



Nº 08 – October 2008

GWU participates in the World Day for Decent Work

The General Workers Union joined unions from all over the world defending decent work for Brazilian workers



"GUW always defended actions in favor of better life conditions for the working class".

The statement is from the president Ricardo Patah, while participating in the opening act of the "World Day for Decent Work", evoked by ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) and by TUCA (Trade Union Confederation of the Americas).

The **World Day for Decent Work** took place in the entire world on the last October the 7th. In Brazil it was set to October, 10, due to the city hall elections. It was considered the first large international union march and in over 100 countries the union centrals and the unions mobilized themselves to demand changes in the world economy at the current moment in which the financial crisis threatens the subsistence of millions of people all over the world.

In many Brazilian cities workers participated in the activities of the World Day for Decent Work. In São Paulo, **GWU** and other union centrals have done a unitary manifestation promoting a walk that ended in front of the Ministry of Labor building at Martins Fontes street, where a document was delivered summing up the vindication of Brazilian workers. The vindictory document was received by **Luis Antonio Medeiros**, National Secretary of Labor Relationships and on the occasion representing the Minister of Labor and Work, **Carlos Luppi**.

Canindé Pegado, General Secretary of **GWU**, pointed out that the proposal of the International Trade Union Confederation comes to the meeting of the minds at **GUW** directed to the economic growth of Brazil so that new coalitions of decent work are generated that are represented by formal jobs, respectable salaries and respect to the union organization.

GWU supports entirely the reduction of work shifts without reducing wages and condemns all and every kind of discrimination (gender, race and sexual orientation). It's also important, as the General Secretary of **GWU** emphasized, that the government reviews urgently the matter of ratification of the ILO (International Labor Organization) conventions 151 that guarantees the right to the collective negotiation in the public sector and the 158 that restrains unreasonable resignations, respectively.

Financial crisis will raise income inequality and worries GWU

The **General Workers Union** is attentive to the evolution of the financial crisis in Brazil, mainly to any attempt to debt from the workers and the population the speculative financial losses. The president of the union central, **Ricardo Patah**, made it quite clear in his blog: "GWU is against it and will work against everyone at all levels of influence. When players (disguised as businessmen) speculated and gained with dollar, they made it in the middle of the night, accumulating large profits. Now, during recession times, they try to make the government pay the bills."

The International Labor Organization (ILO) adverted in a report published on October 16th, that the current world financial crisis will raise income inequality between workers and it has already grown in a dramatic way in most countries since the 90s.

The credit crisis and the collapse of the stock markets began to affect the companies decisions on investments, as well as the workers income and jobs, says the report entitled "**Inequality of Income in the Era of Financial Globalization**".

"The report shows a clear tendency" that "in most countries the hiatus between rich and poor families has widen since the early 90s, and the highest wages have raised faster" says the director of the study, **Raymond Torres**, while presenting it in Geneva.

Two thirds of the countries experienced this raise in income inequality, the report adds.

During the same period, the gap between the 10% of wage earners with highest income and the 10 % with the lowest income has risen 70%.

"Brazil is part of one third of countries that reduced inequality. The report warns governments not to worry only about saving the banks. There has to be protection to the workers" said the representative of ILO in Brazil, **Laís Abramo**.

The report highlights other worrisome factors related to the current financial crisis, factors that can also be observed in Brazil.

The study points one of the causes of these growing inequalities the large increase of incidence of informal jobs observed in most countries over the

last 15 years, because these workers earn a really lower wage than the regular workers.

And points at last that the tax regime is each time less progressive in most countries, that is why less capable to redistribute the profits of the economic growth.

According to data of the report, between 1993 and 2007 the average tax rate to the companies lowered 10 percent in the analyzed countries. When it comes to the income tax of legal persons, the taxes on the highest incomes were reduced in only 3 points during the same period.

GWU defends these same defects under the Brazilian tax legislation and defends a wide reform in all tax system.



General Union of Workers discussed the financial crisis with **President Lula**. On the photo the **GWU**'s executive: Marcos Afonso, Chiquinho Pereira, Salim, Ricardo Patah, presidente Lula, Arnaldo de Souza Benedetti, Alemão, deputado federal Roberto Santiago, Canindé Pegado e Moacyr Pereira

GUW signs Union Declaration on the International Financial Crisis and the WTO

GUW signed, along with other union organizations of American workers, a declaration asking for an articulated international action to face the international financial crisis. Unions of the hemisphere want stimulus to jobs and economic growth and effective actions "so that the eminent danger of world recession is avoided and the economies walk towards a fair and sustainable development".

Below there's the entire document:

The below signatory trade union organizations have been following the WTO negotiations since 2007, and in various statements addressed to national governments and trade negotiators in Geneva we warned about the potential risks to employment, labor rights and sustainable development posed by the current proposals on industrial, agricultural and service liberalization that are still being considered by negotiators following the July collapse.

