable objectives within the range of expectations of the members affected, i.e. direct and tangible improvements in the immediate situation of organised workers and their organisations. The most recent past and the rise of neo-liberal and neo-capitalist ideologies, in particular, have again created a need as well as a call for greater attention to be paid to long-term visionary ideas. In this context, two major directions can be noted: firstly, more declamatory decisions as a basic ingredient and justification for efforts towards a more equitable world order and secondly concrete decisions which can be translated into day-to-day activities.

### Objectives and Tasks

The objectives and tasks of the Global Unions can be compressed into three basic messages:

- promoting worldwide solidarity
- ensuring and enforcing human and trade union rights
- creating economic and social justice.

### Promoting Worldwide Solidarity

The basic principle underlying the activities of the Global Unions is international workers' solidarity. This does not mean that all other aims are simply derived from this one, but without this basis there is no long-term "uniting bracket" to hold them together.

Solidarity is the fundamental principle of the trade unions just as private property is the fundamental principle of the capitalist economic system. And as employers derive from this the striving for maximum profit, trade unions regard solidarity as more than simply belonging to an association to achieve certain aims: it is a common philosophy with the aim of permanence. It means not only helping others because they help me, but because it is right and just. Solidarity is not like a tap that people can turn off and on. It is a specific mindset which attempts to overcome parochial-

ism and narrow-mindedness. Solidarity is a process of mutual learning and teaching.

The Global Unions have the task of promoting and supporting worldwide solidarity among members from the same occupation, branch and/or sectoral group. In this connection, solidarity can assume various forms – a message of support or protest, material assistance of financially stronger trade unions accorded to poorer ones, campaigns and even active support of industrial action in order to help bring about social justice for workers in another country.

But it is not restricted to mere actions of solidarity. It also means to help in the foundation and development of trade unions and to ensure that they become functionable organisations and that member organisations support each other, thus adding to their strength. Moreover, it means to constantly promote cooperation and mutual assistance, both morally and materially.

International solidarity of the kind activated and provided by the Global Unions is of particular importance to the relatively weak trade unions in countries with a low level of development. When they cooperate with international trade union organisations which organise in their industry, it becomes more difficult for employers or governments to ignore their demands or to oppose them. Affiliation to a Global Union ensures support from workers in the same occupation, branch or industry and their trade unions from many other countries. A trade union affiliated to a Global Union does not struggle on its own, but receives support from a worldwide trade union movement.

### Ensuring and Enforcing Trade Union and Human Rights

It is only logical that from the start the Global Unions have regarded the protection of universal human rights, in addition to the protection and implementation of trade union rights, as one of their traditional tasks. They fight for the introduction of and respect for trade union and human rights in general, and for the rights of

workers to influence decisions which affect their lives at the workplace and in society, in particular. This still constitutes an essential problem to workers in many countries, because only if certain fundamental rights have been granted can they represent their interests by themselves.

The Global Unions oppose all forms of exploitation and suppression. They support an active practice of democracy in all spheres of life. It is true that positive results in enforcing trade union and human rights are not exclusively due to trade union intervention. On the contrary, they are part of a national and international framework which is influenced to a large degree, but not exclusively, by the trade unions.

Closely related to trade union and human rights are freedom and democracy. These are inseparably interwoven. The whole history of the Labour Movement has been a struggle against either direct threats to democracy or against dangers from non-democratic forms of government which only accept a trade union movement which is controlled from the top. Owing to their support of freedom and democracy, trade union members have always been among the first victims of totalitarian regimes. Their fight for freedom – personal freedom and free choice of occupation, freedom of speech and of artistic expression – and for democracy has therefore been another ideological foundation of the free International Trade Union Movement from the start, and thus also of the Global Unions. All non-democratic forms of government are, as a matter of principle, unacceptable to them.

The combination of trade union and human rights includes not only freedom and democracy, but opposition to war, the use of force, torture and oppression of minorities of whatever kind. The Global Unions have consequently led the struggle against narrow-minded nationalism and any form of racism and discrimination as well.

The Global Unions have always been involved in campaigning for improved conditions for women, but more emphatically so in recent decades. Their aim is not only to integrate women workers more actively in the trade unions

and in leadership positions, but in general to abolish any form of suppression and unequal treatment. The Global Unions are committed to the principle of unconditional equality of opportunity for women at all levels of their activities.

### **Creating Economic and Social Justice**

It has been and continues to be one of the major demands of labour organisations that an equitable economic and social order should be established. Their aim is not to level down all differences and to create a paradise-like situation, but to abolish worldwide deficiencies caused by the creation of an unbridled capitalist economic system in favour of an economically responsible and socially just form of life.

Globalisation leaves individual governments with an increasingly smaller scope of action. This applies, in particular, to the large majority of economically weak countries in which decisions on economic and social policy depend to a large extent on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and more and more also the World Trade Organisation (WTO). For some time it has become increasingly difficult to fight for better working and living conditions in isolation within a limited national framework.

To strengthen their affiliated unions has been defined as a top priority in the Global Unions' efforts to pursue these aims. Without participation of workers' representatives no economic and social justice will be attained. This involves not only higher wages and better working conditions; the question of how to use natural resources is just as much part of it as is the creation of employment or basic public education for all children.

At the level of transnational enterprises (TNEs), the Global Unions attempt to come to terms or agreements on standards applicable to all units of a company, and to oppose all forms of exploitation and social dumping. They use their influence to prevent an erosion of the functions of the ILO; they cooperate with the latter and with many other international organ-

isations with the aim of improving international standards and norms.

Furthermore, the Global Unions campaign for the inclusion of social and environmental clauses in global trading structures and speak up in favour of social aspects being properly considered when regional economic blocs are established. Recent developments have shown some success in these efforts, giving rise to hopes for further positive long-term changes.

### Measures and Instruments

All the Global Unions use more or less comparable instruments and measures in order to realize their aims and tasks. Frequently several measures are used in combination. Their implementation may vary in form. Each Global Union has developed specific methods of its own. New facets are added to traditional patterns in flexible and creative adaptations. More recent attempts towards concluding international agreements with TNEs in the form of a skeleton agreement, called “Global Framework Agreement”, which directly regulates conditions for workers of the enterprise in any part of the world, may possibly significantly extend the scope of action of the Global Unions, which has originally been of a more indirect nature. It has opened a field of activities to the Global Unions in which they can act in their own responsibility and exert direct influence in an institutionalised form on behalf of their members.

The measures and instruments can be roughly subdivided into:

- measures of protection and support
- measures to strengthen the affiliated unions
- exchange of experience, publications, studies and information
- international negotiations and lobbying

### Measures of Protection and Support

Support and protection measures of the Global Unions are classical examples of international workers' solidarity and they still have a place today. They take primarily the form of direct

humanitarian support during emergencies. The Global Unions assists, for example, in mobilising rescue aid in major disasters and coordinate financial assistance to dependants of accident victims.

The far greater part of this task of the Global Unions deals with assistance and protection in cases of a violation of human and trade union rights and industrial actions over existential questions. It covers a wide area ranging from unjustified dismissals of trade union officials, refusal of collective negotiations to non-recognition of trade unions; it includes governmental restrictions of the right to organise, controls of trade unions and interference with the right to industrial action; regulations of national or international associations may be as much part of it as a ban on and suppression of workers' organisations; and last but not least they include persecution, detention and assassination of trade unionists. The list of incidents is endless and in each individual case exceeds the power of the Global Unions to act effectively and successfully. But frequently it is the moral support that counts because it demonstrates that the organisation under pressure does not stand alone.

The Global Unions call upon other affiliated organisations to assist trade unions in difficulties; they coordinate and organise international solidarity actions, including sympathy and token strikes in other countries, in order to give more weight to the struggle and the demands of fraternal organisations.

One of the few benefits that the Global Unions are reaping from increasing globalisation is the possibility – so far merely in individual cases – of exerting influence on national labour conflicts in subsidiaries through the head office of transnational enterprises. This applies equally to organisations which organise the public sector. In such a case direct contacts with the governments concerned is the rule, though it is not always successful. But more and more often changes are brought about by persistently talking to international institutions such as the World Bank or the IMF, or international organisations such as the ILO, UNESCO or OECD.

Orientation and monitoring missions of high-ranking union leaders, direct international protests and condemnations, campaigns to support prolonged industrial conflicts or those dealing with matters of principle as well as legal assistance fall into this category. Public relations plays a key role in this respect. It can be done very effectively if there is already some critical publicity, for instance if a multinational company has a bad image because of environmental pollution.

Boycotts can also be very effective. However, specific requirements must be met for they must be initiated and promoted by the national unions concerned. The Global Union can only coordinate activities at an international level. In fact, as a rule actions are launched only on request of the people concerned and implemented only if they consent. Moreover, the volume of these activities is naturally limited by a shortage of financial resources and by the fact that the Global Unions will not get the backing of their affiliates for involvement in every industrial dispute.

Generally, it makes sense to internationalise industrial conflicts if an enterprise has proved to be vulnerable, for example to pressure exerted on a subsidiary or to transport restrictions on its products or even in situations where a friendly trade union is in a position to intervene effectively on behalf of the organisation concerned at the head office of the enterprise.

The chances of success for international actions vary from case to case. As a rule, they are most effective if the conflict is caused locally and restricted to a particular company. However, they always presuppose the ability of the union concerned to mobilize. As far as the Global Unions are concerned, the promise of success is not always the foremost criterion in giving help. To demonstrate solidarity with the people concerned and affinity with their cause are frequently just as important in the ongoing struggle against hostile governments and enterprises.

Frequently, the reasons for activities of the kind quoted above suddenly turn up in the course of crisis situations and require an immediate response. The function of a “fire brigade” puts great strain on the extremely limited personnel

resources of the Global Unions, even though modern information technology has made many things possible and easier in the last few years.

The anti-Apartheid campaign of the International Trade Union Movement, in which the Global Unions played a major role, was a spectacular success story. It was not least their unending activities against racial discrimination and the suppression of trade union bodies that finally brought the Apartheid regime to its knees. As an example for all the others, mention is made here only of the support for the South African Union of Miners (NUM/SAF) by the Miners’ International Federation (MIF, now ICEM). In the course of this support campaign – which had had two targets from the start: direct support of a trade union and opposition to the blatant violations of human and trade union rights by the Apartheid regime – the NUM/SAF developed into the largest union in terms of membership and into one of the most influential labour organisations in South Africa, spearheading the struggle against Apartheid and thus contributing in no small measure to the final victory.

Cases such as these demonstrate how prolonged conflicts of this kind can be and that only tenacity and perseverance will bring success. Changes of a fundamental kind are rarely achieved overnight, they presuppose persistent efforts and unflagging optimism, they may call for great sacrifices, but can lead to success provided there is solidarity of everyone concerned.

### **Measures to Strengthen the Affiliated Unions**

To strengthen the affiliated unions is one of the elementary tasks of Global Unions: the stronger the affiliate, the greater its potential influence and the more successful its international activities. In practice, this happens in three ways:

1. by assisting in organising members
2. by assisting in building up infrastructure and
3. by education and training.

These measures are not always put in place separately, but frequently come as a package of mutually complementary elements.

Organising campaigns are primarily intended to strengthen the affiliated union by increasing its membership. This may be done by training the organising union officers, thus improving the effectiveness of recruitment efforts in the longer term, and by supplying advertizing material or suitable equipment for its production. Depending on the circumstances, other material and financial support may also be provided in order to implement selective or nation-wide campaigns.

The target groups for infrastructural assistance are weak organisations in countries hostile to trade unions or those which are still being built up. They include, in particular, emerging independent trade union movements in countries with previously dictatorial rule in the former Eastern bloc or in Africa. Assistance means both financial and material support and special advice and education in order to establish functioning trade union and communication structures and to apply them.

In contrast, support for trade union training and further training is intended to strengthen unions by improving the organisation's quality. The main objective of Global Union-educational activities is to strengthen the power and independence of affiliated unions. Education is also intended to broaden the basis of membership by improving the competence of union officers and by providing basic trade union education. As a result, trade unions are better able to participate in international trade union policy-making and to fulfil their financial commitments vis-à-vis the Global Unions. Education is often provided with the assistance of friendly organisations because of the high costs involved. However, all Global Unions ensure that organisational targets are not imposed from outside, even though preferences and specific competences of donor organisations may play a role in deciding which target group will be supported in what way: some focus on support for women trade unionists, others prefer to support the rank and file and a third group may specialise in education for leadership.

The same pattern is followed through the instruments involved: seminars, courses, study groups, meetings, workshops and discussion fora to exchange ideas, to compare experience and to prepare problem solutions and decisions. The range of topics covers all kinds of areas, but also follows the agenda laid down at an international level. For example, in recent years almost all Global Unions have intensified training on occupational health and safety.

Education and training supported by Global Unions have lost much of their ad-hoc character in the last few years. They are planned with recipient organisations on the basis of long-term objectives and are jointly monitored in their implementation. Even though each project has its own special features, all activities in this area can be summarised under the following objectives:

1. establishment of new trade unions (union-building);
2. recruitment of additional members;
3. increasing the number of organisations affiliated to the Global Union;
4. motivation to unite into larger national unions or coordination committees;
5. capacity-building for the organisation and implementation of education within their organisations;
6. greater competence to participate in societal, economic and social matters.

The problem, in particular in educational activities, is to define the right measure of external assistance. In fact, the principle of "help for self-help" underlies all activities and the recipient organisation is generally expected to contribute to some extent (even though very often only by providing administrative services locally). However, if the size of the union concerned and its area of organisation is so small that its revenues will probably never cover more than the running costs for trade union offices, i.e. it can be anticipated that it will not be able to fund its own education programs even in future, this whole policy becomes questionable. Some Global Unions are therefore discussing guidelines according to which external grants for educational activities



should not exceed a certain percentage of the financial strength of the recipient organisation.

**Exchange of Experience, Publications, Studies and Information for Members, as well as Public Relations Activities**

Exchange of experience and information has been one of the core activities of the Global Unions from the start and an important medium to improve the quality of their relationship to affiliated unions. To know what working conditions are like in the same occupation or industry group in other countries is a valuable point of reference for all union leaders worldwide. In view of growing mutual dependence on economic and social conditions in other countries, trade unions cannot successfully pursue their struggle in one country alone. Rapid and comprehensive information about developments in other parts of the world is therefore indispensable. Modern communications technology is being applied by the Global Unions for this purpose.

It is equally important for the Global Unions to inform the public at large as well as to pass on specific information to important friendly organisations and institutions. The point is to create a critical public, in particular by publishing spectacular successes or disclosing extremely radical employers' practices. The more concrete the case, the more effective their intervention. The Global Unions act as a switchboard for communication both between the affiliated unions of the same occupation, branch, industry or employer and with other international trade union organisations and other players in the global world of work.

In order to meet the requirements of affiliates for accurate up-to-date information, the Global Unions collect and disseminate data concerning specific industrial areas, tendencies in collective bargaining, activities of transnational enterprises, occupational hazards, important social, economic and political developments and other matters of possible interest to the member unions. They organise conferences, workshops and sub-

ject-specific meetings between the members in order to exchange experience and to draw up common strategies.

Almost all Global Unions have a more or less extensive publishing program. Normally each Global Union has a news magazine which appears at regular intervals. Additional publications are issued from time to time about specific subjects. Selective information for specific sectional groups is also available. At times regional offices or sub-organisations have their own print media for the distribution of information. Circular letters, news-sheets and magazines are widely distributed and constitute the most frequent link between the Secretariat and the members. They circulate information about campaign actions, problems and successes among the members and as a rule are sent to the national head offices for further distribution among union officers. However, there is hardly ever a check on how effective this is, i.e. whether the news magazines ever leave the over-crowded office desks of the top-level officers.

The challenges of modern communication have been taken up and mastered successfully. These days the latest information about industrial disputes or agreements is available around the clock in all parts of the world. It was the Global Unions, in particular, which spearheaded efforts towards using the Internet for exchanging information between head office and members, and also between the members themselves. To exchange experience worldwide in response to concrete situations has become a widespread exercise. The Web sites of the international trade union organisations provide fast and comprehensive orientation and contribute considerably to an almost instantaneous dissemination of the latest statements of leading personalities. Not least the new information technology offers an excellent medium for fast action or reaction in the confrontations with employers and governments. However, the digital divide also leaves its mark on the International Trade Union Movement: for various reasons a major part of the weak trade unions in the Southern hemisphere has not yet access to the Internet.

Governments, international organisations and institutions, the press, research institutes, friendly associations and individuals are found more often on the mailing list for special-subject publications and congress reports than for the current-affairs bulletins. In contrast, direct dispatch to the local offices of affiliated unions is rare. The layout and content of publications may vary, but the majority of them are of a professional quality nowadays and are able to attract the attention of readers outside the official circles, including sympathizers.

Some deal almost exclusively with the special affairs of the Global Union concerned or are very subject and occupation-oriented. Others make an effort to present trade union developments in the broadest sense of the word. Some give a lot of room to the concepts and ideas of their Secretary General or look into questions of general policy which go far beyond a purely trade union-oriented framework. The focus of content varies. While in some cases the Global Union magazines merely report about the results of congresses, executive meetings and important events and limit themselves to relevant developments in their areas of organisation, other magazines contain more extensive subject-specific information, for example the results of polls and studies. Editorials frequently address not only current affairs but more general policy issues; they often reflect ideological claims and refer to higher objectives such as democracy, freedom, peace and social justice.

Additional costs result from the fact that publications must be produced in several languages. Minimum requirements include English, French and Spanish; but many also have a German and Swedish edition. Some go even further and with the help of their regional offices distribute information also in other international languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Arabic.

Some Global Unions commission studies or produce them themselves. Apart from other sources, they use the results of polls amongst individual members which in many cases are taken at regular intervals. This was done, and

still is done in some exceptional cases today, by sending out questionnaires. However, extensive opportunities are available with the new communications and information technologies such as databases and email. All Global Unions already use them, though to varying degrees. But they have all realised that more needs to be done in this respect because this provides the potential for more successful international activities in future.

### **International Negotiations and Lobbying**

In the era of globalisation, all activities in the abovementioned areas must be supplemented by measures at the international decision-making levels. This includes the setting-up of participatory structures in the top-level bodies of multinational companies, the campaigns for social clauses and similar arrangements in trade mechanisms as well as the setting of labour standards by the ILO. It is in this field that the bodies of international trade union organisations are playing a specific and indispensable role these days. This applies to both the level of European and global works councils in conjunction with national trade unions, the ETUC and the Global Union concerned, and to conflicts and cooperation with the internationally-operating special agencies in cooperation between the ICFTU and the Global Unions.

### **Representation vi-a-vis Transnational Enterprises (TNEs)**

The ability of the International Trade Union Movement to negotiate with transnational enterprises is constantly being challenged. Supranational bodies representative of workers in TNEs are not a completely new development, but have acquired an unprecedented dynamic in the last decade. As early as the twenties, the ITF was convinced that in view of the internationalisation of capital, the Labour Movement also had to fight at an international level not only in theory, but in practice as well. The Global Unions were the ideal medium for organising in such an inter-

national environment and for fighting their cause, wrote ITF-Secretary General Edo Fimmen in 1924.

There was never any doubt about the purpose of international activities at company level. Since these enterprises evade control by national unions by globalising, trade unions have to follow them to the decision-making levels by operating at an international level themselves. As early as 1966 the International Metalworkers' Federation established world company councils for General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. In the London Declaration of the world company councils of automobile manufacturers of 1971 it is stated: "Centralised control of multinational companies must be confronted with the best possible coordination of trade unions' negotiating activities in all countries where workers of these enterprises are represented."

Today, internationally-operating enterprises take their decisions on investment, flow of capital, trade, production and marketing in disregard of national borders. National governments are frequently powerless and no longer able to implement an economic policy of their own. Workers feel the effect every day: in the form of unemployment, wage cuts and stringent new management methods, introduced in the name of "international competition". Increasing global control of world production requires more intensive cross-border influence of trade unions, the more so as the technical set of instruments developed for a globalized economy have brought about a re-emergence of the ideologies of old Manchester-type capitalism in a new guise.

Globalisation through modern means of communications and the opening-up of markets have also changed the conditions for possible pressure on the employers. National trade unions find it extremely difficult to negotiate with company managements whose head offices are located in another country, while international holdings with a budget larger than that of small countries have no difficulty whatsoever to impose their will on weak governments in the regulation of working conditions.

In the last few years, the Global Unions have intensified their activities in connection with TNEs in all fields. As these enterprises operate mainly from the industrialised countries it was possible to mobilise the big and powerful affiliated organisations in those countries to join in these efforts, for one because they are themselves affected and secondly because they have the necessary influence. The Global Unions intervene regularly on behalf of individual member unions which are facing difficulties in negotiations with or conflicts in international subsidiary companies. This strategy has proved successful both in terms of negotiations and long-term industrial action.

The most important task of world councils of the kind established by IMF, IUF, UNI, ICEM and others in many enterprises consists in ensuring a continuous direct exchange of information between workers' representatives of all sections of the enterprise in respect not only of facts, but of planning background, reports on situations and conditions and discussions of strategy. In such cases strong individual trade unions assist weaker affiliates, for instance vis-a-vis a subsidiary in a Third World country. Activities include coordination of collective negotiations as well as centralised negotiations with company managements.

The signing by the Global Unions of internationally binding collective agreements in the original meaning of the term remains the exception for the time being. Yet the Global Unions are the most significant direct opponents of the TNEs when it comes to interventions. Their growing activities in this area have demonstrated, on the one hand, their ability to act at an international level and, on the other, follow logically from the globalisation of corporate activities.

In Europe, the implementation of the EU-Directive for the establishment of European works councils has brought about new opportunities and challenges in this field. Preparation and training of personnel for the future works councils and ensuring the participation of member organisations in these bodies are major tasks on the agenda at present. As many European TNEs are

also operating globally, promising opportunities for exerting influence through these channels may arise far beyond the European arena.

### **Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations and Institutions**

Trade unions are increasingly being forced to exert their influence not only at a national, but also at an international level because of growing international interdependence of national economies, the integration of economic blocs, the establishment of regional and global markets, international concentration of capital and the resulting global nature of economic problems such as inflation, cyclical or structural crises, varying monetary stability, under-employment and unemployment as well as growing poverty. More and more discussions and decisions which affect the lives of workers are taking place at an international level. Workers must be represented in fora of this kind through their trade unions. Organisations such as the Global Unions are able to exert an influence on the relevant decision-making processes.

Almost all Global Unions maintain permanent contacts to international organisations which are responsible for an area of union organisation. The latter have grown in numbers in recent years so that by now linking up with them has become one of the most time-consuming activities of the Global Unions. Since they are not only growing in numbers but are playing an increasingly important role in drawing up labour standards or regulations dealing with the world of work, representation of workers' interests in these bodies is becoming increasingly crucial.

The Global Unions represent the interests of their affiliated unions vis-a-vis international organisations such as, for example, ILO, WHO, FAO, OECD and other sub-organisations of the UN, but also vis-a-vis international employers' organisations and new institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In many of them the Global Unions hold an official observer status, in others they are consulted because of their expertise, their competence as partners

in dialogue or simply because they have been insistently pushing for recognition. Frequently they act in cooperation with the ICFTU, ETUC, TUAC and other Global Unions. In many cases the official status is attributed to the ICFTU as the primary body responsible for the political representation of free trade unions, while the GUF are consulted because of their expertise and competence or they act on behalf of the ICFTU. The ICFTU-offices in New York and Geneva are playing an important role in this context as contact, support and coordination units.

At the centre of their efforts is the ILO. In this body 169 member states are represented by delegates of governments, employers as well as employees. As part of the UN-system it has a mandate to regulate social and working conditions. Global Unions take part in the annual ILO meetings and are entitled to address the plenary and participate in committee meetings. The Geneva office of the ICFTU coordinates cooperation between the Global Unions and the workers' group on the ILO-Governing Body. The director of the office acts as secretary to the workers' group.

The Global Unions lodge complaints against governments which violate international conventions adopted by the ILO or disregard its recommendations, they insist on discussions about pressing problems and on the adoption of new guidelines concerning labour standards and minimum standards, and with their expertise contribute to many consultations on labour and social problems. Recently, special attention has been paid to the problems of growing unemployment, home work industry and labour migration. The "free export zones" in a growing number of Third World countries are another major problem. In most cases they are "free of trade unions" and valid international agreements are either violated or not enforced. In this respect, they are increasingly threatening the rights of workers in many parts of the world.

