



Woman with Life:

UGT on the International Women's Day

Physical activity, a shout against violence and citizenship actions. These are some of the ingredients that will be part of the third edition of "Woman With Life", an event organized by UGT, that will take place in Praia Grande, south coast of Sao Paulo, on March 07 and 08.



The event marks the celebrations UGT is doing on the International Women's Day, which main goal is the violence issue. "Violence against women is trash", is one of the manifestation mottos, that will bring up other important ideals, such as wage equality among men and women, ratification of ILO (International Labor Organization) Convention N° 156, concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities.

"We believe that another reality is possible if it is a result of a process that sensitizes society to understand the importance of an equalitarian participation of women at all levels of society", affirmed Cássia Buffelli, coordinator of UGT's Gender Collective. "In this date of fight, we, from UGT, will raise our flags for better life and work conditions", ended Cássia.

Directors from UGT that were present at the 10th Plenary Session of the National Executive Board, on August 10, 2010, approved the Letter of Joinville - [Carta de Joinville](#), that repudiates all forms of discrimination and gender violence.

The event of the International Women's Day is part of a national campaign that aims towards the consciousness of workers and sympathy of the society in general, and especially the authorities in charge, to the urgent need to stop deaths caused by domestic violence and all forms of aggression against the human rights of women from Brazil and around the world.

Union action against domestic violence

A recent research from the Perseu Abramo Foundation in a partnership with SESC shows that 5 women are injured under a violent form in Brazil every 2 minutes, a preoccupying number, though lower than ten years ago.

The Maria da Penha law is effective for almost five years, but violence against women is still high. Crimes take place within their homes and are done by their partners, most of the times.

"A lot comes from the macho culture: an unemployed man does not admit that his wife is working and he isn't. This is a violence factor", analyzes **Cleonice Caetano Souza**, from **UGT's Department of Health and Safety at Work**.



The **Maria da Penha Law** aroused a higher consciousness in women regarding the protection of their rights, but it is still necessary to guide them where to look for help. The support centers need more personnel. The union movement should be more active, explain the legislation better, work in the workplace itself concerning the issues of health and safety at work.

"There are difficulties in getting women to file their complaints, many of them go back home, since we don't have enough shelters for abused women. Women's police station are only open during weekdays, from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.; most of the aggressions take place at night or during the weekends, occasions in which men drink the most. And the complaints should be filed on the occasion of the aggression", explains **Cleonice Souza**.

Therefore the need of an active union movement. This issue - the violent men - is a reflection of their workplace. "Once they go through stressful times, they aim all their frustration into their women...", says **Cleonice Souza**. The children, who end up living with aggressions, developing a familiar culture of violence and believing that this kind of attitude is part of the family behavior, creating more violence.

UGT is working with this issue of women in the workplace along with its Women's Department and several NGOs, organizing speeches and debates including the society to aware the union movement into spreading information to men and women and might bring this subject up to the ministry, showing issues that should be worked on. (*Mariana Veltri, da redação da UGT*).

Research shows violence against women

A research by Perseu Abramo Foundation, entitled "Brazilian women and gender in public and private spaces", was made in 25 states. 2.365 women and 1.181 men, both older than 15 years old, were interviewed. They came up with a final result by making a medium projection to the total population. Confirming an issue that was already established by UN as a world tendency, domestic violence is the one that makes more victims.

And, according to the research, these facts were even more serious: 10 years ago, eight women were beaten up during the same time lapse. As for men, 8% of them admitted that they have already physically abused a woman, 48% of them say that they have a friend who done so and 25% of them have relatives that abuse their partners.

According to the research, domestic violence, despite taking place under a domestic figure, is a social problem. In Brazil, 7,2 million women over 15 have already suffered from such aggressions, out of which 1,3 million in the 12 months prior to the research.

As for the men that were interviewed, 2% of them stated that "there are women that only learn if they are beaten up enough". The research pointed out that whoever abuses, do it so repeatedly and frequently, this would show a behavior pattern and not an exception.

