

UNEP Report Card: Trade Unions

In preparation for CSD-14 on Industrial Development, Energy, Climate Change and Air Pollution.

Introduction

Workers world-wide are using their unions in an ongoing effort to give a human face to industrial development. This process is supported by a global network involving local unions, national, regional and international federations and confederations. The term "Global Unions" includes the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Congress of Labour (WCL), which together represent most national trade union centres, along with the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD. It also incorporates ten sector-specific Global Union Federations (GUFs) involving education, chemicals & mining, journalism, garments & textiles, public services, transportation, wood & forestry, metals, agriculture & tourism, as well as professional & clerical office workers (for full names and composition see : www.global-unions.org). These bodies together represent nearly 200 million workers in about 160 countries.

The ICFTU and TUAC were the leading trade union organizations at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). It was in Johannesburg, at the labour conference "Fashioning a New Deal" jointly hosted with UNEP and the ILO, that they agreed with UNEP and ILO to fashion joint workplace approaches for implementing labour, environment and sustainable development objectives in the long term.

Work in Progress

Immediately following WSSD, labour unions joined UNEP in hosting a workshop for the Asia Pacific region on the use of workplace assessments to promote sustainable development at the shop floor level. Union leaders also participated in interviews for the completion of a study on "*The Role of Labour Unions in the Process Towards Sustainable Consumption and Production*", published by UNEP in 2004. Most importantly, follow up to WSSD was given a tremendous boost by the hosting of the *WILL2006* Labour and Environment Assembly at UNEP headquarters in January 2006, hosted by ICFTU, TUAC, UNEP, ILO, and coordinated by the Sustainlabour Foundation. Many case study presentations from all regions showed how unions are working with other stakeholders in promoting different aspects of sustainable development. The meeting resulted in a Declaration calling for follow up action, involving the host organizations and others such as the WHO, in areas such as climate adaptation strategies, responsible chemicals management, equitable trade as well as enterprise social responsibility.

The objectives agreed at WSSD in 2002 embody a number of employer accountability issues that trade unions consider important. Hence, since the WSSD the TUAC has developed and maintains a special database of information about more than 500 enterprises and the agreements they have signed onto. This information forms part of a larger trade union country by country data gathering process focussing on the themes of sustainable development, asbestos, climate change, HIV/AIDS, occupational health and safety, trade union rights and country oversight of corporate behaviour. These databases provide a user-friendly source for union members, analysts and the public to compare the state of play in implementing sustainable development instruments, including key labour and environmental conventions, in different countries. It also provides a quick reference to track progress by corporations in meeting principled obligations they made under initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and cases raised under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The attached sample lists in Annex 1 provide a summary of a special type of agreement that 42 companies have signed onto. These are "Framework Agreements" made with selected Global Union Federations (GUFs). Since WSSD these are considered to be an emerging new type of agreement, sometimes referred to as a form of international collective agreement that are concerned with social and governance aspects of sustainable development. These aspects include worker participation and rights. Framework Agreements between a corporation and union federation reinforce local practices and ensure consistency with internationally agreed standards on freedom of association and collective

bargaining. They also provide a good illustration that industrial relations mechanisms can introduce other issues such as environment and human rights issues into company and trade union engagement processes. Global Framework Agreements have therefore become another, emerging form of formal engagement between unions and companies that, while focussing on labour rights, may also include environmental provisions, human rights provisions and corruption provisions promoted under the UN Global Compact.

b. Future challenges

The tracking of company and employer organizations by TUAC aims to establish more reliable monitoring and reporting of progress, related to many types of agreements, including the UN Global Compact, GRI, OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises and other codes or initiatives covering social and environmental criteria. This monitoring has the aim of improving the degree and quality of worker participation in workplace decision-making and trade union involvement in community policy development and implementation. It also aims to identify how to implement integrated sustainable development approaches through concrete enterprise level policies and actions that include employment promotion for poverty eradication.

Under the umbrella of ICFTU, TUAC and others, unions continue to work with the ILO and UNEP to promote clarify joint approaches over the longer term. The *WILL2006* Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment include presentation of twenty case studies from all regions and discussions in working groups on challenges related to “climate and energy policies”, “chemical risks – hazardous substances in the workplace”, “equal and sustainable access to resources and services”, “corporate social responsibility and accountability” as well as “occupational, environmental and public health – asbestos and HIV/AIDS”. The resolution concluding the Assembly listed agreed objectives. These include:

- strengthening the link between poverty reduction, environmental protection and decent work
- integrating the environmental and social dimension of sustainable development with a rights-based approach
- introducing policies for just employment transition as a central feature of environmental protection
- enhancing dialogue between labour and management, consultation and negotiation in the workplace on sustainable development.