Moreover, the Global Unions have emphatically opposed all recent attempts to undermine the position and status of the ILO. On the contrary, they demand a more extensive mandate and more powers for the ILO.



### How does the ILO function?

The ILO is a UN-specialized agency with 174 member States (1998). It functions through the following bodies and institutions composed of representatives not only of governments, but of employers and workers from all member States according to the principle of tripartism:

- the International Labour Conference
- the Governing Body with 56 members
- the International Labour Office

There are also industry committees.

The *Governing Body* is the executive council of the ILO and takes decisions on ILO's policy, establishes the budget and programmes and sets the agenda for the Conference; it also elects the Director-General. The Governing Body is headed by Juan Somavia from Chile, the 9<sup>th</sup> Director General by now, but the first who is neither from Europe nor the United States of America.

The *International Labour Conference* meets each year in June in Geneva involving 1,800 to 2,000 participants (2 delegates each per

government, 1 representative of the employers and workers each, plus experts) from all member States. They elect the members of the Governing Body, discuss important problems of the working and social environments in all countries and prepare and adopt international standards.

The *International Labour Office* is the central secretariat of the ILO in Geneva. It manages, coordinates and supervises the extensive activities of the ILO. There are regional and local ILO-offices in many countries of the world to support the secretariat. Amongst other things, the Office collects relevant information and statistics from all parts of the world to be used as the basis for research and documentation as well as for its own publications. In addition, the Office publishes studies and handbooks on workers' education, social security, health and safety at the workplace, trade union rights, industrial relations etc., and also periodicals and the Yearbook on Labour Statistics. The



central secretariat is also responsible for activities of the experts in the ILO-offices in the context of technical cooperation.

The head office constitutes a research and documentation as well as a campaign centre. There has been an International Institute for Labour Studies in Geneva since 1960 and an international training centre of the ILO in Turin since 1965.

Four international trade union organisations have been awarded full consultative status with the ILO: ICFTU, WFTU, WCL and OATUU. This entitles them in principle to take part in all the conferences or other meetings of the ILO without voting rights. The ICFTU, in particular, is playing an active part as adviser, especially for the so-called workers' group at the ILO-Conference.

The ILO-Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work sets out the obligation of all member States to respect these fundamental rights which are defined as so-called core labour standards, irrespective of whether countries have individually ratified it or not. The core labour standards had been

identified and given prominence as early as the Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. They comprise the following conventions:

**No. 87 and no. 98:**

***freedom of association and the right to collective negotiations***

**No. 29 and no. 105:**

***ban on forced labour***

**No. 100 and no. 111:**

***the precept of equal treatment and non-discrimination***

**No. 138:**

***ban on child labour.***

ILO-responsibilities are a matter of international treaty law, not of constitutional law, and thus decisions are not enforceable in the individual member States. All decisions are therefore consensual and must be ratified by member States before they attain an enforceable status.

Many Global Unions cooperate with WHO in the fields of education and information. Apart from topics like occupational diseases and safety at work, a number of Global Unions have concentrated on the subject of Aids in particular and intensified their contacts to WHO in this respect. Contacts to the OECD are maintained through its Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC). The Global Unions are frequently given an opportunity to present their views in the special committees and thus participate in the decision-making processes of OECD-bodies.

Some international organisations, however, do not see international labour organisations as either a partner in discussions or in cooperation. The International Monetary Fund, for example, is still rather averse to it, even though its influence significantly affects employment opportunities and conditions in many countries.

Yet the Global Unions successfully fought for greater involvement of their national member organizations in the IMF-country consultations. Although many national governments disregard the fact that trade unions are entitled to take part in this process, an increasing number of the unions use their rights with support, and if required, coordination by the ICFTU and the Global Unions.

Representation vis-a-vis regional institutions is becoming increasingly important. Mention must first be made of Europe where the majority of economic and social problems are no longer the sole responsibility of sovereign national governments, but of European authorities and bodies. In the course of many years of growing together, a large number of opportunities for hearings and interventions have emerged which are used intensively. Organisationally, the Global Unions have responded to this in different

ways, in many cases by establishing special offices, but also independent European regional associations. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) takes over the role of the ICFTU in the region – a relationship not always short of conflict. The Global Unions closely cooperate with the ETUC through its European Industry Federations (EIFs). They also use their own direct channels to exert influence.

### **Alliances and other Forms of Cooperation**

In recent times, greater cooperation with other NGOs in international campaigns has been playing an increasingly important role. In this context, the international union organisations have often entered into temporary alliances with other organisations of the civil society. In cases where enterprises and corporations started to operate across borders, the international trade union organisations followed them; where enterprises and corporations acted outside the control of national legislation, trade unions extended their influence through the supranational world organisations.

The number of campaigns and actions coordinated and coorganised with other non-governmental organisations of the civil society has gone up noticeably in the last few years. As a rule, they are not so much arrangements for long-term cooperation as single-issue alliances. In the case

of violations of human and trade union rights, joint action with human rights groups makes the protest more effective; in the case of industrial disputes and boycott measures, consumer associations can add to the pressure; and during the latest world summits joint actions with other groups from the international women's, environmental and social-work associations contributed to achievements not possible without this co-operative approach.

But greater openness to cooperation is still necessary on the part of the established trade unions, as is more information to potential partners for action whose target groups as a rule are not the workers. Some human rights groups, for example, have still to learn that trade union rights are also human rights.

But the most important and closest forms of alliances are those within the Global Union family itself. Technical interlinkage of operational processes and the establishment of enterprises across individual lines of production and areas of industry provide an important background for joint activities vis-a-vis the same multinational company or for bundling experts' know-how in international committees. Coordination frequently exceeds the framework of general meetings and steering committees provided by the Statutes and in many Global Unions makes up a major part of their activities.

## Problems and Challenges

Like all organisations, the Global Unions are being confronted with recurring problems related to questions of principle and therefore requiring discussions, reactions, adaptations and changes of a fundamental kind. Only a few of these problems are “home-made”, the majority of them are determined by external circumstances; some have been around for a long time, but most of them are the result of recent developments under the influence of globalisation. They are concerned with questions of principle in trade union organisational policy and jurisdictional issues as well as with areas of activity, opportunities to exert influence, questions of efficiency and finally, but often predominantly, the availability of funds.

Some conditions which are causing these problems and challenges are of a structural kind, in other words they have developed with the trade unions and are linked to them. This includes the question of how to optimise the relationship between negotiating and organising strength. On the one hand, Global Unions must represent the largest possible entity for action, on the other make the best out of limited resources by re-orienting their administrative structures, by saving as much as possible and concentrating their resources and by action-specific or permanent alliances.



The indispensable work of the Global Unions therefore takes place in a context of conflicting demands, expectations and their own aspirations on the one hand, and realistic opportunities and existing scope of manoeuvre on the other. The increasing global interdependence of economic, political and social developments and problems has led to an increase in the number of tasks they have to deal with. At the same time, the expectations of their clientele, above all those from Third World countries, are high and continue to increase.

This means that the demands made on staff are increasing with regard to both content and formal matters. This is not surprising considering the scope of their mandate and the fact that the number of those representing the interests of the employers' side with which they are confronted in the international organisations, for example, out-number their own representatives many times over. Large international corporations can hire without difficulty as many consultants for dealing with specific problems as the Global Union concerned employs for its entire staff. And the companies have the funds needed to buy the best know-how available. In consequence, the response must be: solidarity versus financial power, dedicated idealism with the necessary skills versus know-how easily bought. Modern information technologies, political and sociological analyses, international treaty law, the knowledge of languages and of the countries involved, new methods in adult education and organisation – first-rate expert knowledge is in great demand in every field. The Global Unions have successfully addressed all these demands in the last few years by taking on more activities and at the same time improving the content of their work.

As membership-funded organisations, the Global Unions are also confronted with certain problems of available resources. First of all, there is a weakness in the financial basis. No Global Union has any financial reserves worth mentioning and sources of independent income do not exist. All the funds needed for their work must come from members. But there are natural

bottlenecks and only little hope for short-term improvements in this respect. In recent years, the impressive growth in membership numbers of the Global Unions resulted, in the majority of cases, from the affiliation of trade unions from the states of the former Eastern bloc or from Third World countries. In other words, they did not add to the financial strength, but initially increased the need for aid. This imbalance led and still leads to a situation that in some Global Unions little more than 30 percent of the affiliated organisations finance 90 percent of the budget.

From among the group of members who can pay their way most are themselves threatened by falling membership. It is not to be expected that increased dues, which are not fixed by the Global Unions themselves but voted upon by members, will come about to any great extent. The Global Unions have no weapon, beyond the power of persuasion, to place further financial burdens upon the affiliated organisations which are themselves wrestling with great problems; their power of persuasion, however, depends on how useful they prove to be in the medium term, i.e. on how successful they are. This means that it cannot be assumed that any considerable amount of additional finance will be available.

This is also true of funds which have up to now been made available by friendly organisations for educational programmes. On the one hand, the grants they receive from their governments for this purpose are increasing only marginally, if at all; on the other, there is an ongoing debate about new forms of aid with a greater bilateral emphasis which will often lead to a less significant role of the Global Unions in this area of cooperation.

If it is not possible to increase staff and funds directly, the solution left for mobilising greater force and increasing action capability is to make use of the corresponding capacities of the member organisations. What will be important in this respect is to highlight the necessity of international activities beyond the circle of top-level officials; this means that the realisation must grow that the question of industrial bases in the in-

dustrial countries is also decided in Third World countries and that it is necessary to influence this process through strong trade unions in those countries and to participate in international organisations and in transnational enterprises.

The multi-lingual composition of membership continues to present a special difficulty for the Global Unions. Normally, documents and publications are distributed in the three major languages – English, French and Spanish. But this is certainly not adequate for all officials in the member countries and in many cases prevents basic information and quick mobilisation. Additional translations would thus be necessary, but are unaffordable. Even the present volume requires considerable funds for translation costs. ITF, which publishes its information in up to six languages, has increasingly started to use the capacities of member organisations as a result. This saves money for head office and at the same time involves the members in international activities to a greater extent.

An old problem which has assumed new and considerably wider dimensions lies in the question of organisational jurisdiction. Whereas formerly it was a question of trade unions acceding for traditional reasons to a Global Union other than the one responsible for them, or of organising a wide range of activities in smaller countries which were not covered by one Global Union alone, it is today the changes in international economic structure which blur the dividing lines and which link branches hitherto attached to different Global Unions. Since TNEs can have either a horizontal or a vertical structure, a number of Global Unions have already members in branches which cut across each other: in manufacturing, in the service industry and in raw material production.

A difficulty arising in this context when negotiating with globally-operating enterprises is one of responsibilities which are not corresponding: the global responsibility of an TNE's central office is often in collision with a trade union strategy of industry-specific negotiations. It happens with increasing frequency that agree-

ments contain regulations governing the productivity, quality and profitability of an enterprise. Under certain circumstances, the necessity arises to negotiate with one enterprise across branch and industry-specific jurisdiction. Again, the Global Unions have made a lot of progress in adapting to this process in the last few years.

Such changes in the economic structures are further complicated by changes in the employment structure. The changed composition of the workforce brings about a loss of the traditional differences between occupations, skills, and job grades. More and more people are employed in highly-qualified and specialised jobs, and more and more in unskilled service jobs. This means that the old trade union rules which could be used as guidelines to find out which worker belonged to which trade union no longer apply. The question is no longer exclusively one of co-operation, but of bringing a new order into the situation.

It is in this connection that a critical order of magnitude for action and influence of the Global Unions must be pondered. This cannot simply be read off from the absolute membership strength, however, but depends just as much on its composition. With the same total number of members, there are Global Unions where the number of affiliated unions exceed a hundred by only a few or are below that figure, whereas others have more than double the membership. In other cases affiliates are largely concentrated in industrial countries or operate preponderantly in developing countries. Of necessity, all these factors lead to different approaches to procedures and possibilities.

Similarly, a critical mass in respect of organisational equipment and financial basis is required for maintaining a minimum representation. Amalgamations and various forms of co-operation, for example in the fields of data-processing, communications and publications, have a role to play in this context. Sharing material and staffing for education and training can also produce the necessary synergetic effects to achieve greater punch.



A further difficulty related to globalisation lies in the enormously increasing tendency to give sub-contracts to other firms and the resulting demands on trade unions. Large enterprises concentrate on a few core areas in which they enjoy a comparative advantage, technologically speaking, and contract out other activities (servicing, transportation, security etc.) to outside firms. This policy challenges existing trade union structures and branch-wide collective negotiations. What is required here are new approaches to form alliances across a number of trade unions, a task which as a rule can only be achieved by the Global Unions at the international level.

The potential influence of the international union organisations on international organisations and institutions is still restricted by the absence of institutionalised partnerships between equal partners. Comprehensive union representation has rarely been achieved so far and is often limited to an observer status or consultation rights. In addition, international organisations and institutions are based on agreements between national governments; the majority of them enjoys no, or merely limited, independent regulatory powers in supranational matters. The recognition and inclusion of trade unions as

social partners in discussions afforded by some national governments, and the EU itself in some tentative measures, are still an absolute exception, globally speaking.

Conversely, the negotiating mandate of the Global Unions rests, of course, solely upon consensual decisions taken by national members. Majorities are not always to be found for actions which are, in fact, necessary, nor can the opposition of individual interests always be overcome. And sometimes the decision-making process simply takes far too long. It is like a convoy: the slowest tanker sets the speed. But in the last few years, under pressure from the worldwide emergence of neo-liberal economic principles, the view that international action is necessary and the willingness to cooperate have continued to grow.

At the beginning of this century, the International Trade Union Movement once again finds itself faced with a great challenge, some say the greatest in its history. This challenge to its power of resistance has been triggered off by new political ideologies and phenomena such as privatisation, individualisation and a belief in the market as a means of solving all problems. It has become possible as a result of technical



innovations in the communications and transport sectors and by the worldwide disappearance of trade barriers; this permits unlimited global activities and the circumvention of influence exerted by national governments.

The globalisation of the economy forces trade unions to act globally themselves. The attempt on the part of businesses and governments to enforce a neo-liberal economic policy worldwide and to undermine national protective regulations and standards that were achieved after a long struggle calls for worldwide solidarity. International cooperation between the trade unions has never been so much in demand before. What is needed is innovative and strong associations at the international level and their reinforcement.

Professional pessimists already forecast the end of organised labour owing to the globalisation of the economy, the trend from an industrial to a service society, the declining importance of many occupations and the new possibilities of work organisation. In so doing, they disregard the fact that essentially trade unions struggle against exploitation and denial of the right to self-determination. At least as long as the capitalist form of business prevents humane development and an equitable distribution of goods and services produced and denies democratic rights at work, trade unions with the ability to defend themselves must not only exist, but will have an indispensable role to play.

Moreover, the new transnational world economic order does not bring the proclaimed gradual and general rise in living standards through progress and the lasting development of underdeveloped economies. Instead, it leads to the impoverishment of firms and economies which cannot keep pace with this global competition and which is accompanied by massive, rising long-term unemployment. This is why it requires corrective measures which give priority to the idea of solidarity and humanity against the postulate of individualism and worldwide competition of each against the other. This is a task that can only be fulfilled by internationally organised labour.

As a first step, it is necessary to adapt the individual organisations involved. This calls for a rational application of existing resources with more professionalism, competence and to a greater extent. The organisational conditions and bases must be put in place to enable the concentrated force of all Global Unions to respond to the manipulations of the global labour market through transnational capital. The answer to the global challenge can only be global solidarity.

This includes the necessity of guaranteeing the greatest possible measure of united action and the necessity of making the best of limited funds by better arrangement of administrative structures, by savings of scale, by concentrating resources and by uniting for the purpose of individual action or on a permanent basis.

Every reduction in the number of Global Union Federations can only be a gradual, slowly developing process. However, there were amalgamations in the past and there is no reason to assume that this will not be the case in future. From this point of view, which is no longer primarily related to specific occupations, there would be a link-up of fields of activities of sector-specific and interest-related groups and corresponding synergetic effects. This would include greater functional coordination of cross-sector education and training projects, common research and publication, the use of modern communication media as well as effective money-saving activities with respect to office services such as mailing services and the administration of data, which may seem trivial at first glance. This is not to suggest that an amalgamation will necessarily take place in these areas.

Furthermore, the Global Unions must try to become even more independent in their educational activities, for they do not know to what extent and for how long they can count on external donor organisations to support the educational programmes of the Trade Union Movement. This is primarily a financial problem, but not one that can be solved by simply increasing membership dues. What it does mean, amongst other things, is that member unions must be

made even more aware of the international dimensions of their problems so that they will become genuine players in the International Trade Union Movement.

The further development of regional economic groups such as NAFTA, MERCOSUR, ASEAN and others will be an inspiration to re-organise the regional Global Union-structures. To set up regional offices may increasingly be the appropriate response to the question: where are the regional structures in which the Global Unions can work together with the existing trade union organisations in order to exert an active influence on the social and economic policy of that region.

Another consideration in connection with possible new Global Union-structures aims at pushing forward the organisation of sectors and population groups which until now were not organised, or which were under-represented in the Trade Union Movement. This applies to both the informal sector and to the unemployed in general. The problem of the inclusion of the informal sector, above all in developing countries, remains unsolved in spite of many tentative efforts. The rising number of unemployed persons, i.e. potential workers, has so far found too little recognition in organising activities.

Here it is necessary to analyse in how far the traditional definition of the Trade Union Movement, as accepted by the older established industrial countries, can be applied to conditions in Third World countries as they are today. Many industries and services there are based on "informal" labour, but often without a clearly-defined employer in the usual sense of the term and without definite agreements as to wages and working conditions. What exists are many quasi-self-employed persons or what one might call "one-person or one-family sub-contractors", who have to scrape together a living wherever and whenever they can. They are undoubtedly subject to exploitation and unable to defend themselves against it on their own. In the long run, the International Labour Movement will not be able to avoid becoming more deeply involved itself with these individuals and their problems.

The future will evoke changes in orientation. If it is true that we are leaving an age in which the manufacturing industry was the determining factor and entering an era which will be characterised by information and communications, then the question arises what this means for an organisation which arose together with industry. What international trade union movement do we need in tomorrow's society? What will be the tasks and activities of the trade unions in a future post-industrial society? Whatever answers emerge from these questions, they will always rest on the fact that workers must first of all create solidarity in order to ensure the representation of their interests, and this in every society whatever its name.

It is obvious that this calls for extensive continuous coordination at all levels. And it is equally obvious that every member of a trade union in any country of the world must understand the general implications of this so that he/she can contribute him/herself to a stronger position and greater success of trade unions at that level.

One of the problems is that everything happens so far away that the individual at the workplace can no longer comprehend what is going on. As nothing is caused by the miraculous forces of the world market, however, but by acts of will of individuals guided by their interests, it is necessary to influence these decisions. In the final analysis, it is the decisions taken at this level that will directly affect the shaping of working conditions and the earnings of worker(s). In consequence, it becomes even more important that workers in all parts of the world are informed about these activities and understand what this ultimately means for them.

In particular in the last few years, international trade union organisations achieved some breakthroughs at the international level, or they were achieved with significant contributions on their part. Not all of them attracted quite so much public attention as the confrontations in connection with the WTO meeting of ministers in Seattle in December 1999. Some achievements are less spectacular or are not regarded

as quite so important by representatives of the private media. The struggle about the declaration on fundamental principles and basic labour rights (core labour standards) which was adopted by the ILO in 1998 was just as fierce, but covered less extensively in the general press.

In many countries, members have not yet completely realised that this was achieved by their representation, or they do not quite understand the implications. In fact, Global Union Federations function far away from the member of the individual trade union. Their acting officials are not directly elected so that even the national functionaries below the top leadership may not know their names. This distance prevents a proper sense of unity, in other words the development of an emotional basis for genuine solidarity. In the final analysis, it negatively affects the willingness to help, both in terms of ideas and material support. But without the full backing of the company-based or national organisations and without an adequate financial basis, the acting bodies of the International Trade Union Movement are poorly equipped for their work. Whatever is negotiated at the global level must be intended and supported by the entire membership. It is therefore imperative that everyone – down to the rank-and-file member – fully understands that the labour organisations are not only providing assistance and information globally, but that they are involved in proper negotiations at the highest level which directly affect working conditions.

There is no doubt that, contrary to whatever people may believe, the organisations of the International Trade Union Movement are already playing a prominent part as the vanguard of labour worldwide. Globalisation has opened up an enormous field of action to globally-operating firms, often exceeding nationally restricted boundaries, which they brutally abuse. Therefore the fight against them can only take place on the same global field of operation. A new, greatly enlarged role is attributed to the worldwide organisations of the International Trade

Union Movement in the process. To come to terms with it calls for hard work, great flexibility and new visions. The fact that they have achieved some initial impressive successes clearly demonstrates that the International Trade Union Movement has entered the new century with undiminished strength and greater willingness to act than ever before.

Conversely, recent successes may not necessarily last, or even lead to a complete reversal of the massive cutbacks resulting from globalisation. A few initial hope-inspiring signs must be followed up by further unabated efforts. The point is not to contain the damage, but to initiate a development which will bring about genuine positive changes.

In the international field, the Global Unions have done all they can to this end. Their present and future roles also depend on the willingness of the affiliated unions to make available the necessary material resources. The instability and organisational weakness of many trade unions in the countries of the Third World, the limitations of their ability to represent their interests and the threat to the existence of the organisations because of restrictive and repressive state and corporate influences will make direct promotion and support necessary for a long time to come.

International trade union policy must therefore not be looked upon as an adjunct to national trade union policy, but must be its extension and complement through information, coordination and support. It is not enough that only the top leaders of the member unions participate in the work of the Global Unions. International solidarity, which manifests itself through the activities of the Global Union Federations and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, must become the concern of all members. That is why this kind of work should have its proper place in the information and educational activities of the national trade unions. The present handbook attempts to make a contribution to this.

# Individual Descriptions





## Education International (EI)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

The Education International (EI) was founded on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1993. It is the result of the amalgamation of the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP) and the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions (IFFTU). With more than 26 million members, including 17m women, in 310 affiliated organisations in 159 countries in mid-2003, the EI was the Trade Secretariat with the largest membership.

### Areas of Organisation

Educators, teachers, lecturers and other employees in education, research and teaching.

■ **Organisational structure:** world congress every 3 years, President, 4 Vice-Presidents, 17 Executive Committee members and the Secretary General form the Managing Executive Committee; the latter is in charge of the day-to-day business and the Secretariat.

■ **Regional structure:** 4 regions with offices for Africa in Lomé, for Asia/Pacific in Kuala Lumpur and Samabula, for Latin America in San José de Costa Rica as well as for North America/Caribbean in St. Lucia and for Europe in Brussels. Regions advise the Executive Committee, but do not themselves have a mandate to negotiate with governments.

■ **Sectoral structure:** 2 advisory committees, one each for preschools and primary schools, and secondary schools, and 2 round-tables for vocational training and for further and higher education. There is also a committee dealing with the status of women and a working-group on the subject "Violence against Women".

As a non-governmental organisation, EI holds consultative status with UNESCO and ILO



and maintains permanent contacts with the UN, WHO, UNAIDS, OECD, the World Bank and the IMF, amongst others.

### Special Aspects in its Area of Organisation

The educational sector is the largest employer worldwide with almost 50m employees. Conversely, the share of the Gross National Product spent on education is merely 5.5%. In developing countries, where we find 75% of all schoolchildren and 75% of all primary school-teachers, the percentage is frequently far below the world average.

Faster technological development, open borders, worldwide competition and growing mutual dependence in an increasingly more complex world are forcing politicians in the field of education in all countries to respond to the new challenges. At the same time, almost all reform packages in education are under pressure to also include some cost-cutting measures.

In many cases, “privatising” the school system has been regarded as the cure for all ills in this dilemma.

In this situation, cooperation between affiliated unions has gained new momentum since the Congress in 1999, not least as a result of the new communication media and the Internet.

### Tasks and Objectives

The EI seeks to defend the professional rights of teachers and others working in education, and accordingly to improve their status and position in line with the important role of schools and educational institutions for future developments of society. Apart from representing its members, the EI seeks to become itself involved in drawing up educational policy. It is in this spirit that it calls for and promotes democracy, social justice and equality of all individuals in every country.

The EI regards the right to education as a fundamental right which is part of the universal human rights. It therefore speaks up for respect for and improvement of human and trade union rights. It campaigns against all forms of discrimination for reasons of race or gender. In this context, the EI regards a greater involvement of women in leadership positions in society, in teaching and school administration and in the professional organisations as another major task.