Domestic workers demand respect

In Latin America, over 14 million women are paid to work for a family. Remunerated domestic work is one of the occupations with the poorest quality of work: long working shifts, low remuneration, scarce social protection coverage and a high level of nonfulfillment of labor rules. Remunerated domestic work is one of the types of work with the highest deficit on decent work.



Considering such reality, **ILO** began a discussion over the adoption of an international normative tool to guarantee the rights of domestic workers. In the next International Labor Conference, that will take place in June, 2011, representatives from governments, business and labor organizations from the 178 ILO member states will decide whether they adopt a Convention and/or recommendation on decent work for domestic worker (s).

In case this Convention is adopted, it will establish the minimum levels that will guide future modifications in legislations and policies related to remunerated domestic workers all over the world.

Domestic work has been, traditionally, the gateway to the job market for women that have lower schooling, that are not qualified or do not have work experience and do not dispose of social networks in which they could get support in search of a job.

Fourteen out of a hundred women that work are domestic workers. Looking from a numeric point of view, it is the most important occupation for women in Latin America. Actually, these figures could be even higher, since frequently statistics do not consider temp workers, or those that work per hours or day, migrant workers that do not have documents and child workers.

The remuneration of domestic workers is low, although an important wage increase has been observed, one possibly linked to the policy that increases the minimum wage applied in several countries, added to the raise in the demand for domestic work.

Usually less than a third of the domestic workers in Latin America are formal workers and the proportion of workers that are able to retire is even lower. In this scenario, the possibility of achieving the right to maternity leave is almost impossible.

Decent work to domestic workers in the continent

ILO began a discussion on the adoption of an international normative tool, to guarantee the rights of domestic workers. In the next International Labor Conference, that will take place in June, 2011, representatives from governments, business and labor organizations from the 178 ILO member states will go through a second round of discussions on a possible adoption of a Convention and/or recommendation on decent work for domestic worker (s).

To get access to the note from ILO and get to know the reality on which the new normative tool will try and be based on, [click here](#).



May Day will be held at Complexo do Alemão

The Unified May Day of UGT and trade union centrals in Rio de Janeiro (CGTB, CTB, Força Sindical and Nova Central) will take place at the "Complexo do Alemão". This decision was taken by union leaders after last week's meeting.



The "Complexo do Alemão" is in the Misericórdia Hill, composed of 15 slums and nearly 200 thousand inhabitants, which is equal to 10% of the total population of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The area currently is peaceful, without the ostensible presence of criminality. The celebration of the May day will valorize this situation.

Global solidarity with American workers

UNI Global Union supports workers from Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and from the United States in general, whose union rights are under the attack of political from the Republican Party, that wants to destroy unions of the public sector.

If these projects that were presented by politicians from the Republican party turn into law, the states of Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana will withdraw most of the rights to collective bargain from state and municipal public servants.

"We are not going to be seated while Republican governors from Wisconsin, or any other state, are attacking workers that teach their children, that guarantee the security of the community and the health care for sick people" said **Philip Jennings, general-secretary of UNI**.



"The attacks are politically motivated by offensives that aim to destroy the American unionism, one of the last powerful institutions that stimulate the interests of workers", he completed.

The fight for human, economic and labor rights in the United States arrives at the very moment in which millions of people in Northern Africa and in the Middle East are fighting for the same reasons. **UNI** supports all of those that want labor rights and decent wages and benefits.

"We offer the same support to workers and unions of Wisconsin as we offer to those in Bahrein", said Jennings. "We will do everything we can to guarantee that the union movement and American workers win this fight."

UGT joins up with **UNI Global Union** and other affiliated unions all over the world to express its solidarity with American workers and their families.

"The General Union of Workers (UGT) 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. " Ricardo Patah – UGT's President

World UGT – the International Newsletter of the UGT Brasil - General Workers Union

GWU Communications Secretary: Marcos Afonso de Oliveira

Publisher: Mauro Ramos