The present financial crisis dramatically confirms that the deregulation and economy financialization-based policy approach leads us nowhere but to failure. This applies directly to two of the warnings issued by the trade union movement in relation to negotiations within the WTO: the opening of the national financial sectors as part of the GATS, and the lack of protection to industrial and agricultural sectors, which may become trapped within the speculative financial logic instead of being turned into the focal point of the development policies of any country that still lacks an integrated economic structure.

At a broader level, the return to large-scale regulatory state policies, such as those currently being adopted by industrialized countries, should be regarded as the final demise of the reverse approach, carrying away with it what was left of the alleged teachings of the Washington Consensus.

Thus, the trade union organizations demand that our governments and trade negotiators in Geneva see to it that the series of trade negotiations in the Doha Round and at a bilateral level that might be resumed at this juncture be intersected by an approach that places sustainable development at the center and views fair and equitable trade as an essential element.

Likewise, we encourage trade negotiators to fulfill the recommendation made in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which calls upon all international and regional organizations to promote decent work, "as trade and financial market policy both affect employment."

We agree with the International Trade Union Confederation on the fact that "resolving the financial crisis must go hand in hand with concerted international action to stimulate jobs and growth so that the imminent danger of world recession is averted, and economies are launched on paths of just and sustainable development."

Linda Chavez-Thompson

President - Trade Union Confederation of the Americas - CSA / TUCA

Victor Báez Mosqueira

General Secretary - Trade Union Confederation of the Americas - CSA / TUCA

Ricardo Patah

President - **General Workers Union - GUW** and over 40 signatures of union confederations of the Americas

GWU receives the visit of representatives of the American government



The national executive of the **General Workers Union** received the visit of **Mark A. Mittelhauser**, adjunct-director of the International Office of Labor and Social Responsibility, from the North-American government.

He was accompanied by the first secretary of the Politics Section, at the United States Embassy in Brazil, **Peter G. Tinsley** and by **Arlete Salvador**, politics assistant.

The objective of the visit, according to Mark, was getting to know the priorities of **GWU** in the politics field defending the excluded, "since we belong to a governmental unit that takes care of labor matters in the world and promotes actions to defend workers rights", explained. He said he's in Brazil to begin a project with the Brazilian government to fight against slave labor in partnership with ILO (International Labor Organization).

The president of **GWU**, **Ricardo Patah**, gave a brief summary of the activities developed by the institution, some of them in partnership with other union centers, such as the matter of the resolutions 151 and 158, of ILO, and the social politics of Lula administration. He emphasized that he's not affiliated to any political party only to have more freedom of having dialogues with all governmental spheres. "All the issues that aim to give more transparency to the Brazilian democracy, **GWU** supports, explained Ricardo Patah. He also quoted other initiatives, such as the protocol of intentions that is about to be signed with the Vale do Rio Doce Foundation aiming to fight against child prostitution and the participation next year in the Social Forum, in Belém (PA).

Besides **Ricardo Patah**, the following people participated in the host comission: **Laerte Teixeira da Costa** (Vice-President), **Marcos Afonso Oliveira** (Secretary of Publicizing and Communication), **Avelino Garcia Filho** (Councillor), **Antonio Evanildo Cabral e Rubens Romano** (representatives of the Commerce Workers Union of São Paulo).

GWU recognizes the importance of the Social Mercosur Program

The creation, by the Federal Government, of the Social and Participative Mercosur will constitute in another important tool to a better relationship of the social movements in Brazil with the governmental spheres. The information is from the Secretary of Public Politics of the General Workers Union, **Valdir Vicente de Barros**.

The program was established through the decree 6.594/08 signed by the president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at a ceremony held at the Palácio do Planalto, in Brasilia, and that had the presence of many political, diplomatic and union leaders personalities, including the president of GUW himself, Ricardo Patah, and Valdir Vicente, representative of GUW at the Socioeconomic Consulting Forum, at the Mercosur. The measure, according to Vicente, will benefit social movements that act direct or indirectly on Mercosur.



There were also present at the solemnity the minister Luiz Dulci, from the General Secretaryship of the Presidency, Federal Deputy, Dr. Rosinha, president of the Mercosur Parliament, Carlos Cacho Alvarez, president of the Committee of Representatives of Mercosur, leaders of the following union centrals UGT, CUT, CGTB, CTB, Força Sindical, Nova Central Sindical. The secretary Valdir Vicente, from GUW, was invited to be part of the directive board along with State ministers and the president Lula.



"The General Workers Union reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just." Ricard Patah - UGT's President

UGT World - the International Newsletter of the **UGT** - General Workers Union

Address : Rua Formosa, 367 - 24º andar Centro **CEP 01049-000** **São Paulo - SP**
Phone: 55(11) 2111-7300 **Fax:** 55(11) 2111-7301 **e-mail:** ugt@ugt.org.br