### Activities

Since the EI is the Trade Secretariat for employees who come mainly from the public sector, support of members in industrial disputes does not play such an important role as it does for the classical industrial unions. However, the desire to be involved in policy-making means multi-faceted and personnel-intensive cooperation with international organisations, government bodies and representatives at various levels. This process, which EI considers to be a major part of its remit, frequently involves the bundling of interests to be represented and campaigned for in alliances with friendly organisations.

At the same time, the need for teachers to include human rights and human dignity in school curricula is also emphasized. Furthermore, political adult education, as a democracy-building exercise, is part of the EI-list of priorities. With this in mind, EI is cooperating with CIVITAS, a worldwide-operating association of NGOs aimed at reinforcing political adult education in both the emerging and established democracies.

In order to structure these activities the Education International has defined specific *focal areas* which are handled by *departments* by way of organisation.

Public school education (school education provided by the State) is regarded as the centrepiece of education – both for the family and future professional prospects and for the order of the country. *The EI-Department for Education* therefore focusses primarily on the promotion of activities in this field. For this purpose it organises conferences and seminars, circulates publications and issues statements on the subject.

In particular, the EI campaigns for the right of its member organisations to participate in the drawing-up and implementation of educational policy as well as for the right of all groups of the population to have free access to schools and other educational facilities. Priority is given to the demand for preserving State school education and free primary education. The campaign against child labour, in which the EI is involved together with the ICFTU, other Global Unions, ILO, UNESCO and UNICEF, has to be seen against this background.

A worldwide action campaign was started in mid-October 1999 entitled “Global Campaign for Education”, together with ActionAid and Oxfam International and in cooperation with civil-society networks such as, for example, the Global March against Child Labour, which calls upon governments to account for the fact that there are still 120 million children with no opportunity to attend school. The campaign is intended to ensure school education for all children by the year 2015. In support of the campaign, EI organised a Global Action Week in April 2000.

The Committee for Vocational Training regards the non-integration of vocational training into the general education system in many countries as a fundamentally wrong decision. The EI therefore submitted a draft paper to UNESCO in which the demand for and possible ways of integrating vocational training into secondary and higher education policy were proposed. It was, however, also emphasized that elements of general education should be incorporated into vocational training.

The Department for *Trade Union and Human Rights, and Equal Opportunity* is primarily involved in disseminating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO-Conventions on international labour standards and the right of the child and similar international instruments, in order to ensure that they are respected and, in particular, complied with. In this context, the department is active in the defence of persecuted trade union members and supports member organisations which are oppressed by their governments. It is here that solidarity campaigns for the promotion and defence of the rights of teachers are mobilised. The department is also mandated to assist the affiliated unions in representing their interests with the ILO and international authorities. Special attention is paid to the protection of indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, emigrants and children. Last but not least the promotion of gender equality, as a condition for the comprehensive implementation of human rights, is a special concern of this department.

In this context, EI, together with ICFTU and PSI, played a major part in the UN-Special Conference "Women 2000: Equal Rights, Development and Peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (the Beijing+5 Women's Conference) held in June 2000. They succeeded in incorporating in the final document a firm commitment for the ILO-Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights, with special emphasis on the rights of women.

The number of violations of human and trade union rights has reached a deplorable level in the last few years. It always starts with a denial of trade union rights and ends with disrespect



for even a minimum level of human rights of teaching staff and children. In Rwanda, for example, more than half the teaching staff was killed in 1994. Since then, new violations of rights on a major scale in Ethiopia, Algeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Colombia, in the Kosovo and in several other countries have enforced further campaigns focussing specifically on these subjects. Children and adolescents are increasingly being used as soldiers.

Whenever possible, EI gives direct support to the victims and in its worldwide information campaign concentrates on information about these incidents. Moreover, it mobilises humanitarian aid and legal support.

The Department for *Development Cooperation* is attempting to reinforce the member organisations in their structure, their organisational capacities and institutional relationships. In this, it applies both a thematic and organisational approach. In the first case, it responds to the specific content of the areas of work discussed and adopted at the world congresses, in

the latter it orients itself towards the development of strong, independent and efficient trade unions as a precondition for introducing and implementing the established priorities. This program includes education and training of trade union leaders and members, membership recruitment actions and other trade union-related matters. Special emphasis is placed on the training of skills for women in this process, who will in turn be available as lecturers.

A major part of the activities of this department is the result of cooperation with and/or support by friendly organisations.

The *Information Department* has the task of supporting the work of EI by appropriate PR-activities and of publishing material on the individual areas of its work. This includes information and exchange of experience by means of publications and networks, and more recently also the Internet.

EI publishes, amongst other things, the "EI Monthly Monitor" in English, French and Spanish with a circulation of 2,800 copies, and the quarterly "The Education International Quarterly Magazine" in English, French and Spanish with a circulation of some 10,000 copies each. Both publications are available on the Internet. They focus regularly on subjects such as human rights/racism, globalisation, the status of women, child labour etc.

The EI-survey "Education is a Human Right" which was published in 1998 presents a country-by-country description of the level of education and the situation in respect of educational standards, child labour and trade union rights.

Based on the respective congress resolutions, EI and PSI published a joint paper describing the attitude of the Global Unions towards the rights, the protection and support of lesbian and gay colleagues.

In addition, posters, fliers and press releases are being regularly produced in connection with specific campaigns and action programs. Videos provide a further source of information.

With the aim of raising awareness about the "most important profession in the world", the EI – with logistical and financial assistance by UNESCO – invited the nations of the world to

issue memorial stamps on October 5th, 1999, the International Day of the Teacher, depicting the heads of outstanding teachers. This was accompanied by a Web site on the subject "philately and education".

## **Representation vis-à-vis International Organisations**

Efforts towards exerting an influence on educational policy are also reflected in the importance attached to involvement in those international organisations with an impact on education.

Links with the workers' representatives at the ILO are particularly close. A permanent forum for the discussion of the working conditions of teachers was successfully established: the "Standing Technical Committee for Educational Personnel". At its annual meetings, this body discusses pressing topics concerning the work in the educational professions.

EI continues to cooperate closely with the EFA (Education for All)-Forum – a coalition of the UN, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank aimed at promoting education for all children of the world.

The UN declared the year 2000 to be the Year of Culture and Peace and non-Violence. At the meeting of the Managing Committee in March 1999, EI decided to give full backing to this initiative because it regards education as a major stepping stone towards achieving a culture of peace. With this in mind, a set of information material was developed for use by the member organisations. In addition, EI has been actively involved in the campaign for the International Year for a Culture of Peace which had collected more than 100 million signatures worldwide by September 2000.

The "Memorandum of Understanding" concluded with UNESCO in 1994 was extended in 1999 and adopted for another 3 years. It forms a general framework for cooperation and permanent consultations. In 1998, UNESCO published the World Education Report entitled "Teachers and Teaching in a Changing World" for which EI had supplied background infor-



mation and provided a contribution of its own. Moreover, 3 videos were produced in cooperation on the subject “Teachers make a Difference”. A manual about how to use the media and corresponding teaching material for further and advanced training of teachers are in the pipeline.

In cooperation with WHO concepts of health education and disease prevention (among others concerning AIDS) are drawn up. Schools are the ideal place for drawing the attention of young persons to the dangers of this disease, yet teachers are rarely prepared to address this subject in the classroom.

The working group of TUAC on education, vocational training and employment met repeatedly with EI-members for an exchange of views. Together they drew up a paper on the subject “Globalisation and the Necessity of Education and Training”. At a seminar with OECD-TUAC and -BIAC on “How to Fund Life-long Learning”, EI firmly disagreed with the view that lifelong learning could not be publicly-funded.

The World Bank influences educational policies in many countries through its structural adjustment programs (SAPs). The EI therefore holds the view that structural adjustment measures which affect educational policy should be drawn up only in consultation with national teachers’ unions. The EI succeeded in initiating a consultative dialogue with the World Bank. After a series of seminars starting in 1996 on “Cooperation with the World Bank in the Educational Sector”, further activities of the same kind took place in subsequent years. Since 1998 the EI has taken part in the preparation of the annual World Bank report on “Human Resources Development”.

It has been agreed with the PSI to have mutual participation in and discussion of questions of principle in respect of workers’ education and working methods. It is also planned to cooperate in the development of a human rights network.

With the backing of the other Global Unions and the ICFTU, EI is pressing for an open dialogue with the WTO which has so far regarded education as an area to be liberalised as well.

## Future Challenges

Progress in education can be made only if economic and social conditions are improved at the same time. Children who will later take care of them are the only “social insurance” people in poor countries have. As a result of demographic growth, the number of school-children is constantly rising in these countries, in contrast to the wealthy nations. At the same time, the quality of education is deteriorating because education budgets are not excluded from cuts when money is short. However, if children do not learn enough they have no opportunity to break the vicious circle of poverty.

Conversely, educational resources may be entirely wasted if educated children do not find employment on the labour market and if the government does not spend money on creating alternative employment. The EI has focussed even more intensively on labour and social policies as a result.

In addition, the new maxim of lifelong learning applies to all parts of the world in an era of accelerated developments in technology. No one can disregard the call for education for all. This adds another and much larger dimension to the important role of learning and teaching. To respond to it and to influence it effectively will require greater efforts in organising and mobilising the members as well as more intensive and stronger alliances with like-minded partners of the civil society.

Teachers are at the forefront of educating future generations in the spirit of democracy and social justice. They are, as individuals, a force for social change simply because they exist.





## International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

The IFBWW was founded in 1934 as a result of the merger between the Construction Workers' International and the Wood Workers' Federation. Early activities already date back to the Joiners' Federation in the year 1883. This makes the IFBWW one of the oldest Global Union Federations.

The German occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War forced the IFBWW to give up its original head office in Amsterdam. It lost all its furniture and the archives at the same

time and in 1946 had to start from scratch with a reduced membership. At the End of 2003 the IFBWW had 287 affiliated organisations from 124 countries with more than 10 mio. members.

■ **Areas of organisation:** building industry, timber industry, forestry and allied sectors.

■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every 4 years); Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary General and 30 members from 19 geographical regions); Managing Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary General and 8 members). Voting rights at the congress depend on the amount of paid-up dues. Organisations with dues arrears of more than two months lose the right to take part in the congress and other conferences.

■ **Regional structure:** regional committees exist for Africa, Asia/Pacific and Latin America. Since 1998 a regional committee for Europe has been dealing with the specific activities of members which are relevant in this continent. In addition, regional offices exist:

- for *Africa* in Johannesburg/South Africa,
- for *Asia/Pacific* in Malaysia/Kuala Lumpur,
- for *Latin America* in Panama.

In addition, a program office in the Philippines is linked to IFBWW and there is an IFBWW-project in Lebanon for the Middle East.

■ **Sectoral structure:** 1 industry committee each for the building industry and the timber and forestry industries. Additionally, there are inter-professional working groups for women, for salaried employees and for occupational health and safety.

There is also close cooperation with the top-level organisations of the European and the Nordic building and wood workers.



## Special Aspects of the Area of Organisation

The subject of social and labour standards of migrant workers in the building industry is becoming increasingly important in view of the growing number of migrant workers from poorer countries. On the one hand, the human dignity of these migrant workers is frequently completely disregarded and their rights blatantly abused. On the other, specific attempts are being made to exploit migrant workers in order to undermine wages and labour standards which have already been established in the host countries.

### Tasks and Objectives

The main tasks are the development and protection of workers' rights in the sectors represented. The principles of international solidarity guide the activities by the IFBWW in this respect. In addition, it actively promotes respect for and development of human and workers' rights.

In the last few years, the IFBWW has added another specific aim to its general objective of supporting member organisations and of strengthening the International Trade Union Movement, notably fighting neo-liberal economic policy pursued by many governments since the 80s of the last century. In this, the IFBWW pursues an active policy of promoting the relationship with enterprises which are operating in a socially responsible manner. For this purpose, it has drawn up a model framework agreement for multinational companies in which important subjects are clearly regulated and which is intended to prevent the practice of individual multinationals to conclude agreements of a non-committal nature.

In mid-1998, a code of conduct was agreed with IKEA in respect of workers' rights. IKEA is one of the world leaders in the business of interior decoration, buying products in some 70 countries and selling them in approximately 30 countries. The code of conduct provides for IKEA

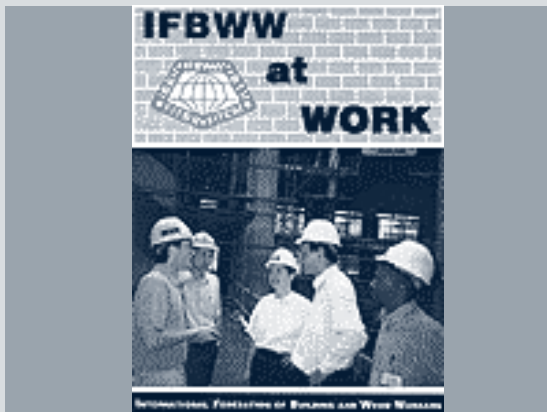


to oblige its contracting suppliers to offer working conditions to their workforce which comply with at least the existing national legislation. Supplier firms must in any case respect ILO-conventions and recommendations applicable to their lines of business. In other words, child labour is unacceptable and workers can join the trade union of their choice and take part in free collective bargaining. The code provides for a control committee with equal representation of both sides for monitoring compliance with the regulations concerned. Similar agreements have been concluded in the meantime with companies like "Hochtief", "Faber Castell", "Skanska" and others.

### Activities

The IFBWW has always preferred practical activities at the rank-and-file level to meetings and resolutions on abstract subjects. However, the changes that have impacted on the building and timber industries as a result of liberalisation and deregulation in a globalized world economy have also left their mark on the activities of the IFBWW. This does not mean that the organisation disregards completely activities at the rank-and-file level, but that it acknowledges the importance of the changes that have taken place.

The 20th Congress of the IFBWW in 1997 decided to launch a program for action in favour of a positive strategy of modernisation. Amongst



other things, mention is made of the need for reorientation towards global obligations by institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO and others. It calls for international campaigns, for example for the rights of indigenous populations, compliance with ILO-conventions and recommendations or for pro-active climate protection.

### Trade Union and Human Rights

Protection, assistance and support of affiliated unions are matters of priority to the IFBWW. Every single attack against workers' rights in any part of the world is considered by the IFBWW as an attack against its membership as a whole.

The IFBWW reacts quickly and unbureaucratically in all parts of the world, for instance with protest letters to governments and enterprises and with "solidarity appeals" and "calls for urgent action" to affiliates. Money is made available from the IFBWW-Support Fund for striking or dismissed workers. Costs for court proceedings and for lawyers are also covered by the Fund. Moreover, IFBWW-delegations are sent to the scene of the dispute or to negotiations with local managers. The IFBWW frequently intervenes at the international headquarters of the subsidiary involved.

The above-mentioned measures are complemented by campaigns in support of ILO-core labour standards by talking to the national governments concerned and by presenting cases of possible violations to the relevant bodies of the International Labour Organisation.

Furthermore, the IFBWW informs and mobilizes friendly organisations of the trade unions, the ILO, the UN and international aid organisations as well as friendly networks of the civil society with a specific interest in the subject under consideration. Coordinated international campaigns and actions are launched against countries which have been on record for notorious violations of human and trade union rights.

A handbook on trade union rights compiled by the IFBWW offers information on solidarity actions and campaigns against enterprises and informs members about how to get international support in the event of a dispute with a company.

### Education and Training

The IFBWW regards training and qualification as an important part of its work and has defined it a focal point in its activities as a result. The IFBWW started at a very early stage to draw up efficient support programs for projects in the field of trade union education in developing countries. Preference is given to educational content of a practical nature, i.e. to make the organisations stronger by greater involvement of members and to increase the organisations' punch in order to defend workers more effectively. To focus on real problems in training and to involve the activists in the field is what really counts; female members must not be neglected either in this process.

At present, IFBWW supports some 90 educational programs worldwide, emphasising the need for a well-functioning and effective regional structure for education everywhere. Networks of education coordinators ensure close cooperation in planning, implementation and evaluation. At the Center of the educational strategy of the IFBWW are the national educational projects implemented by the respective member organisations with support from the IFBWW.

The head office compiled the handbook "Trade Unions in Transition" for training purposes. Educational activities are at times carried out with support from friendly organisations.



### **Sustainability, Health and Safety**

In the building, timber and forestry industries, materials and substances are still being used in many places which are a risk to the health of the people working there and to the environment; the same applies to the working conditions. The IFBWW holds the view that the use of asbestos must be banned worldwide and that safety on building sites must be considerably improved. For this reason, it tries by every means to ensure the ratification of the corresponding ILO-Conventions 162 and 167.

Over-exploitation of forests and monoculture are destroying valuable ecosystems. Such working and production methods negatively affect workers in the industry, and in the longer term will jeopardise the industries themselves. The IFBWW therefore supports sustainable forest management which will not cause environmental degradation or health problems and will prevent over-exploitation. This will ensure sustainable stable employment and living conditions for the future. The IFBWW also supports the certification of timber and wood products and the inclusion of minimum social standards in public tenders and international development projects as a result.

### **Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations**

The IFBWW tries to get support for its industry policy from international organisations such as the ILO, the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO), FAO, UNIDO and from international environmental associations. In addition, the IFBWW is extending its contacts to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It studies the impact of trade liberalisation on its industries and gives advice to its affiliates. Its aim is the practical implementation of a social clause for the sectors organised by IFBWW-affiliates, in other words to establish minimum social standards and to ensure compliance with them. This is intended, in particular, to put a stop to exploitation of migrant labour and the resulting wage dumping.

### **Transnational Enterprises (TNEs)**

Activities of TNEs are increasingly becoming the cause of industrial disputes worldwide. The IFBWW therefore developed strategies for monitoring and investigating such activities in order to assist the member unions concerned with appropriate information and proposals for action.



A model has been drawn up on how to conclude framework agreements with transnational enterprises which is made available to the members, including specific advice. It is intended to incorporate these activities in a worldwide campaign to promote respect for trade union rights and the recognition of minimum labour standards in the building, timber, forestry and allied industries.

In March 2000 an agreement was signed with the German construction group HOCHTIEF which regulated the recognition of and respect for ILO-core labour standards in all HOCHTIEF-units. These regulations are thus directly applicable to some 37,000 workers. Simultaneously, the agreement obliges HOCHTIEF to ensure the same standards on the part of all its suppliers so that they are, in fact, binding for several times that number of workers. On the part of the trade unions, the agreement was negotiated and signed by representatives of IG BAU (the construction workers' union), the central works council of HOCHTIEF AG and the IFBWW.

## Women

Women workers represent 15 percent of IFBWW-membership worldwide. The IFBWW has drawn up guidelines for positive action programs for its affiliated unions and other interested organisations which can be used in collective negotiations. These guidelines are based on the corresponding ILO-conventions and call for equal pay for equal work, educational leave, daycare Centers, access to vocational training and measures to stop sexual harassment at the place of work.

The IFBWW actively supports the participation of women in all its educational programs and gives financial aid for workshops for women trade union leaders.

## Child Labour

The IFBWW again and again draws attention to the fact that child labour continues to exist and has even gone up again lately. At times children

not older than 5 or 6 years are even working in brickworks, in stone and slate quarries, in road construction or are auxiliary staff in civil engineering projects. Many are kept in serfdom or as bonded labour as "guarantors" for their parents' debts (a working conference about child labour and bondage in Asia provided extensive background material on the subject). The IFBWW calls for a ban on child labour, including through social clauses in international trade agreements.

## Information, Networks

Apart from regular publications on specific issues such as occupational health and safety, women, education and workers' rights, the IFBWW sends a weekly "IFBWW-Fax News" to its affiliated organisations. Fax News gives summary reports of important events and developments in the IFBWW, its members and the international world of organised labour. In the event of violations of human and trade union rights the IFBWW calls for urgent action and mobilises the affiliates to this end. Appeals for solidarity are used if one member is in need of moral support by others. Press releases explain the attitude of the IFBWW towards current events.

Other publications are the bi-monthly bulletin on building and timber, and the bulletin "News about Education" which is issued twice a year. Some material is also published in languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

A great deal of information and source material is in the meantime retrievable from a computer database. The Web site is informative and gives a clear picture, containing the most important strategy, conference and discussion papers. There is one video on the subjects "Organizing the Future" and "Modernising our Trade Union" respectively.

The IFBWW compiled examples of case studies on labour disputes in a number of countries in its handbook about "Trade Union Rights" (published in English, French, Spanish and Russian); they demonstrate how the combination of appropriate strategies and international so-



lidity can be successful. Affiliated unions can learn valuable lessons from this handbook and use it as a kind of guide when conflicts arise.

## Challenges and Future Tasks

In the last few years structural change has also been accelerating in the building and timber industries. Changes and transfers of whole areas of production affected not only the way in which construction planning and implementation are divided. In the timber industry many productions have been integrated into other industries, for instance the chemical industry. Trade unions must respond flexibly to this in their organisational structure. Moreover, they must cooperate more intensively at an international level with the aim of preventing the exploitation of migrant labour for wage and social dumping. More and more international cooperation with other Global Unions will be necessary in order to effectively represent workers in the same occupations.

In May 2000, the Executive Committee adopted a declaration in favour of a pro-active industrial relations policy. It starts with a commitment to the concept of a socially-responsible corporate culture and calls for the recognition of workers'

rights and the introduction of international labour standards in line with the ILO-core labour standards. Enterprises, governments and international organisations are called upon to exert direct influence with the aim of eliminating poverty.

The Declaration formulated the following six objectives:

1. To protect trade union rights and to promote the member organisation at the national level.
2. To use the ILO-conventions as the fundamental basis for the protection of workers.
3. To press for the inclusion of worker's rights in the policy-making of international institutions, including financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and other development banks as well as the WTO.
4. To exert influence in order to ensure that workers' interests are considered in important government initiatives.
5. To ensure complete protection of workers at the level of companies.
6. To ensure that industry-related activities of the IFBWW are supported by a high standard of surveys and consultancy.

Globalisation in the building industry calls for global rules which take into account social and ecological standards.



## International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM)



### Information on History and Organisation

The ICEM is the second most recent Global Union. It was established in November 1995 with the amalgamation of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and Factory Workers (ICEF) – established in 1907 as the Factory Workers' International which had merged several times in the course of history – and the Miners' International Federation (MIF), an organisation with a long tradition which had existed since 1890. The foundation congress took place in Washington under the motto: "Unite and Organise". On November 1st, 2000, the United Alliance of Diamond Workers (UADW) also affiliated to the ICEM. The combined Trade Secretariat comprises some 399 trade unions in more than 108 countries with a total membership of 20 million.

Areas of organisation: the energy sector (oil and gas production, electricity generation including nuclear power plants), chemical industries (including pharmaceuticals and biotechnology), rubber and plastics industry, ceramics industry, paper and cellulose production, the glass industry, cement industry, environmental

protection industries, coal mining, mineral mining and stone and sand quarrying. Since November 2000, services have also been provided to the members of the former UADW in a new branch "diamonds, precious stones, ornaments and gems". Services and other industrial sectors which are not organised by another Global Union are included as well.

■ **Organisational structure:** Congress (every 4 years); Presidium (President and 13 Vice-Presidents, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General); Executive Committee (62 members); Secretariat (some 30 members of staff).

■ **Regional structure:** Asia/Pacific, Africa, Latin America, North America, Eastern Europe and Central Europe. In parallel, the European Mining, Chemical and Energy Federation (EMCEF), which is not a regional organisation of the ICEM, operates in the area of organisation of the ETUC.

■ **Sectoral structure:** committees for the chemical industry, rubber and plastics industries, cellulose and paper industry, ceramics industry, glass industry, coal mining and non-coal mining and also for the energy sector.

Specific inter-professional groups exist for women, for salaried employees, for academic, highly-qualified and administrative occupations and for the subject of occupational safety.

### Special Aspects

Globalisation has hit the areas of organisation of the ICEM in particular. While its activities and objectives have always been oriented towards the international level owing to the concentration of enterprises with worldwide operations in its area of organisation, national problems were, as a rule, resolved at the same level in the past so that strong national member unions paid greater attention to the tasks at home. These days, however, all the giant companies in the oil, gas, electricity, chemical, pharmaceutical, mining, tires, ceramics and glass industries are producing worldwide and are, in general, amongst the largest global enterprises. Decisions on production and sales are taken in the headquarters which are situated in other continents. National and local union representatives are increasingly being confronted with managements who do not have negotiating or decision-making powers. In consequence, it has become imperative to set up representational bodies across national and continental borders.

