

Globalising Decent Work Decent Life!

Newsletter
November 2007

Over many years, Solidar has worked - in alliance with Trade Unions and other progressive forces - to make access to Decent Work Decent Life possible for all people of the world. In early 2006, Solidar launched its Jobs Jobs Jobs Decent Work Project in order to give new strength to the campaign. This newsletter will give periodic updates on Decent Work events and actions organised by Solidar and its partner organisations and will celebrate all those people, organisations, and institutions that are making their own contribution to Globalising Decent Work.

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1. DECENT WORK DECENT LIFE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

1.1 Campaigning for Decent Work Decent Life: the Call to Action is launched!



As part of the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign, Solidar, the ITUC, the Global Progressive Forum and Social Alert International held a one day event on 31 October in Lisbon prior to the *ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalisation*. Amongst the various high-level participants from trade unions, civil society and governments, we were delighted to welcome ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, Secretary General-elect of ASEAN Surin Pitsuwan, Portuguese Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity Vieira da Silva and COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

As well as the opportunity for key actors to debate strategies for moving the decent work agenda forwards, the one day conference centred around the launch of a Call to Action for Decent Work, Decent Life, a petition calling on decision-makers to include decent work in policy-making.

With Juan Somavia asserting 'that a decent work movement is being born' and becoming the first to sign the petition, we strongly encourage you to join this movement by adding your signature to the Call to action online at www.decentwork.org.

- www.decentwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=29

1.2 Decent Work Action at the PES Council, 21-23 Nov, Sofia



At the Party of European Socialists' (PES) Council held in Sofia (Bulgaria) on 21-23 November, Solidar had the opportunity to promote the Call to Action for Decent Work.

Among others expressing their support, Austrian Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer (in the picture together with Mr. Karl Blecha, President of the European Senior Organisation) signed the Call.

1.3 Jobs Jobs Jobs: Time for Decent Work Photo Exhibition!



As part of the Jobs Jobs Jobs project (funded by EuropeAid), the Time for Decent Work Decent Life! Photo exhibition was presented at the European Parliament on November 5th.

In launching the photo exhibition and the Call to Action in the European Parliament, Solidar Secretary General Conny Reuter asked the European Parliament and MEPs present to show their support for decent work by signing the Call to Action for Decent Work Decent Life.

"As the democratically elected EU institution, the European Parliament has a clear role to play in supporting decent work for people both in the EU and beyond. We urge MEPs to ensure that decent work is placed at the centre of EU policy making and to guarantee policy coherence between the European Institutions by signing the Call", he commented.

Josep Borrell, Chair of the European Parliament's Development Committee and head of the Global Progressive Forum, addressed participants at the launch urging decision-makers to follow his lead and join the Call, and telling the assembled audience that in order to succeed decent work campaigners need to be *"not preachers, but fighters!"*. *"The achievement of decent work is crucial if we are to convince people in both in Europe and outside that globalisation can work for their benefit and if the Millennium Development Goals are to be attained"*, he stated.

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2. POLICY UPDATE

2.1 Economic Partnership Agreements: More Time Needed for Deal on Economic Partnership Agreements, says ACP-EU Assembly in Kigali

ACP countries need more time to negotiate a deal on the ACP-EU economic partnership agreements (for which a World Trade Organization waiver expires at the end of 2007). So says the 'Kigali Declaration' adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda on 22 November.

The Kigali Declaration on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) 'urges the European Commission to acknowledge that more time is needed for ACP states to assess the implications of the agreements proposed given that negotiations have only taken place in earnest for the past two years'. This declaration follows up the Cape Town Declaration of 2002 at the start of the EPA negotiating process.

In the Kigali text, ACP states declare that they 'have been put under pressure by the European Commission to sign an EPA and that this is against the spirit of the ACP-EU partnership'.

It states that all agreements reached, whether interim arrangements or full EPAs, must ensure that no country is left worse off after the expiry of the negotiation deadline.

Commenting on the need for a new deal, Mrs. Kinnock MEP said that attempts to frame such agreements had proven difficult, largely because the Commission negotiators had approached the talks on EPAs as if they were conventional free trade negotiations focused on market opening, rather than as tools for development. (Source: EP Press)

- See also '[Kigali Declaration](#)'

2.2 Decent Work in Europe? Focus on France

On 14 November the ILO Governing Body invited the French Government to bring legislation covering the CNE ('new employment contract') in conformity with ILO Convention No.158 (Termination of Employment Convention).

The CNE, introduced in France in 2005, allows French companies with less than 20 workers to

- Apply to the 'newly employed' a 2-years probationary period
- Fire 'newly employed workers' without a "valid reason" during the probationary period

Following a complaint lodged by the French trade union *Force Ouvrière*, challenging the compatibility of this contract with the ILO's Convention No.158, the ILO Governing Body adopted a report asking the French Government to bring legislation covering the CNE in to conformity with Convention No.158 which states:



“The employment of a worker shall not be terminated unless there is a valid reason for such termination connected with the capacity or conduct of the worker or based on the operational requirements of the undertaking, establishment or service.” (art. 4).