To accomplish these, the Declaration recognized the need for a commitment to activities such as “capacity building and training programmes to advance integration” and “endeavors, together with civil society allies, to encourage workplace and community action and awareness raising”. Union leaders also welcomed the undertaking by UNEP, ILO and WHO to start joint activities for promoting capacity building and training in the areas discussed. This supports the call in the JPoI, Chapter III on Consumption and Production, for “workplace-based partnerships and programmes, including training and education” (par 17d). Workplace assessments can be introduced at the shop floor level, between several plants, or for an entire region. Their checklist evaluations can lead to the adoption of programmes addressing concerns such as water & waste, energy efficiency, health and employment provisions. Training and education at the plant level on these issues can be targeted at both worker / employee representatives and operational managers. Moreover, they can be used to promote the inclusion and practical application of environment, chemicals and health related issues in agreements such as the Framework Agreements.

c. “Partnership Opportunities”

The *WILL2006* Labour and Environment Assembly Resolution is available online at www.WILL2006.org and at:

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.EN.pdf
Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.FR.pdf
Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.SP.pdf

The resolution emphasizes the need to enhance social dialogue at the sectoral, national and international levels in both public and private sectors, to use appropriate tools to increase social and environmental responsibility and accountability of enterprises through both trade union and

multistakeholder participation in genuine initiatives. The aim of these bilateral, trilateral and multistakeholder initiatives and partnerships should also be to ensure that corporate social responsibility involves compliance with the law as well as or PLUS voluntary action. Against this background, we remain ready to work with the relevant UN agencies and other stakeholder organizations in a partnership manner to advance the objectives referred to above. In doing this, we will also be working with the Sustainlabour Foundation in doing capacity building activities such as climate change adaptation workshops for worker representatives that we presented at recent meetings (Buenos Aires, Montreal) of the Climate Change Convention. Furthermore, openness by more corporations to joins unions in Framework Agreements that also incorporate issues such as environment, chemicals, HIV/AIDS and human rights can make an important contribution.

TUAC is currently also endeavoring with the Business Advisory Committee (BIAC) to the OECD, clarifying the possible elements of successful voluntary agreements that could help implement the OECD's *Environment Strategy*. Initial discussions have been held at a TUAC-BIAC dialogue in a meeting organized by the OECD secretariat in March 2006. There was general agreement that a dialogue of this nature ushers the beginning of a new process among trade unions to explore with employers novel ways of promoting changes to production and consumption patterns world-wide.

Contact:

Lucien Royer

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)

15, Rue Laperouse - 75016 paris, France

Tel (331) 5537 3737 Fax 4754 9828

royer@tuac.org

ANNEX 1

42 Industry & Sector Framework Agreements & their provisions

SECTOR: CHEMICAL, ENERGY, MINING						
Trade Unions COUNTERPART:						
Int. Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM)						
Company	Environment	Chemicals	SD	OHS	HIV/AIDS	TUR
NORSKE SKOG				√		√
STATOIL	√			√	√	√
RHODIA	√	√		√		√
SVENSKA CELLULOSA	√			√		√
FREUDENBERG	√			√		√
EDF	√		√	√		√
ENI	√		√	√		√
ANGLOGOLD	√			√		√
ENDESA				√		√
LUKOIL	√			√	√	√
LAFARGE				√	√	√

SECTOR: CONSTRUCTION - ENGINEERING						
TRADE UNION COUNTERPART:						
International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW)						
Company	Environment	Chemicals	SD	OHS	HIV/AIDS	TUR
STABILO				√		√
IKEA	√	√	√	√		√
BALLAST NEDAM						√
FABER-CASTELL				√		√
IMPREGILO	√			√	√	√
VEIDEKKE	√	√		√	√	√
SKANSKA				√		√
HOCHTIEF						√

SECTOR: DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIAL						
TRADE UNION COUNTERPART:						
International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)						
Company	Environment	Chemicals	SD	OHS	HIV/AIDS	TUR
MERLONI ELETTRODOMESTICI						√
LEONI						√
SKF				√		√
VOLKSWAGEN				√		√
EADS	√			√		√
DAIMLER CHRYSLER				√		√
GEA	√			√		√
RHEINMETALL	√			√		√
RENAULT IFA				√	√	√
BMW				√	√	√

BOSCH	√			√		√
PRYM				√		√
ARCELOR	√			√		√

SECTOR: FOOD, TOURISM

TRADE UNION COUNTERPART:

Int. Fed. of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco & Allied Workers' (IUF)

Company	Environment	Chemicals	SD	OHS	HIV/AIDS	TUR
ACCOR						√
FONTERRA						√
CHIQUITA	√			√		√
DANONE				√		√
CLUB MEDITERRANEE						√

SECTOR: COMMERCE, ELECTRICITY, FINANCE, MEDIA, TELECOM, TOURISM

TRADE UNION COUNTERPART:

Union Network International

Company	Environment	Chemicals	SD	OHS	HIV/AIDS	TUR
ISS	√			√		√
OTE	√			√		√
CARREFOUR						√
TELEFONICA	√			√		√
H&M						√

SOURCES

Int. Federation of Chemical, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM)

<http://www.icem.org/>

International federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW)

<http://www.ifbww.org/index.cfm?n=2&l=2>

International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

<http://www.imfmetal.org/main/index.cfm?n=10&l=2>

Int.Fed. Of Food, Agriculture, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco & Allied Workers' (IUF)

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

Union Network International (UNI)

<http://www.union-network.org/>