In addition, the mergers and takeovers of the last few years have resulted in continuous job

cuts. In consequence, the ICEM experienced a constant decline in membership during this period which could be halted only recently.

Both trends have challenged global solidarity more than ever before. At its World Congress in 1999, the ICEM responded with a strategy of global trade union mobilisation. Assuming that global enterprises are not like international organisations, i.e. they are not merely coordinating national forces and their mutual relationships, but are being managed in a centralised manner, the ICEM called for a joint policy amongst all its affiliates in respect of international activities. The new elements of trade union activities must be based on the realisation that workers in all parts of the world depend on each other, not only on their historical relationships with national centers of power, and that, as a result, they share a common vision of progress in a just world.

### Tasks and Activities

In its foundation document the ICEM commits itself to bringing about positive and progressive changes in the lives of working men and women. The ICEM lends moral support to the poor, oppressed, exploited and those who are discriminated against. It is committed to the principles of solidarity, democracy, information and effective organisation.





The ICEM regards itself as a forerunner of the new global labour institutions. It intends to unite all workers irrespective of race, nationality, gender or faith. It supports sustainable industrial development which is democratically decentralised, in contrast to the exploitative and excessively centralised approaches of large corporations. The ICEM calls for a maximum level of health and safety at work and for an environmentally responsible attitude in the production of industrial goods. It is committed to the global application of the best possible standards and procedures, in particular within multinational companies. With this in mind, the World Congress in 1999 adopted a number of resolutions which defined the concrete tasks in the years to come.

A series of global or regional conferences for the individual sectoral groups were organised in the last few years. The conference material provides a valuable source of information for the ICEM and ensures continuous feedback from its work.

### World Trade Union Movement

The ICEM has decided to build up a world trade union movement in the true meaning of the word for its area of jurisdiction in order to better come to terms with the globalisation of corporate power and the institutions supporting it. For this purpose, the ICEM sets up perma-

nent networks of organised workers in important multinational enterprises. These networks exchange data concerning remuneration, working conditions and other relevant topics in the global corporations concerned. They also determine the issues to be focussed on for joint solidarity actions, if required.

In addition, the ICEM has decided to pursue a dialogue with leading representatives of large companies wherever possible. On the one hand, this is intended to contribute to the settlement of industrial disputes, on the other to ensure that social objectives play a key role in corporate strategies because information about long-term investments is available in time.

Global agreements are to be negotiated with TNEs which recognise the rights of workers to be organised and to negotiate collectively – as laid down in the ILO-conventions. In addition, these agreements are intended to ensure common standards of best practice in the fields of occupational safety and environmental protection. They should also regulate joint educational programs for trade unionists and managerial staff on how to implement the agreements. In order to achieve this aim, the ICEM seeks to initiate campaigns in favour of negotiations for global agreements which focus especially on corporations in the developing countries. Moreover, these agreements are to be extended step-by-step so as to cover ultimately all subcontractors and suppliers. Additionally, the ICEM seeks to enter into dialogue with organisations from the fields of the environment, women, human rights, indigenous people and other relevant groups if this seems appropriate for strengthening the role of trade unions as guarantors of greater social freedom.

The ICEM will take part in the planning and implementation of programs of multinational agencies such as the World Bank, OECD, the WTO, the ILO and the UN-Development Program in order to ensure that their resources are spent for sustainable social results only, and will generally work for greater transparency and democracy within these multinational institutions. If required, such measures will be taken in close cooperation with the other Global Unions.



## Union-Building and Development Activities

A major part of development activities takes place in the form of projects. They are, as a rule, designed in such a manner that they strengthen the member unions or potential members. They include information and research, organisation, preparation of campaigns, education, the building-up of sectoral networks and multinational company councils. All projects pursue one ultimate objective: to unite and to organise, as laid down in the policy resolution of the Congress. Since traditional differences between trade unions in industrial countries and those in the developing countries no longer play a role in a globalised world, ICEM-projects include various forms of cooperation between trade unions from all regions of the world these days: South with South, North with South, East with East, East with West or any other possible combination.

As part of the alliances to be built up with other social and campaigning organisations, the ICEM will also develop experimental and innovative projects in cooperation with society as a whole which will bring together the trade unions and non-governmental organisations. In addition, the ICEM cooperates in projects with friendly international organisations wherever this seems appropriate. External funding for programs and projects, however, will only be accepted if it is provided with no strings attached.

## Sustainable Development

The ICEM has undertaken to take part in all activities with the aim of defining, promoting and sophisticating the concept of sustainable development. It strives for economic, social and environmental harmony without disregarding the fact that the relationship between these three fundamental factors may change over time. This applies, in particular, to the areas in which outdated technologies are replaced on a large scale by new, environmentally-friendly ones.

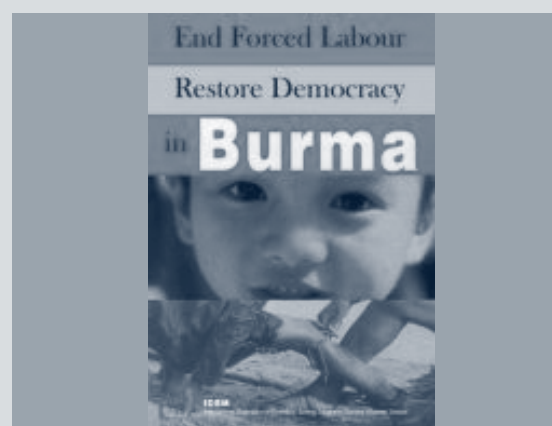
In this context, the ICEM also seeks to contribute to the development of policies and strategies

which ensure fair results of the changes and in which the needs of workers and their families are taken into account in the phase of transition and in the pursuit of sustainable development. The World Congress emphasized the international implications of such a “just transition”, especially as far as it concerned support of workers and their families in the developing and the newly-emerging industrial countries.

In all global agreements with transnational corporations, irrespective of their location, the ICEM insists on best practice standards in the fields of occupational health and environmental protection. It also intends to make greater efforts in fields requiring urgent action, such as the prevention of environmental dumping, the development of more efficient and cleaner forms of using energy and the phasing-out of outdated and/or undesirable products and experiences. In this context, special mention is made of the need to cooperate with the other Global Unions, while cooperation with other groups of the civil society is not excluded either.

## Women

The ICEM has traditionally been involved in women's issues; the structure was largely provided by the ICEF since only a few women were organised in the MIF because of the large number of jobs in deep-mining. There are special conferences, workshops and educational seminars for women in the individual regions, dealing with equality of opportunity for women at





work, in society (including the trade unions), with health and safety problems of working women or home work industry jobs as well as the effect of free export zones and economic blocs (such as MERCOSUR in South America).

The women workers organised in ICEM-affiliates represent slightly more than 30% of the membership, tendency increasing. The Conference in 1999, however, confirmed the firm will to do much more in order to ensure proper equality of women in the movement, including the ICEM itself. "Inclusion" is the key to ICEM-equality policy, in other words the dimension of gender equality must be incorporated in all policy-making areas. Equality must be comprehensively addressed in all aspects of trade union policy and greater participation of women be achieved at all levels, independent of goodwill and voluntary mechanisms. Since women are regarded as one of the most important target groups in recruitment campaigns, the ICEM-program calls upon all members to take a proactive attitude in women's issues.

More than 13 million people are working in small mines and their number is increasing. These workers, amongst them many women and even children, are completely unprotected and often victims of extreme forms of exploitation. Accidents and occupational diseases occur in disproportionate numbers and children often age prematurely in their physical development. Together with the ILO, the ICEM is drawing up a comprehensive policy for the industry which calls specifically for an immediate ban on child and bonded labour and on the exploitation of women in small-scale mining. It also calls for the introduction of safety regulations under ILO-Convention no. 176. The eradication of poverty, poverty being one of the root causes of such exploitation, is included as an accompanying measure. The ICEM insists that trade unions need to be extensively involved in the design of a World Bank program for the industry.

The ICEM-Women's Committee monitors whether the female membership as well as women's issues and rights are adequately taken into account in project activities.

## **Cooperation with and Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations**

The ICEM cooperates with many international organisations or is accredited to them through its forerunner organisations: for instance with WHO (with a consultative status for the former ICEF), ILO (amongst other things in the committees for coal-mining and for the chemical industries) and OECD (via TUAC). The ICEM also participates in the International Programs for Chemical Safety (IPCS), a joint programs of ILO, WHO, UNEP, FAO, UNIDO and OECD. It is also involved in the ICFTU/Global Union joint working group on occupational diseases, occupational safety and the environment. In addition, there are permanent contacts and communications with some employers' organisations and environmental organisations.

## **Information and Exchange of Experience**

The ICEM supports its affiliates by making available facts, figures and by setting political targets which are interesting and relevant for the organisations. In addition, it provides timely and accurate analyses and other relevant information.

With the electronic communications network developed by ICEF, the ICEM has an instrument with which to exchange information quickly, as required in the face of growing globalisation, and which has enabled it to realize the synergy effects from amalgamation in a short period of time. Moreover, databases contain collective agreements which have been collected over years and cover the most important items in industrial negotiations such as pay, working time, leave, holidays and social benefits.

Computer-based information networks have been created for the most important TNEs. Every three or six months, after intermediate results of enterprises have been published, the ICEM will report by electronic mail on company finances and recent investment decisions; conclusions can be drawn from this in respect of



future corporate strategies, for example. Individual trade unions with access to this database can benefit from it in their negotiations with enterprises. They, in turn, feed information into the system, for instance details about current industrial actions. The ICEM then translates the news into other languages and makes it available to interested members.

The ICEM installed a Web site as early as 1996. International cooperation has gained a new dimension through the opportunity of exchanging information globally and interactively in a manner which is both cost-effective and “real-time”, or at least instantaneous. The ICEM cannot yet exhaust the full potential of this technology for its activities, but is purposefully moving ahead in this process. The full capacity is opened up not least with the development of a Web site by the regional offices and by an increasing number of affiliated organisations.

In addition, the classical sources of information are not neglected either. The ICEM publishes a quarterly news magazine, the “ICEM INFO”, as well as the “ICEM GLOBAL” twice a year; both publications are available in 7 languages. Moreover, the ICEM publishes practical guides on health and safety at irregular intervals as well as individual studies about sectors or occupational groups and for special events.

The ICEM also produced a documentary “One World – but What Kind of World?” as a

video. The video examines and describes the social consequences of globalisation, the opportunities for agreements between trade unions and enterprises at the global level and the role of networking between both the trade unions from various countries and between trade unions and other campaigning groups.

### Challenges for Future Activities

In 1999, UN-Secretary General Kofi Annan called for a “Global Compact” in Davos with the aim of ensuring respect for workers’ rights, human rights and the environment. In this context, the ICEM declared that such a global compact could best be achieved if organised labour and organised entrepreneurs were to negotiate and to implement global agreements. In consequence, the ICEM-Congress of November 1999 mandated the executive bodies to negotiate and to conclude global agreements with transnational enterprises. This decision gave the Trade Secretariat a direct mandate for negotiating agreements on trade union rights, occupational health and safety, environmental protection and equal opportunities for women – a prerogative which up to that point had been exclusively in the hands of the national trade unions and could only be exercised if there was complete agreement between the national and international level on this issue.

On July 10th, 2000, the ICEM announced that the first global sectoral agreement had been concluded with the Freudenberg Group – an enterprise with headquarters in Germany. The agreement covers all units which are part of the Group worldwide and a workforce of 30,000 workers in 41 countries. This global agreement concentrates on the issues of trade union and other human rights. Specific reference is made to the corresponding ILO-conventions. The agreement entitles the ICEM to monitor compliance and to discuss annually with the central management any problem arising from it. In the event of conflict or violation of the agreement, the two parties undertake to contact the respective other party immediately and directly in the firm determination to find a common solution. The German union IG BCE contributed considerably to the shaping of the agreement which also bans any kind of unlawful or unethical business practice. ICEM-Secretary General Fred Higgs called the agreement not only a positive undertaking for the workers, but one which was in the interest of the enterprise and the shareholders as well.

To exert influence on transnational enterprises continues to be the focal point of ICEM-activities since it organises the workforce in a very large number of these giant companies. Their influence through economic decisions often goes beyond the sphere of influence of individual governments. It goes without saying that the ICEM gives priority to this line of work since it is imperative to negotiate with the party that has the power to change matters. The fact that the ICEM has traditionally regarded itself as an organisation fighting for its membership rather than a political lobby group in no way contradicts the trend amongst other organisations of the International Trade Union Movement towards greater emphasis on the political arena.

The ICEM defines solidarity unreservedly as any form of action which offers advantages and improvements to all organised workers in an equal measure in both the industrial and the developing countries. For this purpose they must organise themselves to a much greater extent in both parts of the world and must consult each

other and coordinate their activities through constant contact. The affiliated trade unions must build up the capacities which enable them to organise campaigns successfully. ICEM's key union-building programs is therefore geared towards strengthening the affiliates and turning them into strong organisations by applying the same fundamental principles at the global level which have proved to achieve good results locally. The motto is: the harm done to one of us is done to all of us and must therefore be fended off by all.

Generally speaking, the ICEM seeks to replace the voluntary self-imposed codes of conduct of industry by global agreements with the trade unions because only then will the organisation be entitled to monitor compliance and to negotiate in the event of non-compliance with the code. It is through such rights only that the enterprises will gain the desired credibility so that such measures are ultimately in their own self-interest.

Efforts have thus been made to conclude further global agreements with TNEs. Exploratory talks have taken place with Shell, Rio Tinto and BP Amoco on subjects such as trade union rights, health, occupational safety, equality of opportunity and environmental protection.

Talks with the International Confederation of Chemical Associations (ICCA) concerning the conclusion of a global sectoral agreement have already reached an advanced stage. They focus on a program for responsible prevention and preventive measures in the fields of health, occupational safety and environmental protection. If the ICEM were, in fact, to be recognized as an equal partner in this process it would be able to maintain a high standard for good.

In addition, the ICEM has decided to pay greater attention to the setting-up of alliances with other groups of the civil society in future. New and informative forms of project work for orientation and exploration are to be developed to this end in order to exert greater public pressure in favour of concerns of trade unions and non-governmental organisations as well as other groups in society.



## International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

A first attempt at establishing an International Federation of Journalists was made in Paris in 1926, but it soon failed; further abortive attempts followed later. In its modern form the IFJ was founded again in 1952 by journalists' unions from 12 West European countries as well as from the USA and Canada. These unions had split from the International Journalists' Organisation, founded in 1946, because of continuous conflicts over fundamental principles such as the freedom of the press and independence of trade unions from the government. In 1985, the IFJ was recognized as a Global Union by the General Conference of Global Union Federations. Today, the IFJ has member organisations in more than 100 countries with some 500,000 members and represents the largest organisation of journalists worldwide.

■ **Areas of organisation:** print media, broadcasting, film and television, news agencies, press offices, public-relations agencies and new electronic media. But members must be full-time (professional) journalists (text or graphic). There are areas which partly overlap with other Global Unions. For example, layout designers can be members of either the journalists' unions or be organised in one of the classical printers' unions. Associations for the freedom of the media that do not meet all trade union criteria may become associate members with the right to speak, but not to vote in decision-making bodies.

■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every three years); 21 members on the Executive Committee (President, 3 Vice-Presidents, 16 directly elected representatives of which 8 are regional representatives, plus the Secretary General without

voting right); Administrative Committee consisting of the President, 3 Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary General.

■ **Regional structure:** the IFJ has regional offices in Brussels for Western Europe, in Australia for Asia/Pacific, in Caracas for Latin America and in Ljubljana (Slovenia) for Eastern Europe. Its representational body for Europe EIJF has been recognized as European Industry Federation (EIF) by the European Trade Union Confederation. Regional activities are not initiated and extended to the same extent in the various regions.

■ **Special-subject groups:** there are groups for special subjects such as authors' rights, the rights of free-lance journalists, defense of public broadcasting, freedom of information, racism and xenophobia.

### Special Aspects

Freedom of the press and the media are pillars of democracy; journalists who speak up for these principles are therefore frequently the first victims of persecution by dictatorial regimes or anti-democratic organisations. Assistance for



persecuted and endangered members and the fight for democracy therefore use up a lot of IFJ's resources.

## Tasks and Objectives

The IFJ is first and foremost committed to freedom of expression and the press as well as independence of journalists and their vocational training and further training. As far as the IFJ is concerned, the main point is to define itself what it means by journalist ethics and not to leave this to governments. The IFJ holds the view that the State should refrain from controlling the media.

## Activities

### *Human and Trade Union Rights*

As early as 1992, the IFJ set up an "International Safety Fund" to provide humanitarian aid to journalists and media-workers in dire straits. The money is donated by journalists and their trade unions from all parts of the world. Fund resources are also used to send monitoring commissions to regions and countries where the rights of the press and of trade unions are violated and to report about these cases.

For instance, the IFJ launched a worldwide campaign against the sentencing of journalists in Indonesia. In former Yugoslavia, the IFJ supported some 50 independent media organisations across the borders caused by the war. In 1995, the Congress decided, amongst other things, to establish a commission to examine the so-called "hate media", which have been spreading war propaganda and provoking hatred between different ethnic groups, nationalities or religions. In solidarity with endangered journalists, the Congress also decided to establish a regional Center in Algeria. Between 1993 and 1996 almost 50 journalists were killed by terrorists in Algeria. Another Center offering assistance to journalists was later established in East Timor, and since 1999 the IFJ has provided active sup-

port to the association of journalists in the Kosovo with the aim of relaunching their activities.

In 1999, more than 80 journalists lost their lives worldwide while on duty, including many who were murdered. The IFJ therefore calls for the adoption of an international code of conduct for the protection of journalist activities.

### *Defense of Democracy and Pluralism*

The IFJ has drawn up a program "Media for Democracy" with which to defend democracy and pluralism. It sponsors activities for the promotion of independent media and cooperates with those publishers, who train journalists and human rights organisations on three continents.

The IFJ also speaks up in favour of cooperation between media-workers' unions and broadcasting staff with the aim of defending public broadcasting. It initiates regional campaigns for the freedom of broadcasting and for strengthening social and professional rights in the development of the "information society".

The IFJ has published a policy document entitled "Access and Pluralism in the Information Society". While it welcomes the potential advantages of the "information society" such as growing economic activity, greater opportunities for work, access to considerably improved public services for the public at large, more democracy and greater public participation in decision-making, the IFJ also cautions that this process cannot be successful without more extensive involvement of citizens and workers. As long as it is merely driven by technological progress and market conditions, there is a danger of increasing media concentration on the basis of commercialized programs in a sensational and violence-ridden television dominated by advertising and sales interests; this may ultimately lead to a situation in which political institutions will be under the influence of media conglomerates. At the same time, the concentration of media power in the wealthy, metropolized societies will widen the gap between the rich and the poor around the globe as well as exclude



certain sectors of the population from information, thus keeping them in discriminatory isolation.

The IFJ-policy document calls for a more holistic approach which brings together all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels for a joint discussion of the problems. To ensure the same free access to the network for everyone must ultimately be the objective. In this context, the IFJ also calls for a closer examination of the social effects of the information society and a regulatory framework for the protection of social and employment rights of tele-workers.

In June 2000, the IFJ organised an international summit in Caracas on the topic "authors' rights". It ended with a decision for a global campaign of coordinated action to protect authors' rights. The target groups are writers, journalists and other creative individuals, and also human rights groups, trade unions, politicians and employers. The underlying principle is that moral rights are also universal human rights. Collective negotiations are intended to strengthen the organisation of both employed and freelance journalists and to make their representation more effective. Closer cooperation with other trade unions and other sympathising groups is required in order to improve legal protection. For this purpose, strategies for legal harmonisation, information and advanced training and also for awareness-building are to be drawn up for both IFJ-members and sympathisers. In addition, it is necessary to develop a code of conduct, to campaign for the right to collective negotiations where appropriate and to build up suitable databases.

### **Projects, Education, Training**

The IFJ-project department has planned or implemented a total of 42 project activities for the period 1999/2000, some of them of a long-

term nature. They include very diverse education and training courses dealing with both trade union and journalistic aspects. There were 14 programs in Europe which were concentrated on the south-eastern part of the continent with special funds being available in the wake of events on the Balkan. Africa held 9 meetings which dealt primarily with trade union and legal problems. In Asia, the IFJ also sponsored 9 project activities which focussed almost exclusively on organisational problems of trade unions. In contrast, the Latin American program included an educational program for young trade unionists over several years and seminars on legal problems and election reporting. At the global level, a survey was compiled with the ILO on working conditions for free-lance journalists as well as a study on the contribution made by women journalists in the struggle for trade union rights and freedom of the press. A competition for products which highlight the importance of human rights for development was organised over a period of three years and concluded by September 2001.

A major part of the IFJ-anti-racist campaigns is handled by the International Media Group against Racism and Xenophobia (IMRAX). IMRAX represents another European coalition of journalists and media experts which was set up in 1995 to deal specifically with professional ethics and standards. IMRAX aims at drawing up an international strategy for improving the quality of reports on race, tolerance and multi-cultural co-existence. IMRAX organised 7 international conferences since its inception and took part in designing the IFJ-award for journalists who report on problems of anti-racism and xenophobia.

In addition, the IFJ is in charge of the Roy-aumont journalistic sub-project funded by the EU which is intended to enhance peace, stability and good neighbourly relations between South-East European states.

## Relationship vis-a-vis International Organisations

The IFJ maintains relationships with UNESCO, the ILO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the UN-Center for Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International, among others. The IFJ also participates in the Information Society Forum of the EU which studies the effects of technical and social change in connection with the emerging information society and new media systems.

## Information and Networks

The IFJ circulates the information letter "Directline" among its affiliated organisations and some 1,500 subscribers in three languages. It reports on activities of member unions, human rights issues, new technologies etc.. Special issues publish the evaluation of questionnaires from members, for instance concerning working conditions, minimum and maximum wages, working hours, leave regulations, overtime pay, holidays and holiday pay etc..

In addition, the IFJ issues the "Euronews"-bulletin for the area of organisation of the European Journalists' Federation and the "News Line" in connection with the Royaumont-project.

In order to monitor attacks against the media and to make them public, the IFJ – together with other free-press organisations – has established a worldwide electronic network to quickly disseminate such news via electronic mail.

## Future Challenges

A technological revolution is in full swing in the media sector, accompanied by radical changes in the ownership of capital. By now, international media conglomerates, telephone and computer companies are fighting each other over worldwide domination of the new multi-media markets. This technical revolution will result in dramatic changes in work contents and locations. Cross-border networks destroy the division lines between national and regional jurisdiction. New copying and conversion technologies and distributed databases on worldwide computer networks are making it increasingly difficult to protect intellectual property. Protection of sources of confidential information is in jeopardy if each digitalized telephone call can be later traced back to source.

Access to information in this new media world cannot be left to Capital alone. Even today the overwhelming majority of people in this world have never made a telephone call, while a small minority has been surfing the Internet each day for a long time. Those who control information will also have the power. Concentration of information in the hands of the few must be stopped if the gap between the haves and the have-nots in information is not to widen even further.

The radical changes in the communications sector are particularly drastic for those working as journalists. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the media revolution will become the greatest challenge of all for future activities of the IFJ.



## International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

Metalworkers who participated in an international socialist congress in Zurich founded the International Metalworkers' Federation in 1893. It started with an information office for the exchange of information and one liaison officer in each of the 8 countries: Switzerland, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Great Britain and the USA. At the time of foundation the Federation had 60,000 members. The international movement grew fast and gave itself the name International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) in 1904.

Today, the IMF has more than 200 affiliated unions in 100 countries with more than 25 million metalworkers.

■ **Areas of organisation:** production workers and salaried employees in the automobile industry, aerospace industry, electrical engineering and electronics, mechanical engineering and the metal-processing industry, ship-building, iron and steel production as well as in the production of non-ferrous metals.

■ **Organisational structure:** Congress (every four years); Central Committee (as executive body); Executive Committee (as managing committee);

Finance Committee. The located Secretariat is in Geneva from where the General Secretary and 27 members of staff take care of the day-to-day business.

■ **Regional structure:** in the face of growing globalisation of the economy, special attention has been paid to the building-up of regional structures in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. 16 sub-regions have been established in these four regions and regular meetings take place between them. There are offices in Johannesburg for Eastern and Southern Africa, in Santiago de Chile and Mexico City for Latin America and the Caribbean, in New Delhi for South Asia, in Kuala Lumpur for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. There is also a project office in Moscow, for the CIS-countries.