On top of all this, the 2 year probationary period has been declared ‘not reasonable’.

More details are available at the following link (in French)

- <http://info.france3.fr/france/36354997-fr.php>
- <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/depeches/0,14-0,39-33227582@7-60,0.html>
- <http://www.lesechos.fr/info/france/4639096.htm>
- <http://tf1.lci.fr/infos/economie/social/0,,3623402,00-oit-condamne-cne-.html>
- <http://www.eurojuris.fr/fre/entreprises/rh/embauche/actualites/oit-condamne-cne.html>

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3. FOCUS ON...

3.1 Peru: Decent Work in the field

Following the Global Network conference held in Lima in September 2007, Solidar and the Thai Labour Campaign (TLC) travelled 400km south to the agro-export region of Ica to visit workers from the recently formed AGROKASA and COEXA trade unions. Notwithstanding the appalling conditions of work faced by many Peruvian workers, the trip was an opportunity for Global Network NGO and TU partners to come together in practice and witness the progress being made at the grass-roots level on the Decent Work front.





The formation of the AGROKASA and COEXA trade unions in Spring 2007 is the result of successful collaboration between the workers in Ica, Plades (an NGO member of the [Global Network](#)), and the General Confederation of Peruvian Trade Unions (CGTP).

These trade unions are the first to be formed in Peru's agro-export sector and the unionisation of the workers from AGROKASA and COEXA will hopefully prompt others among the 35000 agro-export workers in Ica to exercise their bargaining rights. Though the Ica region was devastated by the earthquake that struck Peru in August 2007, the courage and determination shown by the workers in organising themselves to secure their rights in the face of continuing threats and intimidation from their employers should act as inspiration to all involved in the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign.

- To know more about the workers from AGROKASA, watch the video made by Plades at http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh_2QAVJ4m0
- To read more about working conditions in the Peruvian agro-export sector, read Solidar - Jobs Jobs Jobs Briefing on "Decent Work and the Agro-Export Industry" at www.decentwork.org//index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=30

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4. DECENT WORK MILESTONES

4.1 Who said what?

"The MDGs are still achievable if we act now. This will require inclusive sound governance, increased public investment, economic growth, enhanced productive capacity, and the creation of decent work." United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon.

- www.undp.org/mdg/
- The Millennium Development Goals Report 2007 is available at http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2007/UNSD_MDG_Report_2007e.pdf

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5. RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

5.1 ILO Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work

One year ago, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) approved a Ministerial Declaration encouraging the UN system to develop a toolkit to promote decent work. Since then the ILO has worked closely with other agencies through the Chief Executives Board chaired by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work is designed to help organizations throughout the multilateral system assess and improve the employment and decent work outcomes of their own policies, programs and activities.

- The Toolkit is available at www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/selecdoc/2007/toolkit.pdf

5.2 Socialist Group Pamphlet 'New Thinking on Trade Policy and Development' on 'Trade and Employment'.

For its third pamphlet, the Socialist Group within the European Parliament has chosen the topic '*Trade and Employment*'.

Globalisation and companies relocations, production methods and the international division of labour are among the topic addressed. The pamphlet also stresses the risk that opening up of trade, while boosting certain sectors and certain countries, may also destroy thousands of jobs in other, more fragile, less competitive countries.



The pamphlet sees the contributions of Eddy Lee (Director of the International Policy Group of the ILO), Esther Busser (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions - ICFTU) and Sandra Polaski (Senior Researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).

➤ The document is available at:

www.socialistgroup.eu/gpes/media/documents/55812_55812_TRADE%203_web_EN_071011.pdf

5.3 Out of Informality - Ghana's Way to Decent Work

3/4 of people in the Developing world earn a living from precarious business with nothing to fall back during hard times. Ghana is no exception.



But in the country's central region, informal workers are starting to see the benefits to more formal ways of working and some of them are making the transition to Decent Work. With help from the ILO's Decent Work Pilot Project, people in Ajumako and Winneba, some of the poorest areas in Ghana, are bringing about their own transition to Decent Work.

A video on Ghana's experience is available at

➤ www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Documentaries/lang--en/docName--WCMS_087884/index.htm

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6. AGENDA

Next Solidar members' activities to promote the Call to Action for Decent Work Decent Life will be:

04 December	Workshops with Trade Unionists	Fiesole - Italy	ISCOS-CISL
18 December	Seminar on Working conditions in the Building Sector	Sweden	PALME CENTER INTERNATIONAL
20 December	Workshops with Trade Unionists	Fiesole - Italy	ISCOS-CISL

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