■ **Sectoral structure:** sectoral groups in the above-listed areas of organisation and inter-professional groups such as women and non-manual workers.

### Special Aspects

The International Metalworkers' Federation is supporting solidarity across national boundaries between blue- and white-collar workers in important industrial sectors, with the aim of



improving pay and working conditions for millions of people.

This goal has been guiding IMF policy for over 100 years. Trade unions are now confronted by new and difficult challenges with economic globalisation. Modern technology has in many ways erased national boundaries and increased the pace of change in industry. Twenty years ago, companies found it very difficult to move production from one country to another; today, it can be done in very little time. The driving force behind it is usually the search for the cheapest possible production. Every one of these decisions affects working people and their families.

The most important job for unions today is the struggle to make economic globalisation serve all people. The trade union movement must act as a global counterbalance to the power of international capital.

It is not only globalisation which is having an impact on the work of trade unions. Increasing numbers of women workers and white-collar workers urgently require changes in working practices and in trade union structures. Industry has new demands for knowledge, which means that trade unions have to think in new ways. Increasing numbers of white-collar workers combined with a decreasing number of traditional blue-collar jobs are having an impact on trade unions at all levels.

Thus international trade union activities are more relevant than ever.

The aims of the IMF include working with affiliates to:

- organise new members and democratic associations for metalworkers all over the world;
- strengthen the rights of workers, especially women workers;
- ensure that International Framework Agreements are introduced into transnational companies;
- influence politicians so that their decisions lead to a fair distribution of growth and resources.

## Activities

The IMF and its large affiliates in the industrial countries have been in the vanguard of trade unions' successful campaigns, in particular since the second World War. It was frequently an affiliated union of the "Iron International" which brought down so-called "ultimate barriers" of the employers in a given country, for instance in the fight for a reduction of working hours, longer leave or work-free weekends. In most cases this was the result of bitter strike action. The successes achieved by member unions of the IMF could later be claimed by workers in other branches of industry as well. IMF-solidarity played a not insignificant role in achieving these breakthroughs.

The IMF seeks to build a global movement of metalworkers by adding a global dimension to all trade union activities. In this context, the IMF supports worldwide the campaigns aimed at organising the unorganised. Activities include organising projects and education of trade union trainers.

The IMF organises dozens of seminars and courses every year, often in developing countries or in countries with fragile or threatened unions. Courses are normally organised by the IMF's Regional and Project Offices, and subjects include how to organise a union, how to recruit and retain members, or how to negotiate and formulate collective bargaining agreements. Special seminars are organised for women.

Regional conferences for specific industries prepare the ground for collaboration and exchanges of information within a particular sector. World Company Councils bring together trade union activists within transnational companies.

A Summer School is organised by the IMF in Geneva, Switzerland. Around 20 members from nearly as many countries attend. The Summer School is aimed at young women and men who are active in affiliated unions. For the trade union movement all over the world, it is a mat-



ter of survival to recruit not only more women, but also younger people.

### **Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations**

Against the framework and the priorities set by the IMF Action Program, IMF co-operation with the other Global Union Federations, the ICFTU and TUAC focus mainly on action towards the international financial institutions, the WTO, the World Economic Forum, the World Social Forum and the movements of the civil society.

Social movements all over the world are leading struggles that the trade union movement should be leading. In order to play its role fully the trade union movement needs to have clear objectives in mind when meeting with institutions of the multilateral system, and coherence with these objectives should be reflected in the affiliates' strategy at national level, especially vis-à-vis the international financial institutions.

The IMF Action Program clearly sets the fight for a social dimension to economic globalisation as a main goal. Collective bargaining is indicated as the key instrument for the promotion and the protection of fundamental rights and to tackle inequalities in society. In order to achieve these goals metalworkers need to act at national and

international level, and to establish alliances with social movements sharing their fundamental values and aspirations.

For trade to benefit the world's people a reform of the WTO is indispensable; social, labour and environmental norms have to be incorporated in its rules; WTO and BWI policies need to be reoriented with a development focus including increased purchasing power for workers in developing countries and improved access to markets in the developed world. Reform of the international financial institutions is long overdue and their greater transparency and accountability is indispensable.

The IMF will join other trade union bodies to push for the establishment of a so-called Tobin Tax, for debt cancellation, for human and workers' rights issues to be addressed by the BWI policies, and more generally for the organisations of the UN system to follow-up the principles of the UN Copenhagen Summit.

### **Transnational Companies (TNCs)**

For a large number of TNCs, the IMF organises regularly industry-wide conferences and meetings at company level at which the workers can develop joint strategies and adopt a coordinated trade union negotiating policy.



International Framework Agreements (IFAs) are a relatively recent tool but one now widely used by the IMF and other Global Union Federations to lay down the rules of conduct for transnational companies. Since they are negotiated on a global level and require the participation of trade unions, International Framework Agreements are an ideal instrument for dealing with the issues raised by globalisation.

International Framework Agreements (formerly called Codes of Conduct) are negotiated between a transnational company and the trade unions of its workforce at the global level. It is a global instrument with the purpose of ensuring fundamental workers' rights in all of the target company's locations. Thus, IFAs are negotiated on a global level but implemented locally.

Generally, an IFA recognises the ILO Core Labour Standards. In addition, the company should also agree to offer decent wages and working conditions as well as to provide a safe and hygienic working environment. Furthermore, there is an agreement that suppliers must be persuaded to comply and, finally, the IFA includes trade unions in the implementation.

Transnational business operations and a global economy raise issues that go beyond the reach of national legislation. Through IFAs, the ILO's Core Labour Standards can be guaranteed in all facilities of a transnational company. This is especially helpful in transitional and developing countries, where legislation is sometimes insufficient, poorly enforced or anti-worker.

IFAs are a way to promote workers' rights in the global arena. The arrangement guarantees influence and the possibility of a dialogue that is mutually beneficial. Unlike unilateral Codes of Conduct, IFAs emphasise implementation, which paves the way for actual improvements.

Currently (July 2003), the IMF has signed 5 IFAs, for the TNCs Merloni, Volkswagen, DaimlerChrysler, Leoni and GEA.

## Equality of Opportunity and Women's Work

To implement equality of opportunity and equal rights at the workplace for everyone, women or men, young or old, irrespective of race or origin has been an central area of activity for the IMF. As early as 1952, a solidarity fund for trade unions from Third World countries was established. 40 percent of the IMF's income is earmarked for activities in the developing countries. The money is spent, in particular, on assisting the colleagues in the impoverished countries to build up and to strengthen free, independent and democratic metalworkers' unions.

Special attention is paid to the recruitment of women workers. The IMF makes efforts to add momentum to this field of work by means of industrial actions and international campaigns, and also to call for greater solidarity with women.

Moreover, the IMF is also addressing the critical under-representation of women in IMF structures. The IMF Executive Committee has voted unanimously to recommend to the next IMF Congress (in 2005) that the IMF Rules be changed to increase the size of the Executive to 24 members, of whom at least six must be women, and to reserve six seats for women, distributed equally between the regions.

The decision forms part of a broader platform of measures endorsed by the Executive. These include establishing women's structures at world and regional or sub-regional levels, setting a 20 per cent target for women's participation at meetings of the Central Committee and Congress, and holding a Women's Conference in conjunction with the Congress.



### Information and Networks

The IMF communicates with its affiliates, their members and the rest of the world through a number of different channels. The website, [www.imfmetal.org](http://www.imfmetal.org), is updated daily. A news bulletin, IMF NewsBriefs, is distributed weekly by e-mail or fax, in English and Spanish.

A magazine, Metal World, containing articles, interviews and analyses, is published quarterly in English, Japanese and Russian.

Reports are published frequently. One of them is a classic, "The Purchasing Power of Working Time", a comparative study on the development of purchasing power in various countries. The constant changes in the auto industries of the world are covered in the "IMF Auto Report", which appears regularly.

All IMF publications are available for downloading from the IMF's website: [www.imfmetal.org](http://www.imfmetal.org). The majority are available in several languages.

### Challenges and Future Activities

The traditional iron and steel industry has provided (and is still providing in many countries) a strong basis for IMF-membership, but it is increasingly being shifted into raw-material producing low-wage countries. Overcapacities are the result of this development and in times of economic decline (as in the former USSR) they can only be fully utilized with the help of dumping prices. In consequence, formerly dominating industries are unable to compete and turn whole regions into an industrial wasteland. Conversely, former heavy-industry enterprises are increasingly using high-tech. The IMF is challenged to organise a new stratum of highly-qualified skilled workers in these firms, of whom many believe that they have little in common with the traditions of workers in heavy industry.

The IMF has applied for the status of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank.

With the aim of giving new impetus to international solidarity, the IMF has adopted a cross-border action program for the next few years in order:

- to strengthen international cooperation in the economic and financial fields by promoting productive investments and creating jobs, by regulating and stabilizing the financial markets and by preventing a dismantling of social security systems and ensuring sustainable economic growth;
- to ban social dumping of any kind;
- to integrate developing countries in the world economy.



## Public Service International (PSI)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

The PSI was established in the year 1907. In 1935, the International Federation of Salaried Employees in Public Administrations and Companies merged with the International Federation of Government Servants and Teachers (the teachers had already left in 1927). Until 1958 the organisation called itself “International Federation of Salaried Employees in Public and Government Services”.

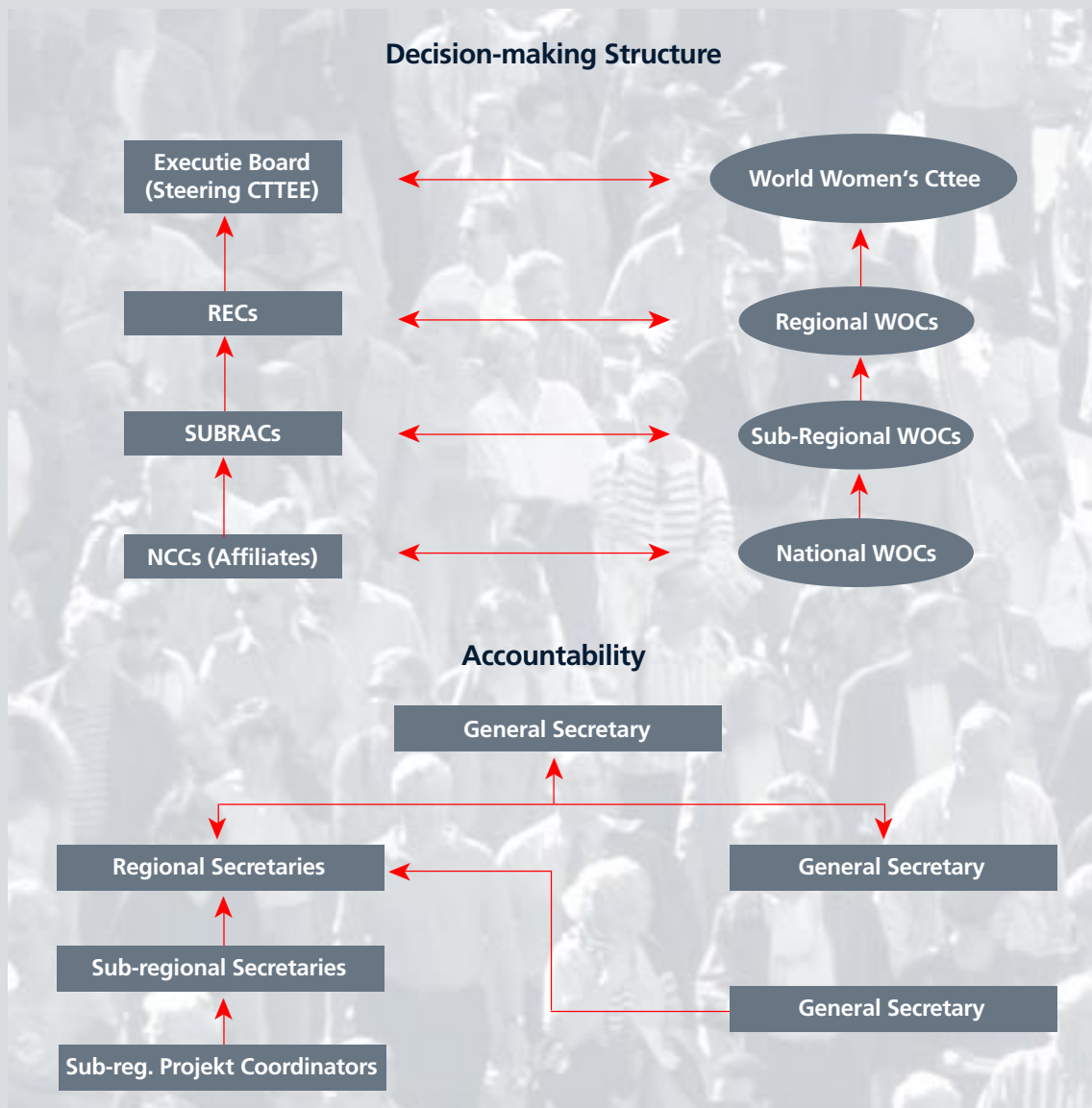
At the end of 2003 the PSI membership consisted of more than 600 organisations in about 140 countries with a total of some 20 million members. The share of women in the overall membership amounts to some 65 percent worldwide.



Areas of organisation: employees in public administrations, enterprises and institutions of local authorities, public authorities, foundations, public-law institutions; in companies generating and distributing gas, electricity and water, in waste management; in the environmental, social and health sector; in public educational, cultural, leisure-time and similar facilities, administrations and companies delivering public services; and last but not least employees in international institutions which have been established by states or communities of states. Following the privatisation of services which were originally provided by the State, a growing number of workers from private companies are members as well. Teachers and employees of State-run postal and railway services are explicitly excluded; for them, decisions of the PSI are merely recommendations.

■ **Organisational structure:** Congress (every five years); President, General Secretary, and 12 Vice-Presidents (six from Europe and two each from the three other regions – with equal representation between men and women). Steering Committee consisting of President, General Secretary, Chair of Women’s Committee and Vice-Presidents; Executive Board consisting of President, General Secretary, Chair of the Women’s Committee, Vice-Presidents and titular representatives from 24 geographical areas; Women’s Committee (24 titular members); Secretariat (with General Secretary and 27 members of staff at headquarters).

■ **Regional structure:** 4 regional committees, i.e. AFREC (Africa/Arab countries), APREC (Asia/Pacific), IAMREC (the Inter-Americas) and EUREC (Europe), and 4 Regional Secretaries. In addition, PSI has 16 Sub-regional Secretaries each presiding over a sub-regional committee. PSI also employs project coordinators (varying in numbers). The line of accountability, planning and budg-



eting in this well-established worldwide network is from sub-regions to the regions to the Executive Board. In 2003, there were some 50 staff members in the regions.

### Special Aspects

Originally, the main criteria for membership in the PSI was that only organisations with public-sector employees who could not join any other trade secretariat would be accepted. This principle has been diluted in the course of privatisations, for PSI-affiliates did not leave their members in the lurch when their enterprise was privatised, but continued to take care of them.

However, this resulted in an overlap with other Global Union Federations, notably with UNI.

As neo-liberalism with its emphasis on individualism has been gaining ground, it has become more difficult to recruit new members even in countries with long-standing established public-service unions. Many member unions are involved at present in defensive campaigns against cuts and reductions in staff in the public sector. But in many countries the right to strike is being handled more restrictively for public-sector employees than for those in the private sector so that alternative forms of industrial confrontation and action must be found. The PSI is supporting its member unions through

political action to get them off the defensive and into pro-active campaigns.

## Tasks and Objectives

The PSI vehemently opposes ideologically-motivated developments towards privatisation of each and every public service. Public services have an important social part to play, they prevent inequalities in the fulfilment of basic needs and in the eradication of under-development and poverty. The PSI is therefore firmly convinced that public services need democratic control and must not be subjected to the dictates of profitmaximisation.

Therefore the PSI does not restrict itself to direct union representation of its affiliates, but is involved at the political level in creating and protecting the necessary general conditions. The PSI is committed to the principles of parliamentary democracy and a pluralist political system. It supports dialogue and negotiations. It is convinced that for a market economic system, in particular, to be successful it needs a strong, democratically-structured public sector and powerful unions which, together with a strong economy, secure employment, an adequate standard of living and social justice for everyone in society. Without a sense of community a democracy is doomed to fail.

The PSI does not deny the necessity of public-sector reforms. Public services must be decentralised to ensure greater participation of citizens and to be able to respond flexibly to changing general technical and economic conditions. This requires a rethinking among public service employees as well. Trade unions, which are still strongly centralised in many countries, must reform their structures accordingly.

## Activities

The range of PSI-activities is as wide as its membership and continues to expand in order to meet new requirements. The PSI attaches greater importance to political activities than do most of the other Global Union Federations in private industry. Conversely, topics that consume

a lot of energy in other Global Union Federations, such as competition through wage dumping abroad or transfer of production in transnational enterprises, only started to influence the work of the organisation with the progress of globalisation. However, structural adjustment measures by governments affect the public sector much more than many of the private industries.

Some of the PSI-affiliates have more than 1 million members and can certainly influence the discussion on social policies in their countries. In other cases, the unions are still too small and in their infancy have to fight for their recognition as partners in negotiations. In addition, the salaried employees and civil servants in their membership are still denied fundamental trade union rights. This is a special concern of the PSI, which has always dedicated much attention to this subject.

The PSI World Congress in 2002 in Ottawa, Canada, adopted a program of action (POA) to guide worldwide operations, actions and concrete campaigns for the next five years. The POA is divided into four broad areas, entitled: Winning Workers' Rights; Public Sector Workers and Their Work; Equality, Equity and Diversity; and Union Development and International Solidarity. See [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org) for details.

On the basis of the POA, detailed planning takes place each year at regional and sub-regional levels. This enables the member organisations to identify their own needs, which can then be translated into regional and sub-regional action programs.

Congress also decided to start a global campaign for quality public services. There is growing awareness that quality public services are essential in the eradication of poverty, central to generating sustainable growth and development and well-functioning societies. The objectives of the campaign are:

- to ensure that public services are adequately funded and resourced, with well-trained workers delivering quality services;
- to develop the ability of public services to meet social objectives – particularly the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of people;



- to ensure that public services meet high standards of ethical behaviour, and enable national and global economies to operate effectively and equitably;
- to ensure that public sector workers have full rights and decent working conditions.

### Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations

The PSI represents the public-service unions at an international level. It is recognised and consulted by the ILO and other UN-organisations as well as by the institutions of the European Union. At a time of globalisation, monetarism, privatisation and downsizing, PSI has made a name for itself for its uncompromising support of public services and of social and political values represented by the public sector.

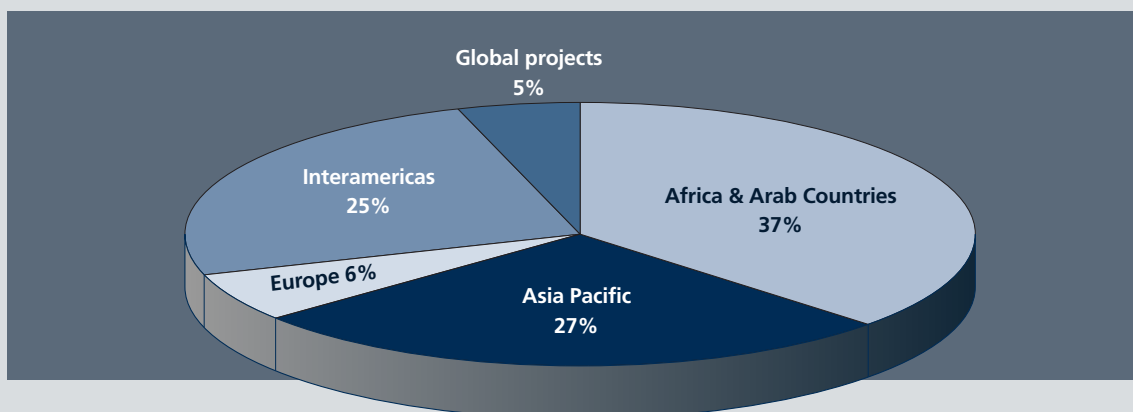
Since the First Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Singapore in 1996, PSI has monitored WTO work. However, it was in the lead up to Seattle in 1999, PSI started to follow proceedings closely and make a difference in that environment. PSI is part of the Global Unions' Trade, Investment and International Labour Standards Network (TILS), and is also actively involved with two NGO-oriented coalitions: the 'Our World Is Not For Sale' network (OWINFS), and the 'Stop the GATS attack' coalition. PSI is recognised as a leading critic of GATS implications for public services, govern-



ments' abilities to pass regulations with confidence, on secret and anti-democratic decision-making and for its effects on developing countries.

Each year, the Global Unions group meets with the World Bank and IMF senior leaders and officers. The issues covered are: structural adjustment policies, debt relief, involvement of trade unions in country-level discussions by the International Financial Institutions (IFI) with governments, and specific project issues. In addition, PSI is currently participating in discussions with the bank on the World Development Report (WDR) 2004, entitled 'Making Services Work for the Poor'.

**Sponsored union development activities in 2002**



## Education and Training

Educational activities play a key role in the PSI. This is reflected in the new POA, which draws education and capacity building into the main body of the activities under the title 'Union Development and International Solidarity'. PSI's approach to education and development programs are dynamic and clearly linked to issues at the workplace. Based on the principle of 'learning by doing', programs encourage active involvement of the membership in different activities to strengthen their capacities. The strategies involve a variety of tools and elements such as:

- Strategic planning
- Feasibility studies
- Local and international campaigns
- Membership recruitment
- Specific programs for women, and for young workers
- Equal opportunities
- Gender awareness
- Collective bargaining
- Sectoral networks
- Leadership development, and more

## Women

At the PSI World Congress in 2002 it was decided to adopt a new constitution that makes PSI the first major international union organisation to have equal gender representation at all decision-making bodies as its official policy.

In addition to the long-running gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women campaigns, PSI continues to focus on the promotion of pay equity. PSI has been working with the ILO and has developed a resource package and a video on this subject.

PSI also works with the ICFTU and EI on a maternity protection campaign. This campaign has three aims: the ratification of the new ILO Convention 183; lobbying for improvements in national provisions and finally, negotiating improved maternity protection in collective agreements. A maternity protection kit has been dis-



tributed in 8 languages and PSI has promoted a wide range of activities at national level. In this campaign PSI has developed a working alliance with the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) and the World Alliance for Breast Feeding (WABA).

## Information, Exchange of Experience

PSI publishes a number of regular publications such as the quarterly magazine 'FOCUS on the Public Services', the quarterly 'PSI Women', monthly newsletter 'flashes' for each of the regions, and a fortnightly PSI World News. In addition, PSI publishes an annual 'Report of Activities' and an unspecified number of one-off booklets or series on specific subjects. Most of these publications are also placed in part or in full on the PSI website ([www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)).

In co-operation with the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) at the University of Greenwich in the UK, PSI maintains a

database on multinational companies in utilities and health and related services. Reports drawn from the database are published as needed and used at international and other relevant meetings. All reports are available from the PSIRU website ([www.psiru.org](http://www.psiru.org)).

PSI has for a number of years worked with Brendan Martin, Public World ([www.publicworld.org](http://www.publicworld.org)). In 1993, he wrote his first book 'In the Public Interest?', which was published in cooperation with PSI. His next book, entitled 'In the Public Service', was published in the Northern Autumn 2003.

PSI is also working with a number of researchers elsewhere on a more ad hoc basis.

### Challenges and Future Activities

Globalisation has been the driving force of change for workers at the international, regional and national level. Globalisation has been made possible by changes in technology, which

have allowed an easier flow of capital, information, goods and services and people. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the World Trade Organisation have acted as the conveyor belts of these policies.

The neo-liberal policies coming out of these organisations have translated into liberalisation, deregulation, tight monetary control, privatisation and shrinking public sector expenditure. They have also translated into more power to the already powerful, including the multinational enterprises (MNEs), which are driving the current form of globalisation, and less respect for people and human and workers' rights.

To be effective in the face of deteriorating conditions and rights for unions and its members, it is necessary to focus scarce resources on core priorities as outlined in the POA. PSI is committed to retaining a strong public service identity, and to recruiting and organising more workers.



## International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)

### Membership

The ITGLWF today represents 216 organisations in 106 countries with a total membership of more than 10 million workers. Over the past years there had been a significant decrease in employment and in union membership in the industrialised world. The growth in the ITGLWF's membership is centered in developing countries and in the transition economies. This shift in the base of the industry has been accompanied by a very considerable increase in workers rights abuses and in problems faced by unions, necessitating greater global solidarity.

The ITGLWF is funded by subscriptions from its affiliated organisations. Education and development aid programs are funded by donor organisations.

### Objectives

The aims of the ITGLWF are to:

- draw up policy guidelines on important issues for unions in the sectors and coordinate the activities of affiliates around the world;
- act as a clearing house for information of relevance to the daily work of unions in the sector;
- undertake solidarity action in support of unions in the sector whose trade union rights are being denied;
- run a program of education and development aid to assist unions in developing countries in organising workers and educating their members to play an active role in their union;
- lobby intergovernmental organisations and other relevant institutions to ensure that the interests of workers in the sectors are taken into account in decisions made at international level.

### Organisational Structures

The decision-making authority of the ITGLWF is vested in its governing bodies, which are representative of union membership worldwide. The Congress is the supreme authority of the ITGLWF and meets once every four years to decide general policy. It is composed of delegates from affiliated organisations.

The Executive Committee meets once a year and is responsible for directing the activities of the ITGLWF and implementing the decisions of the Congress. It provides representation on the basis of number of paid-up members by country and currently includes representation from 34 countries.

The Presidium meets twice a year and is responsible for the administration of the affairs of the ITGLWF as well as having the authority to take decisions on matters of immediate urgency. The Presidium is composed of the President and fifteen Vice-Presidents. The Secretariat of the ITGLWF is headed by the *General Secretary* with a team of 8 staff members.

While the overall priorities and policies of the ITGLWF are handled at global level, regional activities and relations are covered by the regional organisations. The regionals operate as an integral part of the ITGLWF, though each has its own decision-making bodies and conducts its own activities:

- FITTVCC/ORI, the Americas' regional organisation, is based in Venezuela.
- ITGLWF/ERO, the European regional organisation, is based in Belgium.
- TWARO, the Asian regional organisation is based in Japan.
- ARCC, the African Regional Consultative Council, is based in South Africa.



## The textile, garment and leather industries

Nowhere is globalisation more apparent than in the textile, clothing and footwear industries where production is carried out in 160 countries for export into the markets of only about thirty nations.

As many as ten different countries may have contributed to the production of any single garment we are wearing. The cotton grown in Senegal, spun in Pakistan, woven in Turkey, cut in Germany, stitched in Tunisia, the thread from Ireland, the buttons from China, the labels from Indonesia, the packaging made in Mexico, the garment finished in Malta.

In addition, much of the production is now carried out in Free Trade Zones where national labour legislation either doesn't apply or is ignored by employers and the authorities. More than 27 million workers are now employed in such zones.

This competition, fragmentation of production and lack of respect for basic worker rights is having a major impact on workers in the sector.

Exceptionally low wages and long working hours are common. For example, women in Bangladesh sew garments for up to 16 hours a day, seven days a week for a monthly wage of less than US \$ 20. In Cambodia, teenagers die at their sewing machines from a combination of exhaustion and malnutrition.

## Activities and Priorities of the ITGLWF

The 8th World Congress held in Sweden in 2000 charted a path for the ITGLWF for the next four years and beyond.

### *Organising*

At the Center of ITGLWF activity are organising, improving the ability of trade unions to represent their members and encouraging the participation of ordinary union members in the democratic life of their unions.

Without the right to organise, the most fundamental of all workers rights, it is almost impossible to secure or defend other rights. Unions must broaden their membership base and put organising and recruitment at the forefront of all their activities. The 8th World Congress committed the ITGLWF to devoting at least 15% of its total resources to organising.

Developing the ability to negotiate international framework agreements with leading multinational manufacturers, merchandisers and retailers in the sector and the extensive use of corporate codes of conduct plays a key role in the organising process. The ITGLWF is currently engaging a number of MNCs in discussions around a detail framework agreement.

Faced with constant attacks on their members, unions must make full use of other measures, in-





cluding trade mechanisms and corporate campaigning, to enforce international minimum labour standards. All affiliates should vigorously pursue the linkage of trade to respect for internationally recognised labour standards

### Health and Safety

Health and safety is a major problem in these sectors, though workers and even unions may not be aware of work-related health problems, some of which may not manifest themselves for years. Noise, dust, bad postures, lack of sanitary facilities, overcrowded workplaces, very long working hours, chemicals, repetitive movements and stress are just some of the problems workers face both in developed and developing countries.

The ITGLWF runs an extensive health and safety program which aims to reach not only organised workplaces but also reach the unorganised sector, including the informal economy and small workplaces.

### Child labour

The ITGLWF is committed to the abolition of child labour. Much has been achieved in recent years to raise awareness of the evil of child labour, and this awareness had provided the political pressure needed to force government in many countries to begin to devote the resources needed to provide a decent education system which will bring children out of the workplace and provide them with a future. However, many governments still fail to make the necessary education provision, and still trot out traditional

excuses for the use of child labour. But the causes of child labour remain the same – the greed of employers, the connivance of certain governments and the continuing insensitivity of those who buy goods made by exploited youngsters.

### Women

The majority of workers in the textile, clothing and leather sectors are women, who are among those worst affected by violations of human and trade union rights, which occur most frequently in the informal sector and in export processing zones, which employ a high proportion of women.

The ITGLWF is committed to increasing the number of women recruited through its organising program. It is actively participating in the ICFTU's 3 year worldwide campaign "Organising for Equality", aimed at doubling the union membership of women, with special attention given to those in the informal sector, export processing zones and atypical work.

### Used clothing

The trade in second-hand goods is destroying jobs in the industry and worsens poverty, particularly in Africa, where local industries are being suffocated by the onslaught of imported used clothing.

The ITGLWF is committed to ensuring that used clothing donated for the poor is used for that purpose and is distributed free of charge, thus avoiding the damage being caused in developing countries.

### International structures of the trade union movement

One of the priorities for the ITGLWF is pursuing the restructuring of the international trade union movement, in order to secure trade union structures which will best represent workers interests 20 years from now and to make the changes necessary to these structures to ensure a more responsive, professional and effective global labour movement.



## International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

The International Transport Workers' Federation originates from the International Federation of Ship, Dock and Riverside Workers, which was founded in London in 1896 as an organisation for seamen and dockers. Two years later it included land transport and changed its name to ITF. When the aviation sector had developed technically, it was integrated as well. Its headquarters were first in Berlin and then Amsterdam before, under the growing threat of Nazism, it moved to London in 1938.

At the beginning of 2004 the membership figures exceeded 5 million from 621 trade unions in 137 countries. Around 12% of members are women.

■ **Areas of organisation:** all workers in the transport industry, fisheries workers and tourism services workers.

■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every 4 years); President and 5 Vice-Presidents (at least one of which comes from each of the 5 regions and one must be a woman); Executive Committee with 38 members, including the General Secretary who heads the Secretariat.

■ **Regional structure:** regional/subregional offices in Nairobi and Ouagadougou for Africa, in Tokyo and Delhi for Asia/Pacific, in Brussels and Moscow for Europe and in Rio de Janeiro for Latin America and the Caribbean.

■ **Sectoral structure:** 8 industry sections, notably the railways (1.3m members), road transport (1.5m), inland navigation (55,000), docks (380,000), seafaring (655,000), fisheries (112,000), civil aviation (602,000), tourism services (60,000). For the latter a European Liaison Committee was established in 1995, which operates jointly with UNI and IUF because of overlapping jurisdiction with these other Global Union Federa-



tions. A Special Seafarers' Department oversees the industrial side of the ITF campaign against Flags of Convenience (FOCs) which reports to the Fair-Practices-Committee (FPC) a body consisting of equal numbers of members of ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions.

Each of the section committees maintains a network of subcommittees and working groups and task forces dealing with specific occupational categories, issues or campaigns. Campaigns conducted by the industrial sections include the regular Action Day against long hours and fatigue in road transport, the campaign for public services and safety in railways, the 'air rage' campaign in civil aviation, the campaign to stamp out union busting in the ports and the campaign to concentrate attention on seafarers on the annual World Maritime Day organised by the International Maritime Organisation.

## Special Aspects

Whereas the ITF operates in a similar way to other Global Union Federations in some transport sectors, in shipping, thanks to the Flag of Convenience system, it has taken over many functions which normally would be taken care of by national unions. For over 50 years, in what was the first demonstration of globalisation, shipowners have been registering their vessels in countries which have rented their flags out to owners of any nationality and which make it easy to avoid tax, social legislation and national trade unions. Since seafarers on these vessels cannot be protected by their national unions, the ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions have together been operating a campaign against the flag of convenience system. This takes two forms; a political campaign to persuade international organisations such as the UN to end the FOC system itself, and an industrial campaign designed to provide trade union protection and minimum employment standards for the seafarers concerned. Having long laid down such standards unilaterally, in 2000 for the first time the ITF concluded an international collective bargaining agreement laying down minimum wages and conditions for seafarers on FOC ships with a large international group of maritime employers. Seafarers concerned are either members of an ITF union or, if no union exists in the country concerned, can be enrolled directly into the ITF Special Seafarers Department. The ITF thus is the only global union federation which directly influences wages and working conditions of a specific group of workers.

## Tasks and Objectives

Apart from regular tasks such as campaigning for human and trade union rights and supporting affiliated organisations, the ITF is also cooperating in international and regional bodies which regulate the transport sector economically and socially and draw up policy guidelines for the industry. Owing to the special conditions in the transport sector, the ITF must frequently pro-

vide direct help in cases where other Global Union Federations can indirectly assist through their member organisations.

## Activities

### *Mobilising Solidarity*

At its 1998 Congress the ITF adopted a policy program 'Mobilising Solidarity' designed to bring international action much closer to the members of transport unions and to flatten the 'communications pyramid' which can often slow down international solidarity. This has included a series of education activities including an annual summer school for key activists, education materials and networks of rank and file union officials. At its 2002 Congress, the ITF adopted a second policy program 'Globalising Solidarity' which built on the progress made since Delhi while also concentrating attention on building more effective international campaigns, strengthening links with the global trade union movement and the wider social movement and dealing with the increasingly integrated global logistics business for transporting goods worldwide. Both programs have also highlighted the need to build national coordinating committees of ITF unions as the basis for building national unity.

### *Direct Assistance to Seafarers*

The ITF plays a central role in providing assistance for seafarers worldwide both through a network of over 130 inspectors in ports around the world, and through a headquarters staff dealing directly with seafarers' problems. This activity is funded by the International Seafarers' Welfare Assistance and Protection Fund which is financed by levies on shipowners who have signed ITF collective agreements on more than 6000 Flag of Convenience ships.

The FOC campaign has recently launched new activities in special sectors of shipping. One campaign, dealing with the offshore oil supply industry, is being run jointly with ICEM. Another, dealing with cruise ships, includes a campaign office in Florida.



### ***Representation vis-à-vis Transnational Enterprises***

The ITF is increasingly being confronted with the impact of globalisation in the large corporations with which it has dealings. However, international solidarity could be mobilised in a series of spectacular cases to halt it. This is particularly important in aviation where multinational companies are as yet unable to operate due to international regulations and which have instead created so-called airline 'alliances'. The ITF has created parallel 'solidarity alliances' bringing together the unions in the airlines concerned. The ITF also maintains a network of union officials and representatives responsible for relations with the growing number of transnational companies in the bus/rail industries such as Vivendi/Connex (where it works with PSI and UNI), and UK based companies including First Group, National Express and Stagecoach.

### ***Representation vis-a-vis International Organisations***

The ITF participates in all international organisations that are relevant to the transport sector. A special role is attributed to its activities within the ILO and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). As a result of efforts made

by ITF affiliates in the course of many years, it was possible to have more than 50 conventions and recommendations adopted by the ILO specifically covering workers in maritime shipping. In 2001, the ILO decided to merge all these instruments into a single framework maritime labour convention which will effectively become mandatory for any ship engaged in international commerce. It is expected that this convention will be adopted by a special ILO conference in 2005. A similar instrument is also planned for fisheries.

### ***Women***

The ITF vigorously supports gender equality in all areas of the transport industry. The election of a Women's Committee in 1998 greatly reinforced the relevant activities. Five members of the Executive Committee including one of the ITF-Vice-Presidents are women. The Women's Committee is responsible for an intensive program of educational and campaigning activities in the different regions and for the creation of a series of women's networks.

A preliminary survey in 1999 identified the most important areas for future activities for women. An initiative based on these findings has two major objectives:

- to improve employment rights of women in the transport sector,
- to extend national and international union activities earmarked for the female members.

## Information

The ITF publishes ‘Transport International’ – an in-depth publication aimed at transport union activists four times a year together with an electronic information bulletin ‘ITF News Online’. It also publishes regular sectional bulletins, leaflets and campaign guides. The ITF ‘Seafarers’ Bulletin’ is distributed directly to workers involved in the maritime industry in 10 languages with a circulation of nearly 230,000 copies. It also produces a wide range of education materials, films and other audiovisual materials, details of which can be found on the ITF’s web site: [www.itf.org.uk](http://www.itf.org.uk)

## Challenges and Future Activities

The transport industry is developing rapidly and becoming increasingly integrated between transport modes. The growing role of logistics in goods transport, coupled with the use of ‘just

in time’ production methods in an increasingly globalised manufacturing makes the transport chain increasingly important. This was shown clearly for example when the lock out of US West Coast portworkers in 2002 quickly paralysed production in factories throughout Asia. So-called ‘informal work’, usually involving companies using ‘self employed’ contract workers who were once employees and are still totally dependent on the company for their work but no longer covered by employment protection, is becoming a major challenge particularly in the road transport sector. Railways are increasingly being subject to privatisation and restructuring, often under pressure from international institutions such as the World Bank, and dockworkers are now facing the same trends. The aviation industry is facing demands for a major change in the regulatory regime which has governed it for over 50 years coupled with major job losses made worse by the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the 2003 SARS epidemic. Together with the influence of urban transport transnationals all these developments require even more practical international solidarity between transport unions than ever before, and closer links with other parts of the Global Unions family.





## International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)



### Specific Information on History and Organisation

The IUF was established in 1920 as a result of an amalgamation of the international secretariats of brewery workers, bakers and workers in the meat industry. Other trade groups joined the IUF later: in 1958 the International Federation of Tobacco Workers, in 1961 the International Union of Hotel and Catering Workers and finally in 1994 the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers' Unions (IFPAA).

Early 2004 the IUF consisted of 336 unions in 120 countries with an affiliated membership of 12 million workers.

■ **Areas of organisation:** the preparation and production of food and drinks, hotel, restaurant and catering services, agriculture and plantation farming as well as tobacco processing.

■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every 5 years); Executive of 50 members, representing geographical regions; Administrative Committee (Secretary General, President and 11 Vice-Presidents). The President is normally elected for one term of office only.

■ **Regional structure:** 6 regional organisations in Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America, the Caribbean and the Asian/Pacific region. There are additionally educational and or re-

gional/subregional coordination offices in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand, Hungary, Croatia, Lithuania, and Russia and a Japan Coordinating Council. Regional organisations have their own statutes which require the approval of the IUF-Congress.

■ **Sectoral structure:** branch group for the hotel, restaurant and tourism sector, branch group of the tobacco workers and the branch group of agricultural workers. If required, special industry conferences or general conferences are organized for workers in transnational companies.

### Special Aspects

Many affiliates have great problems in organising workers because they work mainly in small businesses. Moreover, home work/cottage industry production, which still exists in the food industry, and the informal sector confronts them with requirements quite unlike those for normal union activities in companies. The IUF is also present in global enterprises such as Nestlé, Coca Cola, Unilever or McDonalds. In the developing countries, in particular, there are still a large number of financially weak member organisations in agriculture.

When the International of Agricultural and Plantation Workers merged with the IUF in 1994, the manifesto of the new branch group stated:

“Working and living conditions of agricultural, land and plantation workers are by far among the worst known. Wages, working conditions, social security and occupational safety standards lag far behind those in the manufacturing industry. Accommodation is frequently in a deplorable state, healthcare and education is at times non-existent. The vicious circle of poverty leads to children being used frequently as labourers.”

Millions of workers in agriculture have been denied, and continue to be denied the freedom of association. In the few cases where trade unions have been permitted to operate at all, their activities continue to be precarious. Not infrequently death squads are hired against trade union activists.

Moreover, agriculture continues to be one of the most dangerous areas for work both in the industrial and the developing countries. Apart from mining and construction, it has the highest proportion of casualties, accidents at work and occupational diseases. More than half of the more than 300,000 fatal accidents at work each year occur in agriculture which is estimated to employ approximately 1.3 billion workers altogether. Yet workers in agriculture also represent a disproportionate number of the more than 250 million workers each year who have an accident at work and of the more than 160 million of those who fall ill because of risks and exposure on the job.

However, women and men who are working in the fields, the fruit plantations, the greenhouses, on animal farms and in primary processing plants do not only suffer from a high rate of deaths, injuries and diseases. They are also working in a rural environment where there is frequently no clear dividing line between working and living conditions, as would normally be the case with their colleagues in the factories and offices.

## Tasks and Objectives

International workers' solidarity is the guiding principle of the IUF. It is therefore the raison



d'être of the IUF to strengthen the member unions by means of mutual support. It functions as a central clearing house for information and as coordinator of activities. In the course of increasing globalisation, the IUF has also been becoming directly involved in representing the interests of its affiliates vis-a-vis transnational enterprises.

## Activities

The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations:

- advocates human and trade union rights vis-à-vis governments, international organisations and employers and assists its members in industrial or political conflicts,
- monitors the operation and development of multinationals and of political and economic institutions,
- promotes equality of women,
- implements trade union educational programs,
- organises meetings for the exchange of experience and ideas and for planning joint programs,
- informs about developments in bargaining, occupational safety, employment problems and developments in commerce and technology.

## Trade Union and Human Rights

The IUF protests against all forms of violations of human rights and trade union rights and supports the members with all its resources when violations occur. This may be done by means of coordinated solidarity actions, including work stoppages and boycotts, and requests to member organisations not to supply specific companies or markets. International campaigns draw public attention to shortcomings and oppression.

The IUF actively promotes programs which give the working population greater control over its economic, social and political lives and which extend fundamental freedoms, the freedom of expression and association as well as the right to strike. It supports all individuals in their attempts to determine their own lives and to preserve the freedom of their national culture. It fights against discrimination of any kind and explicitly champions lasting peace on the basis of freedom for all.

## Representation vis-à-vis Transnational Companies

In its relationship with transnational companies the IUF follows the principle of defending and promoting the interests of members by common action based on the decisions and support by everyone concerned. The IUF is one of the few Global Union Federations which at an early stage have successfully signed agreements with transnational enterprises which are enforced worldwide in all subsidiaries. The IUF was most successful in the Danone and Accor corporations. As early as 1980, the IUF established a world council for the Danone company (at the time called BSN). In the meantime four 'platforms' have been signed in which guidelines are laid down for the subsidiaries of the company in all parts of the world, including its subsidiaries in China. Agreements provide for a right to information about economic and social aspects, for gender equality and qualification measures to prepare employees for production



changes and modernisations. In 1994, a declaration was signed which gives all workers the right to join a trade union of their choice. It also emphasizes the key role of unions in representing the interests of the workforce vis-à-vis management and protects workers' representatives against discrimination because of their activities or function.

Apart from Danone and Accor, the IUF also signed internationally valid agreements with, the international dairy company Fonterra and the banana transnational Chiquita.

## Representation vis-à-vis International Organisations

The World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organisation are at the Center of efforts made by the IUF in connection with international organisations. The IUF believes that agriculture, in particular in respect of its role of ensuring food security, ought to be free of intervention in the instance of regulations forced upon individual countries by these organisations.

A constant working contact is maintained with the UN-Organisation for Food and Agriculture (FAO). If required, the IUF cooperates with other Global Union Federations.

## Workers Employed in Agriculture

By its very nature, the above-mentioned situation in the agricultural sector outside plantations and large farming estates requires a great deal of resources for response. First of all, organisers and union officials need to be trained and strong unions be built up. Other programs are intended to ensure the equality of women at the workplace, the implementation of international labour standards, improved living and working conditions, an end to unrestricted use of pesticides and a ban on child labour.

Organising activities are strategically directed towards closer cooperation of workers at every stage of the food chain in order to strengthen the position of the IUF in transnational companies. Target areas have initially been the production, processing and marketing of tea, coffee, sugar, cocoa and bananas.

The IUF believes that it is in the interest of society as a whole that agricultural workers in all parts of the world are no longer excluded from effective occupational safety. The IUF therefore called upon governments and employers to support its demand for an international convention and an international recommendation on occupational safety in this extremely important branch of the economy. The IUF was actively involved in providing assistance in the preparation of the convention on health and safety in agriculture. “The ILO had good reasons to prioritize improved occupational safety standards in agriculture”, said IUF-Secretary General Ron Oswald. “The democratic public in all parts of the world has a definite interest in concluding the relevant activities with an effective convention and a recommendation. Workers and human rights activists, consumers’ and environmental organisations, and also all active members of the public, should keep a close watch on the attitude of governments and employers’ representatives to ensure that they support our efforts towards creating safe jobs in agriculture which are necessary to protect the health of the workers and the public as well as the environment“.

The ILO-convention on health and safety in agriculture was needed because the workers in agriculture are not only amongst the poorest worldwide, but the most endangered and the least protected. Workers in agriculture are frequently not covered by any legislation on trade union rights, minimum wages and social security in individual states – including the industrial countries.

## Home Work Industry, the Informal Sector and Labour Migration

Home work industry, the informal sector and labour migration are a second major and extremely difficult area of work in addition to agriculture. Working conditions are even worse there than in the official sector and yet it is an area which is difficult to organise. The IUF is working on an analysis of the needs of these workers.

In the course of liberalisation and a global division of labour, contracting out to home-based subcontractors is becoming increasingly important for the decentralisation of production. The majority of those workers are women who are often forced to make their children work as well, thus contributing to hidden child labour. In the area of IUF-jurisdiction home-industry jobs are found mainly in the tobacco and fishing industry, in confectionery production, in the processing of spices and a number of other agricultural products.

Migrant workers, in particular illegal migrants, are even more difficult to represent. The majority of them find themselves at the bottom of the pay scale and must put up with the most abominable working conditions because they are threatened by immediate expulsion if they try to defend their human dignity. In many countries, they cannot even afford to send their children to school and do not use the official healthcare services because they are constantly afraid of being found out. They are blamed for unemployment, while themselves being victims of it in their countries of origin. Only more humane immigration laws, and above all more employment in their countries of origin, will in the long run give these migrants a better chance in life.



## Women and Youth

With women being the overwhelming majority of workers under IUF-jurisdiction, special attention is being paid to their interests. There are regular seminars about the problems of women workers. The IUF emphasizes in this context that women's rights can only be implemented if family policy is designed accordingly. What is needed, for instance, is a sufficient number of childcare facilities and an opportunity for both husband and wife to educate the children and to look after them.

The IUF and the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) issued the first international declaration on the elimination of child labour in the agricultural sector. The declaration was signed in Geneva by the Executive Director of the ITGA António Abrunhosa and IUF-Secretary General Ron Oswald, and was witnessed by the ILO-Executive Director Kari Tapiola. The agreement, in which the ITGA and the IUF undertake to work together for the elimination of child labour in the global tobacco-growing industry, was triggered off by a survey disclosing the fact of child labour on tobacco plantations in Malawi.

## Education and Training

The educational projects of the IUF are intended to increase the independence and strength of its member unions. Their aim is to enable the affiliated unions to draw up and to implement programs in line with their actual needs. There are, as a rule, preparatory seminars for this purpose at which educational programs are developed between the educational officers of the unions and the IUF. To inspire and to encourage members to manage their own education programs without outside interference is the ultimate objective.

In all IUF-regions, projects are implemented with particular attention paid to equality of women and greater participation of women in trade union activities and structures. The participating unions themselves share some of the costs of



education, additional funds are made available through grants from members in the industrial countries.

## Information, Networks

There is a long tradition behind the political culture of the IUF. Regular publications always include a political editorial, and for readers in the Third World they are frequently one of the few union information sheets which deal specifically with global political problems. Circular letters of the Secretariat and regular publications are sent to affiliated unions in five languages (English, French, German, Spanish and one of the Scandinavian languages) and are in most cases distributed free. The bi-monthly „IUF News“ is also directly dispatched to union members. Everyone can subscribe to it. There are regional publications such as the Japanese version of the newssheet, periodical information leaflets such as “Women and Work” and “Questions of Work” (“Labour Issues”) as well as a set of brochures on issues of general interest to the Labour Movement.

In addition, the IUF collects and disseminates information about the industrial sectors in which the members are working, about trends in bargaining, the operations of transnational enterprises, occupational hazards and about social, economic and political developments; the infor-





mation is made available to every member union on request.

Like other Global Union Federationss, the IUF also runs an informative Web site with reports on current activities.

As part of a pilot project in Ghana and India, the IUF compiled a handbook on pesticides and other hazards. Moreover, a specific training handbook was published for women in the Asian-Pacific region.

## Challenges

The IUF has made amazing progress in some areas and has been admirably active in others. Yet for a globally operating organisation, a certain critical mass of members and revenues is needed to maintain its punch in the longer term. However, the members of many unions in the area of IUF-jurisdiction are among the poorest of the poor and cannot afford high dues. In this situation, a lasting improvement of the financial base can only be achieved if new members are recruited. There is certainly some scope

left for this outside the smallholdings and medium-sized farms. But the bulk of potential members are the workers in food production and in catering. (In theory, the bulk of potential members is clearly in agriculture, the ILO estimates the worldwide agricultural proletariat, i.e. strictly-defined wage earners, at one billion women and men). The problem with this line of employment, in particular in Third World countries, is that there are still millions of businesses which cannot be reached, or barely so. They employ workers, very often migrant or home workers, in small and subcontracted businesses which are frequently excluded from any effective occupational safety measures and national legislation on trade union rights, minimum wages and social security. These workers continue to represent in principle a huge potential membership, but it is unlikely that they can be recruited given the existing political and social circumstances. And it will probably take some more time before the tentative steps by the ILO towards the setting of international standards for this industry will prove successful.



## Union Network International (UNI)

### Specific Information on History and Organisation

UNI is the skills and services international which was formed as result of the amalgamation of four international trade secretariats on January 1st, 2000 after two years of negotiations. It is thus the most recent Global Union Federation. Its 1st World Congress took place in Berlin in September 2001.

The forerunner organisations were the Communications International (CI) which had evolved from the International of Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Workers (PTTI) only a few years earlier, the International Federation of Salaried Staff in Private Industry (FIET), the International Graphical Federation (IGF) and the International of Media and Entertainment Unions (MEI). Some of those, in turn, had a long history of amalgamations themselves which began as early as the 19th century with amalgamations of classical occupations such as the lithographs and allied trades. This development from the early industrial society to the early information society clearly reflects the growing processes of transformation and integration in both the forms and content of employment as well as a general structural change in favour of the service sector and the politically desired transformation of public into private companies.

UNI consists now of more than 900 national trade unions from more than 140 countries with a total membership of 15.5 million.

■ **Areas of organisation:** unions affiliated to UNI can no longer be classified as part of a specific industry, occupation or sector. They organise blue-collar workers, salaried staff and specialists in large administrations, service firms and small businesses, in the professions and in managerial positions.

■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every four years, the last one in 2001); Management Committee (President, 4 Vice-Presidents, Regional Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary General and deputy Secretary General); World Executive Board (apart from the MC-members it consists of another 50 members from 12 geographical regions).

Regional structure: 4 regions (UNI Africa, UNI APRO, UNI Europa, UNI Americas) with offices in Harare, Singapore, Brussels, San José.

■ **Sectoral structure:** 12 sector committees, notably UNI commerce, UNI electricity, UNI financial services, UNI graphics, UNI hairdressers and cosmetic services, UNI IBITS (= white-collar and managerial staff, IT-specialists), UNI media and entertainment & art, UNI postal service, UNI social insurance and private health services, UNI property services, UNI telecom, UNI tourism.

Inter-professional groups exist for specialists and managerial staff, for women and for youth. These groups deal with cross-sectoral problems.

### Special Aspects

The impact of globalisation on trade unions has become even more evident as a result of this amalgamation.

In the course of the privatisation of further enterprises formerly government-run there is frequently an overlap with public-service unions which continue to look after their members in the State enterprises now privatised.

In many countries managerial employees have the problem of being excluded from collective agreements by law or ordinance and/or of not being allowed to join a trade union. The UNI-Committee for Managerial Employees is therefore drawing up strategies of how to organise managerial employees in trade unions.

## Tasks and Objectives

The UNI opposes economic and social exploitation at all levels, rejects any form of racial discrimination, defends and promotes the social, economic, legal and cultural interests of salaried employees at an international level and represents their interests vis-a-vis all relevant international institutions. It supports union activities if the circumstances in the organisations concerned make this necessary.

UNI-affiliated unions organise sectors of the economy in which change is all-pervading. In particular the manufacturing industry, services in the commercial sector and information technology have been at the Center of attention in the last few years. Special organising efforts will have to be made vis-a-vis big IT-corporations with their extensive influence on public opinion.

## Activities

The World Action Program is a summary of all UNI-activities. Its areas of activities cover organising campaigns, wage and salary principles, the regulation of working hours, leave and public holiday regulations, job security, bonuses above agreed rates, occupational health and safety, effects of new technologies and information technologies as well as organisational support for its affiliated unions.

These activities include, amongst other things:

- preparing a report on global organising activities with detailed information about the trade union situation in the countries concerned;
- bridging the digital divide by equipping all UNI-affiliates with computers and Internet connections. All affiliates should become Web-friendly and be able to use the Internet for organising purposes;
- drawing up surveys on how best to support the member unions and to develop new strategies;
- cooperating with other associations of the civil society and exchanging views and dialogue with the OECD, EU and ILO;
- emphasizing the organisation of youth, women, part-time staff, the self-employed and workers on limited-term contracts;
- organising activities in the “new economy”.

## Union Development

The Department for Union Development is responsible for and manages the worldwide solidarity program. Its tasks include:

- building up strong and democratic unions in sectors organised by the UNI
- promoting the integration of women in trade union structures and activities
- improving the skills of trade unionists at all levels of the organisation
- supporting the trade unions on the road towards greater independence.

At its first meeting in July 2000, the newly-elected Executive Committee of the UNI decided to introduce a UNI-passport which enables the increasingly mobile workers in UNI's area of organisation to claim support and rights at any posting location.

## Education and Training

The Department for Union Development is also responsible for education and training.

UNI-educational activities are traditionally focussed on developing countries. Since the end of the 80s of the last century, a number of Central and Eastern European countries have been included in the educational program as well. National programs are given priority, if possible in cooperation with the regional structures of the ICFTU and the other Global Unions. The UNI receives support from donor organisations for its educational programs.

In March 2000, the UNI organised a workshop for journalists from UNI-affiliates which was followed up by a meeting of the webmasters in charge in 2001. A seminar for national UNI-bargaining officers was organised in September 2000 by the European Trade Union College to prepare for the official introduction of the EURO.

## Information and Networks

After the amalgamation, one of the first tasks was to give the new organisation a distinctive and unmistakable profile. Public relations activities have thus been combined under the new



UNI-logo and divided into UNI info, UNInet.news and UNIwebsite.

The UNI-Secretariat collects information from affiliated organisations about their activities, data on salaries, working and living conditions of salaried employees in the different countries, international regulations etc. Edited information is passed on to all member organisations through the UNI-Info.

The Secretariat can be reached from all parts of the world via electronic mail within seconds. Since January 2000, the UNI runs a UNI-homepage on the worldwide web of the Internet with facilities for online discussions and links to friendly organisations or to organisations which are relevant for its international activities.

In addition, affiliated organisations can retrieve data about more than 500 leading companies in their sectors from an electronic database. If required by member organisations in industrial disputes, additional data can be retrieved from commercial online databases. The Secretariat has also a CD-ROM with data on more than 7,000 firms.

### Relationship vis-à-vis International Organisations

The UNI maintains close links to the ICFTU and its regional organisations. At the ILO, UNI participates in the Bureau for Workers' Activities and in the Department for Salaried and Intellectual Employees. In so doing, it continues the activities of its forerunner organisations which, for example, contributed to an ILO-Convention on Part-time Work which was signed as early as 1994. And together with the ICFTU it drew

up the contribution from the labour side for the ILO Working Conference 1995 on the issue of home work industry.

In its relationship to the World Bank and the IMF, UNI speaks up in favour of more consideration for social questions in structural adjustment programs. At the WTO and GATT, UNI insists on including social clauses in international trade agreements. At the OECD, UNI participates through the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC), for example in the drawing-up of safety guidelines for information systems within the framework of an OECD-group of experts. As special adviser of the ICFTU on patents, trademarks, copyrights and similar matters, UNI takes part in sessions of the World Intellectual Property Organisation WIPO.

UNI has posted a Commissioner in Washington who attempts to influence the policies of the World Bank and other international financial institutions in cooperation with the ICFTU. In addition, sectoral activities of these institutions are regularly monitored by the UNI.

### Women and Youth

Campaigns for more women's rights play a key role in the UNI. At the Center of these activities is the project "global equality". It aims, amongst other things, at extending regional networks for the training of women trade unionists. A first seminar in 2000 brought together 24 women in Senegal from 22 UNI-affiliates from 13 African countries. Participants discussed subjects such as violence against women, sexual harassment at the workplace, health and safety for women workers as well as collective bargaining and trade union organising activities for women.

In May 2000, the first European Women's Conference of UNI took place in Luxembourg with 90 delegates from 21 countries. It established structures for the inter-professional group of women and elected a new committee.

In view of the fact that today's young members are the leadership of tomorrow, the UNI deliberately intensifies its efforts towards integrating the young workers in the Trade Union

Movement and at the same time involving them in the decision-making processes. For this purpose, the UNI encourages and promotes communication and systematic exchanges between young people from all parts of the world so as to enable them to play an active part in trade union life and thus to promote international trade union solidarity. UNI-youth activities are primarily focussed on encouraging young individuals to participate in a global exchange of views and to discuss matters of common interest, to draw up action-oriented plans and to present them within the democratic structures of their trade union.

### Challenges and Future Activities

New organisation of work processes and worldwide computer links make it possible for even sophisticated work processes to be contracted out today to the other side of the globe via data networks. In consequence, a growing number of qualified workers are exposed to a continuous dumping of wages. In addition, new technologies open up an enormous potential for rationalisation of almost all services.

This globalisation of the division of labour and deregulation of working conditions sorely test the fighting strength of UNI-affiliates. UNI has therefore placed the first World Congress after the amalgamation, which took place in Berlin in September 2001, under the motto: "Global action @ for the people in the New Economy". The cor-

responding agenda included subjects such as the role of UNI and the rights of individuals in the new economic order as well as trade union organising activities in the era of worldwide networks. Delegates also discussed the potential role of network-based solidarity in connection with the huge sums of workers' money paid into pension funds which are currently used for financing transnational companies.

UNI-Secretary General Philipp Jennings said about the challenges for the future: "The distribution of wealth, not its concentration in the hands of a few, should be the primary objective of international politics. Globalisation produces instability and disadvantages for workers in all parts of the world. The downward spiral, in which the world is searched for the cheapest and least protected workers, should be replaced by intelligent upward competition. We are moving towards a knowledge-based economy in which success will ultimately depend on the profitable deployment of knowledge. Globalisation has no future as long as billions of individuals are mere spectators and victims instead of beneficiaries of the enormous potential of technological and economic change".

One thing is certain: in order to cope successfully with future conflicts, many more qualified white-collar workers have to be recruited for the unions. Organising is the challenge to be faced by UNI-members on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



# International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

## Specific Information on Organisation and History

The ICFTU was founded in 1949 when the COMECON governments took control of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). In this respect, it was initially a result of the Cold War. The ICFTU sees itself, however, as a successor to the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU) which was founded as early as 1903 and even existed as a united federation before it split into a social-democratic and a communist-oriented trade union internationals.

At the end of 2003 the ICFTU had 233 affiliated federations worldwide from 152 countries, in which some 151 million workers are organised, 63 million or 40 percent of them women.

■ **Areas of organisation:** The ICFTU is the international organisation of the national trade union Centers of individual countries. In some countries there is more than one national Center and therefore more than one member federation affiliated to the ICFTU. The ICFTU may also, under certain conditions (if, for example, no national Center from that country is affiliated to the ICFTU) accept individual trade unions. Affiliated unions have to be completely independent of outside influence (for example from the government) and its leadership must be democratically elected.

■ **Organisational structure:** Congress (every four years, the next one in December 2004, in Japan); Executive Board (consisting of 53 members, roughly the same number from industrial and developing countries, amongst them at least 5 women); Steering Committee (of up to 19 members: Secretary General, President and up to 17 Executive members). The Executive Board, meeting annually, coordinates activities between the congresses. ICFTU-management rests with the



Secretary General who runs the head office in Brussels with around 65 members of staff at present. The Steering Committee meets twice a year to oversee ICFTU finances and to handle any urgent matters between meetings of the Executive.

There are further permanent offices in Geneva, Washington and New York and special representative arrangements in other parts of the world.

■ **Regional structure:** regional organisations are formed by the member organisations of the respective regions. They are to a large extent autonomous, particularly in the area of trade union development cooperation work, and elect their own Executive Committees, Presidents, Secretaries and offices. There is APRO (Asia/Pacific), AFRO (Africa) and ORIT (America). When the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was

founded in 1969, the regional ICFTU-organisation for Europe stopped functioning. There is close cooperation with both the ETUC, the Global Union Federations and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (see below).

Thematic areas are covered by special committees, notably the Women's Committee, the Projects Committee, the Committee for Human and Trade Union Rights, and the Economic and Social Committee. The work of these is supplemented by a range of ad hoc taskforces and working groups, such as the Working Party on Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment, the Global Unions Taskforce on Trade, Investment and International Labour Standards (TILS), and the ICFTU Child Labour Taskforce.

■ **Funding:** Basic activities are financed entirely from affiliation fees paid by member organisations. Affiliation fees can be reduced by the Executive Committee in the case of organisations which are passing through economically, socially or politically difficult times. There is also an International Solidarity Fund into which some of the larger and financially stronger member organisations make voluntary contributions. Some members with access to public development assistance funds make available resources for ICFTU-projects for trade union education, training, capacity building and for campaigning or thematic work in developing countries.

## Special Aspects

Since the mid-80s, the ICFTU has experienced a number of dramatic changes in the political context of its work. The end of the Cold War, the almost global change of direction from socialist economic forms to a capitalist market economy have brought about enormous political and social upheavals. On the one hand, the break-up of the Soviet bloc put an end to the constant ideological confrontations with State-controlled compulsory unions and resulted in the return to a largely united trade union movement across the globe. While this contributed to a considerable increase in membership in the medium term, initially causing major problems

of integration and transformation and thus consuming more resources than it produced, this reversal of the political trend has brought about a strong anti-social climate in many established democratic industrialised countries. And the globalisation of the world economy, which is given further momentum by new technologies, adds another threatening dimension to this challenge.

Such tendencies are a threat to trade union rights and social achievements attained after decades of struggle. Unrestrained movements of capital and at the same time the establishment of regional economic and political blocs have undermined national protection legislation. In consequence, the ICFTU has had to concentrate all its resources for some time on defending what had been taken for granted before. However, in recent times the ICFTU has regained some of its old momentum.

## Tasks and Objectives

The motto "Bread, Freedom, Peace" from its founding manifesto continues to be the "leitmotif" of the ICFTU to the present day. It is the objective of the ICFTU to promote the interests of working people worldwide. It defends the right of workers worldwide to organise and to have their organisation recognised as a free independent partner in negotiations. The ICFTU champions social justice in all parts of the world and throughout the international system, with a special focus on the ILO, WTO, the international financial institutions and other UN agencies. It defends and promotes human and trade union rights and





campaigns for a better standard of living, full employment and social security.

The ICFTU is committed to closing the gap between poor and rich, both among and within nations. It works incessantly for international understanding, disarmament and peace. It opposes every kind of oppression and dictatorship and every form of discrimination. It is committed to equality of opportunity for women.

## Activities

As the top-level organisation, the ICFTU gives priority to organising and facilitating the *exchange of experience and views* between national trade union Centers – this process leads to the emergence and broad national support for global union policies in a variety of areas. There are a number of conferences and meetings to this end, for example the Economic and Social Committee or the Committee on Workers' Capital, in addition to the Executive Board and the Congress itself.

The ICFTU pays special attention to the problems facing workers in *developing countries* and several ICFTU-projects are linked to the eradication of poverty. The ICFTU, for example, in collaboration with the IUF, cooperates with trade unions of plantation workers. Some projects produce concrete employment effects, for example in building up agricultural and trades cooperatives, community-based industries, community settlements or the construction of vocational training Centers and some work focuses on the

eradication of child labour, for instance in the tobacco sector. Practical training for organising officers is another focal area of work. Support by the ICFTU is intended to prevent new dependence and to give help towards self-help. The ICFTU is convinced that the best way to help those who are marginalised in the world economy is to strengthen their trade unions.

Whenever possible, the ICFTU defends *human and trade union rights* in the field. It sends out fact-finding missions, studies the facts, visits imprisoned trade unionists, attends court proceedings and provides legal assistance. The ICFTU cooperates closely with human rights organisations such as Amnesty International in this area. For a long time, the ICFTU has specifically focussed on providing information about workers' rights in countries where children, prisoners or individuals in quasi-bondage are employed under appalling working conditions. Each year, the ICFTU's flagship publication, the Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, highlights, country by country, trade union rights situation all over the world.

In its cooperation *with international organisations, public bodies and institutions as well as governments* the ICFTU, in consultation with the GUFs, attempts to bring about a meaningful Social Dialogue between trade unions and employers in connection with political issues. Efforts towards including core labour standards in the agendas of ministerial meetings or all relevant international fora are given a central role in ICFTU's activities.

In the context of its work coordinating the Global Unions *Working Group on Trade, Investment and International Labour Standards* (TILS), the ICFTU conducts discussions at the highest level with the World Bank and the IMF. The ICFTU, usually in close cooperation with the GUFs and TUAC, represents the labour movement at international conferences, at the United Nations and its specialised agencies, in particular the ILO, UNCTAD, UNESCO, FAO and WHO. It also campaigns and lobbies around the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and facilitates, coordinates and, if required, actively ensures the participa-

**ORIT, the Inter-American regional organisation of the ICFTU**, agreed with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1999 to set up a joint working group. At the first official meeting of the group in September 2000 the subjects for discussion included, amongst others things:

- the effects of globalisation and of economic integration on labour markets and the application of core labour standards,
- policy and practice of IDB in respect of consultations with the civil society and trade unions,
- future changes in IDB-evaluation procedures and opportunities for trade unions to take part in the evaluation of projects and policies,
- reforms of social services in America and the role of workers in this reform process,
- proposals for a joint IDB/ORIT-programme aimed at promoting ILO-Conventions 182 (elimination of the worst forms of child labour) and 111 (ban on discriminatory action).

It was agreed that the following measures be taken before the end of 2001:

- the IDB Vice-President sensitises the Bank's senior management in respect of core labour standards,
- IDB, ILO and ORIT jointly prepare a program proposal for joint or parallel surveys on globalisation and submit it at the next meeting of the working group,
- ORIT draws up a pilot project for the promotion of ILO-Convention 182 to be passed on to the IDB for support,
- the IDB Vice-President informs the IDB country representatives that the trade unions are to be included in action plans for consultations with the civil society.

These discussions and proposals were a first attempt towards cooperation with a regional development bank which may lead to new developments in this direction.

tion of trade unions in the IMF-country consultations because many national governments disregard the fact that trade unions have the right to take part in these meetings.

Within the OECD, the ICFTU, together with the GUFs, exerts influence on the long-term strategies of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) through the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC).

Continuously, the ICFTU analyses and provides positions on global socio-economic developments and the developments in and effects of globalisation. It has drawn up detailed positions over recent years with its Global Unions partners on such as a global solidarity pact, involving an international program for coordinated actions to promote growth, for an end of debt crisis, for a reform of international finances and the reduction of unemployment and poverty.

The ICFTU is also campaigning, at the WTO and in the context of regional and bilateral trade

negotiations, for respect for workers' rights in international trade agreements. Cooperation with the Global Union Federations has also gained a new level of intensity in the development of strategic approaches to industrial relations at the international level. The ICFTU works closely with the GUFs in exchanging information and in developing common approaches on many issues related to multinational companies.

Joint ICFTU/GUF campaigning is being expanded, often coordinated by the ICFTU, under the banner of the Global Unions group. In November 2001, the first Global Unions Day of Action was coordinated, at the start of the WTO meetings in Qatar, and this resulted in 70 related trade union actions in 50 countries. In 2003, a Global Unions theme for May Day, "Respect", was promoted and unions in around 90 countries linked up in various ways to this initiative, in the context of a campaign on globalisation. Another Global Unions campaign is being launched in 2003 on the fight against HIV/AIDS.



The ICFTU maintains an especially close relationship with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). So far the ILO is the sole UN-agency with a tripartite structure of representatives of the governments, employers and employees. Almost all the members of the workers' group elected to ILO-executive bodies are at the same time leaders of an ICFTU-affiliate. It is due to their commitment that the ILO has been able to adopt many international standards for the protection of workers. The ICFTU runs an office in Geneva, which is involved, among other things, in the preparation of the annual International Labour Conference of the ILO; the head of the Geneva ICFTU office also serves as secretary to the ILO Workers' Group.

In addition to a wide range of ongoing involvement with the ILO, for instance, in the work of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, in recent years the ICFTU has been monitoring in particular the development and activities of the ILO Working Group on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation, which was launched in 2002, and progress made in the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

ICFTU-educational activities are, in particular, intended to build up democratic structures in trade unions. ICFTU-educational programs are run mainly by the regional organisations and target national trade union Centers and their affiliates. Whenever possible, the ICFTU will try to link educational programs to its latest campaigns and priorities and at the same time to take into account the educational priorities of the individual national unions. It is particularly keen on leaving the organisation of education in the hands of the local unions. The ICFTU offers courses in all parts of the world, especially for trade union leadership.

The ICFTU is committed to the equality of opportunity and equal treatment of women in terms of employment, pay, training, and working conditions. This presupposes sufficient participation of women in trade union bodies and programs. The present minimum quota is 30% for women's representation.

Youth membership is a decisive issue for the future of trade unions. The ICFTU, through its youth programs, encourages trade unions to organise young workers. It campaigns for better school education and vocational training and better employment conditions for and protection of young workers. It promotes international contacts between young trade unionists and demonstrates to them the value of international solidarity.

The ICFTU has played a major role in developing common approaches and cooperation around the issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and codes of conduct, and in particular in connection with the international institutions and processes which have emerged in connection with CSR in recent years, such as the UN's Global Compact, the Ethical Trading Initiative and the Global Reporting Initiative. The ICFTU has also helped develop and set up international networks for information and consultation on framework agreements with multinational companies. This is another area in which the ICFTU is active with the GUFs.

There are regular publications for information purposes, for example "Trade Union World" background briefings on a wide range of issues are published regularly, and ICFTU Info is a bulletin targeted at unions in developing countries. The ICFTU also runs a free e-mail based news service, ICFTU Online, which anyone can subscribe to, over the ICFTU website, in English, French and Spanish. The annual survey, launched each year in June, covering violations of trade union rights, recorded incidents in 133 countries for 2002 alone. In addition, the ICFTU regularly publishes research papers, and thematic publications, all of which can be downloaded or ordered from the ICFTU website.

From an early stage, the ICFTU has been using the Internet as a means of exchanging information quickly. National trade union officials can read up on the detailed summaries of developments and negotiations which the ICFTU disseminates to affiliates and close partners by e-mail as soon as they are available. Draft papers for international conferences are



available for discussion and so are documents about concluded agreements. Information is sent out by the ICFTU to all the unions concerned for all the international meetings, often containing at the same time draft letters and model press releases to national representatives for lobbying purposes.

The globalisation of commerce and industry and the growing importance of multinational corporations have forced individual trade unions to become more involved at an international level. As a result, their Global Union Federations have taken over a number of functions in which the ICFTU is also active. More and more *coordination* is required to avoid duplication or even conflict of activities. Communication must therefore be even more closely linked by networks in order to produce the necessary synergies. The representation of the Global Union Federations at the ICFTU-Executive Board Committee and other joint working meetings with the Global Union Federations ultimately serve to facilitate such coordination. At the same time, one must not neglect the practical work when faced with all these coordination requirements.

## Challenges and Future Activities

At its last Congress in spring 2000, the ICFTU laid out its priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Amongst other things it proclaimed:

We want to build a world free from poverty, free from discrimination and injustice, and free from the threat of war and oppression. We want to see an end to unemployment and the realisation of full-employment. It is a world where extremes of opulence and misery are eliminated, where women and men are equally able to work to fulfil their potential and share it with the community. We want decent work for all. We want democratic processes based on respect for, and enforcement of, universal human rights, to regulate concentrations of private power and big international business. We want to achieve the full equality trade unions have worked so long to attain, with a society free from discrimination based on race, colour, creed, political opinion,

gender, sexual orientation, disability, health or age. We want to create ways of living and working which are safe and promote quality living and are designed to sustain the environment for future generations. And we want our children to have lives of continuous learning and progress with real prospects of achieving better living standards than our own.

This is fleshed out by a long list of tasks to be tackled in the coming years. The immediate challenges are to ensure general respect for the right to organise and to organise all those without a voice at present and, in particular, to integrate the workers in the informal economy.

Amongst other things, the following objectives are to be attained:

- full equality and equal treatment at work and decent work for all;
- building up partnerships across borders in order to make multinationals accountable, including working with groups of the civil society and non-governmental organisations;
- developing the negotiating strength of the International Trade Union Movement on the basis of broadly-based representation in order to add to the weight of workers in the power Centers of the new global economy, the multinationals and inter-governmental organisations.

The millenium review names a great, almost too great, number of additional tasks and objectives. But we are just at the beginning of the new century. The ICFTU has entered it with great confidence. This confidence is the result of a critical stock-taking. While globalisation has changed our world in the last 15 years at an unprecedented pace, the International Trade Union Movement is now being challenged to respond to these changes in an appropriate manner. The resolution of the ICFTU-Congress spells it out clearly:

*"In view of such a challenge no trade union can afford to enter into competition with other trade unions or to become involved in political trench warfare. We must change ourselves in order to change the world."*

## European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

### Specific Information on Organisation and History

The European Trade Union Confederation was founded by 17 national union Centers and ICFTU-affiliates on February 8th, 1973. In the course of time, other organisations joined of which some were affiliated to the ICFTU, while others belonged to the WCL or to no international organisation at all. Today, the ETUC consists of free independent and democratic national union Centers and European industry federations. It lays claim to represent all workers at the European level as a united pluralist organisation.

The ETUC is therefore not a suborganisation of the ICFTU, but an autonomous organisation of trade unions in Europe, including countries which are not part of the EU. It also has members from outside the ICFTU and some affiliated to the WFL.

The EU-Commission has recognised the ETUC as the sole social partner and representative body of the workers with universal orientation. This recognition also covers the affiliated industry federations in their respective industries.

■ **Areas of organisation:** The ETUC as a top-level organisation today comprises 77 national union centers from 31 European countries, including 33 from the fifteen EU-member States. As a result, the ETUC represents 60 million paying members. 6 organisations from Central and Eastern Europe have observer status (as of October 98). The second pillar of the ETUC are 15 European industry federations, one of them with merely observer status. Owing to the different basis of membership, these industry federations exist in parallel with the European regional organisations of the Global Unions, but often with the same officials in positions of leadership.



■ **Organisational structure:** congress (every 4 years, the next one in 2007, consisting of delegates from the affiliated national Centers, of the European industry federations and the Women's Committee); it elects the President, who chairs the congress, the Executive and the Steering Committees, and also the Secretary General and the two deputies, who manage the day-to-day business together with the Secretariat.

Technical committees exist on subjects such as economic policy, social policy, collective bargaining, international politics, working conditions, regional policy and employment and education. There are also working groups for environmental questions, energy, immigration and racism, democratisation of the economy and trade union organisation. The Women's Committee, established by force of Statutes and also represented with its own delegates at the congress, holds a special status. Specific age or function-related groups are Eurocadres (European Council for Managerial Employees), FERPA (European Federation of Pensioners and Old-age People), the ETUC-Youth and 38 IUCs (interregional union councils).

The latter ensure cross-border cooperation between national Centers affiliated to the ETUC in economic and industrial regions of Europe

which extend beyond national borders: for example Saar/Lorraine/Luxembourg or Elbe/Neisse, but also Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland.

*ETUI, the European Trade Union Institute*, conducts research into varying subjects. It runs a documentation Center and publishes a large number of publications, including the scientific quarterly journal "TRANSFER".

*ETUA, the European Trade Union Academy*, on the one hand seeks to promote European awareness in trade union education by supplying national unions with didactic material and by training European lecturers. On the other, it trains unionists directly at a European level for functions in supranational bodies or for European works councils.

*TTUB, the Technical Trade Union Bureau for Health and Safety* produces expert opinions for the ETUC in its role as the mouthpiece of the workers' group in the Advisory Committee of Luxembourg. It provides a network of trade union experts for the activities of the European standardisation bodies, it acts as an expert body on the classification of substances, chemical preparations and similar matters, draws up statements on testing and certification procedure in Europe and produces the appropriate educational material for trade union activities.

*AFETT, the European Association for Training Employees in New Technologies* was set up on the initiative of the ETUC. It combines training in technological and organisational innovations with aspects of social dialogue and industrial relations.

The European Commission, the European Council and EFTA have recognised the ETUC as the sole trade union organisation at the European level representing all sectors.

## Tasks and Objectives

The ETUC campaigns for the protection of human and trade union rights and for a society based on freedom, justice and solidarity, for an extension and consolidation of political liberties and democracy, for a democratisation of the economy. It opposes all forms of discrimination,

champions the rights of immigrants and minorities against racial hatred and hostility to foreigners.

It is committed to equality of opportunity and equal treatment of men and women (not least in the trade unions themselves), a geographically-balanced, environmentally-friendly economic and social development, a freely-chosen productive paid job for all, constant improvement in living and working conditions, continuous development, improved education and better qualified training.

The ETUC takes steps to strengthen the European Union socially, politically and democratically. It supports an active role of Europe in the efforts towards peace, development and social justice in this world.

## Activities

It is the task of the ETUC at the European level to realise the trade union initiatives required to attain the above-mentioned objectives as part of the process of European integration.

In the pursuit of these objectives, ETUC-activities are directed towards

- the European Union with the aim of giving greater emphasis to its social, political and democratic aspects and to bring them in line with those at the monetary and economic levels;
- the European Council, EFTA and other European institutions with the aim of promoting cooperation in areas affecting the interests of workers;
- the Federation of European Employers with the intention of establishing sound working relationships at the European level by means of Social Dialogue and negotiations.

A major part of the work of the ETUC is taken up by introducing workers' interests and minimum social standards into European legal regulations and political programs.

In negotiations with employers' federations, for example, the ETUC was successful in having the principle of "social dialogue" included in the protocol of the EU-Treaty of Maastricht, thus granting the European social partners the right

to conduct negotiations and to conclude agreements at the European level. When the ETUC-Congress in 1995 had to note that there was no apparent interest in such a solidarity pact amongst the employers, it was decided “to do everything to move the social dialogue out of the present stalemate”.

One positive step in this direction was the agreement signed with the employers’ central organisations UNICE and CEEP in respect of a European minimum right to parental leave which is intended to guarantee fathers and mothers of children up to the age of eight a minimum of 3 months unpaid leave and job security for that period in all countries of Europe. A new procedure was applied in this case for the first time which enables trade unions and employers, instead of national governments, to draw up legislation which is binding *across Europe*. This regulation was followed up by another agreement on part-time work. The two agreements were ratified by the EU-Council of Ministers and are now part of the enforceable European body of law.

The ETUC vigorously campaigns for the inclusion of social clauses in the General Preferential System of the European Union. In December 1994, the EU-Council agreed to exclude countries with forced labour from most-favoured nation status in future. The same regulation is now in place in respect of core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation. This is a major step forward since the subject of social clauses has been fended off in other international bodies. In addition, the ETUC insists that new regulations concerning the flow of speculative capital, which take into account the concerns of the workers, are a matter of great urgency.

From the very start, the ETUC has campaigned for the right of workers to information and consultation in transnational enterprises. This had become the more urgent since the TNEs were increasingly shifting decisions from the national to the European or international levels. On September 22nd, 1994, the EU finally adopted a Directive concerning this matter; the ETUC has



been monitoring its implementation in national legislation since then.

In consequence, the establishment of European works councils has played a major part in the Europeanisation of industrial relations according to the ETUC. After many discussions and against the opposition of Great Britain, in particular, the EU-Council of Ministers adopted directives concerning the establishment of European works councils in 1994 and decided to introduce this institution across the board as from 1999. The ETUC used the transitional period to prepare the affiliated trade unions for the procedures and opportunities available as a result.

The European works councils which have accordingly been set up are, however, relatively restricted in their rights of information and participation. The ETUC is therefore calling for a new EU-directive containing more extensive rights of information and consultation in every company with cross-border operations, irrespective of its size and number of staff. There must also be the opportunity to impose sanctions in the event of non-compliance by companies.

Not every European enterprise concerned has as yet set up the appropriate works councils, while others have attempted to establish forms of workers’ representation tailored to the specific conditions in their operations. The ETUC is thus faced with the mammoth task of having to provide guidance and advice and to offer support in hundreds of enterprises.

The ETUC-network of lawyers, which had been set up as early as 1993, has been given a new organisational structure under the name NETLEX in the last few years. NETLEX is an

information network consisting of more than 90 legal experts from 56 member unions in 27 countries. These experts function as a link between NETLEX and the legal protection officers of individual organisations. This system of resource persons ensures easy access to legal information and advice in the “jungle” of European legislation whenever required, and at the same time supplies the ETUC continuously with information about respective developments in individual countries. NETLEX is closely cooperating with the ETUI in this process.

The ETUC-Forum for Cooperation and Integration offers trade union organisations from Eastern and Central Europe an informal framework for contacts, exchanges of information and experience and for the development of joint projects. In addition to the 9 national Centers which hold observer status with the ETUC, another 18 organisations from Central and Eastern Europe are cooperating in this framework.

### Information and Networks

The ETUC publishes a weekly information bulletin “Report” and a monthly press review. There is also the bulletin “Forum Facts”. The ETUC has been linked to the data highways via electronic mail since 1997.

### Challenges and Future Activities

The ETUC regards the establishment of European works councils as a major condition for the Europeanisation of industrial relations between workers and employers. However, the European Directive on the establishment of European works councils means an enormous

challenge. There are some 1,300 enterprises with roughly 25,000 works council members who will be involved. Not much more than one third of potential European works councils have so far been set up. This task can only be shouldered in a joint effort with the ETUC setting the general direction and offering assistance.

As regards the forthcoming revision of the Maastricht Treaty, the ETUC will have to bring to bear the full weight of the organisation in the face of the present anti-social climate in order to ensure that social concerns and workers’ interests are not neglected in the process. As integration towards European economic areas and labour markets progresses, efforts must be made in time to create structures for collective negotiations at a European level.

The ETUC calls for the inclusion of social, democratic and environmental clauses in all trade and economic cooperation agreements in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO-Declarations on Fundamental Rights and Principles of 1998. The 9th ETUC-Congress decided to form an alliance with the other international trade union organisations with the aim of controlling the activities of TNEs and banks by means of binding multilateral agreements.

This task will not become easier when many of the European enterprises are at the same time operating worldwide, as is often the case. There are as yet few universally operating works councils and there is a danger of confusion in respect of both national practices and regional, and thus ultimately universal, regulations. The ETUC could be useful in bringing to bear its weight at the international level as well, yet must avoid the impression that Europe takes care of its workers at the expense of the rest of the world.





## Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)



### Specific Information on Organisation and History

The TUAC is the trade union advisory committee to the OECD. It was established as early as 1948 in connection with the Marshall-Plan. It is a non-governmental organisation which was granted consultative status with the OECD in 1962. Since 1971, the TUAC has been composed of national trade union Centers which operate in OECD-member countries. These union confederations are either affiliated to the ICFTU or the WCL or to neither of the two international organizations. The TUAC-membership is at present some 70 million organised workers in 56 affiliated federations from 30 OECD-member countries.

In addition to national trade union Centers, TUAC is cooperating with the international trade union organisations (such as the ICFTU, WCL, ETUC) and the Global Union Federations. It is part of the “Global Unions” partnership.

### Organisational Structure

The *Plenary Session* convenes twice a year. It consists of all affiliated organisations and of representatives from the international trade union organisations. The Plenary Session takes major policy decisions in all areas of TUAC-activities, sets the budget and affiliation fees.

The *Administrative Committee* of the TUAC prepares the Plenary Session and at the same time oversees the TUAC-administration. It consists of the following organisations: DGB (Germany), TUC (Great Britain), AFL-CIO (USA), CLC

(Canada), FO and CFDT (France), CISL (Italy), JTUCRENGO (Japan), ÖGB (Austria), STTK (Finland), LO (Denmark), CSC (Belgium,) and the Secretary General ex officio.

*TUAC-Working Groups* exist on economic policy; global trade, investment and multinational companies; education, training and labour market policy; and jointly with the Global Unions on health, safety and the environment, and on workers' capital. Working Groups are open to all affiliates, the international organisations and to TUAC-partner organisations in Central and Eastern Europe. Ad-hoc meetings are held whenever other subjects require a statement by the TUAC vis-a-vis the OECD. TUAC-bodies generally work on the consensus principle.

The TUAC is *funded* primarily through affiliation fees. Since 2000 some additional work on Multinational Enterprises and on Corporate Governance had been partly donor funded. The TUAC-office in Paris has a limited staff of fulltime officers who are not delegated by affiliated unions.

### Tasks and Activities

FOCUS, the PSI-publication, once called TUAC with slight exaggeration “the watchdog of trade unions in the OECD”. Yet little is actually known about the activities of TUAC in trade union circles. This is probably due to the fact that TUAC is primarily involved in trying to influence the policy debate amongst governments in the economic and social field.

The TUAC is the Interface of the International Trade Union Movement with the OECD,

while the OECD in turn holds a key position in drawing up guidelines on economic policy for the industrial countries. It also acts as a “think tank” for trade unions. The TUAC draws up statements and proposals of the trade unions in respect of key issues of international policy which are discussed and adopted at OECD-meetings. The main input from TUAC is delivered before the final decisions are taken.

TUAC coordinates and disseminates the views of the Trade Union Movement in the industrial countries in general, while the views of the Global Union Federations are largely taken into account in the sectoral activities of the OECD.

In fact, the most recent OECD-decisions reflect an extension of activities towards becoming a forum of inter-governmental policy discussions in respect of globalisation-related issues. In this context, the TUAC regards it as its main task to insist on a policy that adds an effective social dimension to global markets and creates a more balanced situation in the process.

The main TUAC-activities within the OECD deal with general economic policy (including preparation of the trade union statement for the annual global economic summit of the G-8), structural adjustment and labour market policy, the impact of globalisation on employment, education and training as well as multinational enterprises, corporate governance, the growing relationship of the OECD with non-members, and science and technology policy.

The TUAC has made a number of statements at OECD-governmental conferences, for example for the Council of Environmental Ministers, Ministers for Social and Labour Affairs, Ministers for Science and Technology etc. It draws up discussion papers for internal union decisions, makes proposals for codes of conduct as part of the OECD-code, organises conferences and meetings with ministerial circles and arranges the joint meetings with OECD-bodies.

The TUAC is also involved in the OECD-Labour/Management Programs partially financed by the OECD, which serves as a forum for preliminary consultations between trade unions and management experts on matters that will eventually become part of the OECD's program of work. This

program includes subjects such as world trade and workers' rights or the role of trade unions in the development of corporate structures and strategies.

Present priorities adopted by the TUAC-Pleinary Session are globalisation, economic, social and employment policies, problems of education and training, multinational companies as well as trade and development. Increasingly, more attention is being attached to OECD-environmental policy and OECD-relationships with non-members, in particular in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia.

### Special Achievements

In the latter part of the 1990's TUAC has succeeded in focussing attention once again on the subject of unemployment as the main topic of international economic policy by the OECD and the G-8 – after a decade of neglect. The TUAC was able to exert a positive influence on many parts of the positions formulated by governments, even though satisfactory answers remain wanting. It was again due to pressure by the TUAC that the topic “workers' rights in world trade and in multilateral investment agreements” was put on the OECD-agenda. It was in part because of this that the OECD governments failed to adopt the draft of the Multilateral Agreement for Investments (MAI).

Following 1997, the TUAC was invited to take part in the G-8 conferences on employment. This enables the organisation to present directly the trade unions' views to the conference and thus to influence the decisions taken by its participants.

In addition, TUAC's efforts in the last few years to present the unions' position concerning the dangers of globalisation has had some impact. The OECD-Ministerial meeting in June 2000 took place under the motto: “Shaping Globalisation”. The seven areas of discussion demonstrated the growing importance attached to the concerns of the TUAC, and thus to those of the International Trade Union Movement.

Debates about trade liberalisation reflected the impact of the Seattle protests. The Final Document of the Ministerial meeting listed a great

The outcome of the OECD-Ministerial Conference in June 2000 was again proof of TUAC's effective powers of influence. The OECD-guide-line on MNEs, which had been in force for 25 years, was replaced by a new regulation covering a number of additional social aspects which had not been considered under the previous system; it has visibly become a global instrument for worldwide application now. The guidelines, signed by 30

OECD-member States as well as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the Slovak Republic, also refer to the responsibility of TNEs in respect of the conduct of their suppliers and other sub-contractors. The preparation and adoption of these guidelines have been a first step. It is now up to the respective trade unions to ensure their implementation in every member State. The TUAC has produced Users Guide for trade unionists on the Guidelines.

many unresolved problems, recognised the necessity of more intensive cooperation with the ILO and other international institutions, considered consultations with organisations of the civil society and referred to human rights – a term which had practically been a taboo so far in this context. It spelled out clearly that the OECD-Council of Ministers did not regard globalisation to be a matter in which markets dominate politics, but that it was first and foremost the task of governments to enhance and use the advantages of globalisation, while controlling its costs.

The TUAC has always attempted to add a social and labour-related dimension to the OECD-working program with the “dynamic Asian economies” and to draw attention to the effects created by the globalisation of the world economy. This is why the TUAC, together with the ICFTU-APRO, conducted a seminar in Seoul in 1995, when the Republic of Korea applied for accession to the OECD, on the subject “The Social Dimension of Economic Integration in Asia”. The meeting focussed, in particular, on the global economy and social integration, pluralist democracy and economic development, the union response to globalisation as well as labour market and social policy. The TUAC had drawn up a comprehensive background paper as a basis for discussion. These documents high-

lighted a number of economic and social implications which had not yet been discussed in Korea in this manner. The hitherto unknown aspect of an “open market economy” as part of open civil societies in which workers' rights are respected, attracted a great deal of attention. At the end of the seminar, all participants agreed that the topics concerned had to be taken into account in the final negotiations. In the case of Korea, the TUAC thus succeeded for the first time in making trade union rights an essential part of negotiations for accession to the OECD.

### Challenges and Future Activities

The neo-liberal ideology which had dominated the OECD agenda for many years greatly restricted the unions' room for manoeuvre in the political arena. At the dawn of the new century, however, there are some initial signs of a change for the better. The TUAC therefore deserves the support of every national affiliate.

The TUAC is undoubtedly a body which is representing trade union interests effectively. Its consultative status enables it to exert considerable influence on OECD-strategies for economic policies by means of lobbying. Since the OECD plays an important part in the shaping of world economic policy, the effect of TUAC-activities in this respect should not be underestimated.



## Adresses

### International Labour Organisation (ILO)

4, route des Morillons  
CH -1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
phone: +41 22 799 6111  
fax: +41 22 799  
e-mail: [actrav@ilo.org](mailto:actrav@ilo.org)  
web: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

### Education International (EI)

5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II  
B - 1210 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 224 06 11  
fax: +32 2 224 06 06  
e-mail: [educint@infoboard.be](mailto:educint@infoboard.be)  
web: [www.ei-ie.org](http://www.ei-ie.org)

### European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II  
B - 1210 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 224 0411  
fax: +32 2 224 0454/55  
e-mail: [etuc@etuc.org](mailto:etuc@etuc.org)  
web: [www.etuc.org](http://www.etuc.org)

### International Federation of Building and Woodworkers (IFBWW)

54, Route des Acacias  
CH - 1227 Geneva  
Switzerland  
phone: +41 22 827 3777  
fax: +41 22 827 3770  
e-mail: [info@ifbww.org](mailto:info@ifbww.org)  
web: [www.ifbww.org](http://www.ifbww.org)

### International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II  
B - 1210 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 224 02 11  
fax: +32 2 201 58 15  
e-mail: [intertpo@icftu.org](mailto:intertpo@icftu.org)  
web: [www.icftu.org](http://www.icftu.org)

### International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers' Unions (ICEM)

Avenue Emile de Béco 109  
B - 1050 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 626 20 20  
fax: +32 2 648 43 16  
e-mail: [icem@geo2.poptel.org.uk](mailto:icem@geo2.poptel.org.uk)  
web: [www.icem.org](http://www.icem.org)

### International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

266, Rue Royale,  
B - 1210 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 223 2265  
fax: +32 2 219 2976  
e-mail: [ifj@pophost.eunet.be](mailto:ifj@pophost.eunet.be)  
web: [www.ifj.org](http://www.ifj.org)

### International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

54 bis, Route des Acacias  
Case Postale 1516  
CH - 1227 Geneva  
Switzerland  
phone: +41 22 308 50 50  
fax: +41 22 308 50 55  
e-mail: [info@imfmatal.ch](mailto:info@imfmatal.ch)  
web: [www.imfmatal.org](http://www.imfmatal.org)

### Public Service International (PSI)

45, Avenue Voltaire. B. P. 9  
F - 01211 Ferney-Voltaire Cedex  
France  
phone: +33 450 406 464  
fax: +33 450 407 320  
e-mail: [psi@world-psi.org](mailto:psi@world-psi.org)  
web: [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)

### International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)

Rue Joseph Stevens 8  
B - 1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
phone: +32 2 512 26 06  
fax: +32 2 511 09 04  
e-mail: [itglw@compuserve.org](mailto:itglw@compuserve.org)  
web: [www.itglwf.org](http://www.itglwf.org)

### International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

49-60 Borough Road  
London, SE1 1DS  
Great Britain  
phone: +44 2074 03 2733  
fax: +44 2073 57 7871  
e-mail: [mail@itf.org.uk](mailto:mail@itf.org.uk)  
web: [www.itf.org.uk](http://www.itf.org.uk)

### International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUFA)

Rampe du Pont-Rouge 8  
CH - 1213 Petit-Lancy (Geneva)  
Switzerland  
phone: +41 22 793 22 33  
fax: +41 22 793 22 38  
e-mail: [iuf@iuf.org](mailto:iuf@iuf.org)  
web: [www.iuf.org](http://www.iuf.org)

### Trade Union Advisory Council (TUAC)

26, avenue de la Grande Armée  
75017 Paris  
France  
phone: +33 1 47 63 42 63  
fax: +33 1 47 54 98 28  
e-mail: [evans@tuac.org](mailto:evans@tuac.org)  
web: [www.tuac.org](http://www.tuac.org)

### Union Network International (UNI)

Avenue Reverdil 8 - 10, Box  
CH- 1260 Nyon 2  
Switzerland  
phone: +41 22 365 2100  
fax: +41 22 365 2121  
e-mail: [contact@union-network.org](mailto:contact@union-network.org)  
web: [www.union-network.org](http://www.union-network.org)

*All Global Unions, together with the ICFTU and ETUC, also publish current and elementary information on their Web site: [www.global-unions.org](http://www.global-unions.org).*



## List of Abbreviations

AFETT	European Federation for the Education and Training of Workers in the New Technologies
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour – Congress of Industrial Organisations (top-level confederation of US-American unions)
EI	Education International
CEEP	European Centre of the Public Economy
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
ETUA	European Trade Union Academy
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUI	European Trade Union Institute
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GUF	Global Union Federations
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IFBWW	International Federation of Building and Wood Workers
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICFTU-AFRO	African Regional Organisation of the ICFTU
ICFTU-APRO	Asian/Pacific Regional Organisation of the ICFTU
ICFTU-ORIT	Inter-American Regional Organisation of the ICFTU
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
PSI	Public Service International
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investments
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
OATUU	Organisation for African Trade Union Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
TTUB	Technical Trade Union Bureau for Health and Safety
TILS	Task Force International Labour Standards – of the ICFTU
TNE	Transnational Enterprise
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee (OECD)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICE	Union of National Industrial Employers in Europe
UNI	Union Network International
WB	World Bank
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WCL	World Confederation of Labour