



The construction of Belo Monte and the urgency of decent work

by Otton Mata Roma

UGT believes that the Brazilian government cannot forget to listen to the trade union movements, union leaders, as well as Native American people, river banks communities and traditional populations, so that the diversity of the labour world might be contemplated. It seems to us, that this issue is one of the challenges regarding the process of building the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam (UHBM).

Known as the "third largest dam in the world", this construction involves heated discussions: on one hand, the environmentalists, on the other hand, the so-called developmentalists, that raise and polarize the debate with opinions that many times are divergent.

Many positions, against or in favor, are increasing, UGT, however, thinks that the most important thing is to guarantee that the traditional communities are not affected in a harmful way, and that workers that are involved in the construction have their rights respected.

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UGT reminds that, ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention 169, concerns indigenous people, establishes the protection of social territories of indigenous people that have historical traditions, such as the local population in this case.

We are aware that the construction of Belo Monte will create a significant amount of jobs and that all the local economy, in which the natives and the riverbank populations are part of, will increase.

UGT is following these facts and fighting in pro of these features, through the participation of Nilson Duarte, president of UGT's State branch of Rio de Janeiro, in the tripartite committee related to the Office of the Secretary-General to the President. Duarte reminds that Belo Monte should not follow the example of the Jirau dam, in Rondonia, that not only impacts the biodiversity of its surroundings, but "violated numerous labour rights concerning working conditions and safety at work. Many workers died of malaria, and had their health conditions committed, due to long and heavy working shifts. The urban structure and the construction site were irregular".

UGT defends that the construction of the dam values dignity and respect towards labour rights, and that the local population is incorporated, in a productive form in the construction process, following the example of the local economy and commerce, that undoubtedly, will suffer a significant expansion.

Decent work is consolidated in all international normative, and with Belo Monte, it shouldn't be different. We must align development with the quality of life of the population, that contributed so much with the economy and the preservation of the Xingu region.

Decent work in the Soccer World Cup

Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) promotes meeting between unionists to define a national fight agenda of the professionals that work in the construction sites of the Soccer World Cup.

BWI organized a meeting with construction unionists in the states that will host the Soccer World Cup of 2014. The event, that took place on November 16 and 17, in Sao Paulo, had the goal of defining a unified fight agenda to negotiate the increase of the workers rights.

During the meeting, that gathered representatives of unions of UGT, Força Sindical, CGTB, Nova Central and CUT, a document was written, and it will be send to the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), the Labour Minister and the Office of the Secretary-General to the President.

On the occasion of the document being sent, by the end of the year, unionists intend to negotiate with construction companies the creation of a national wage floor for workmen, value based on the minimum remuneration used in Sao Paulo, which is R\$968, added to the growth of construction revenues in 2011, that corresponds to 11,9%, plus the inflation of the period.

According to Edson Bernardes, vice president of BWI for Latin America, this campaign in pro of decent work in mega sports events of Brazil, is positive and overcame the expectations of BWI. "It is important that trade union institutions are together to request a unified agenda, to fight against disparities between how much professionals from Rio de Janeiro make, for example, and how much workers from Natal make", explains **Nilson Duarte, president of UGT State branch of Rio de Janeiro and president of the Union of Workers in the Industry of Heavy Construction of Rio (SINTRAICP).** *(Fábio Ramalho – Redação UGT)*



No World Cup without labour rights

The ITUC, the Building and Wood Workers International and the Swiss Union Unia met with FIFA General Secretary Jerome Valcke at FIFA headquarters today, to inform him that unless Qatar upholds labour rights, the international trade union movement will campaign against the 2022 World Cup being held there.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said the ITUC has made it clear to FIFA that the international union movement "will not accept people working to build stadiums without respect for workers' rights."

"We took the message to FIFA and the meeting was constructive. We will work with FIFA in the coming months and are prepared to meet with the Qatari authorities to see if they will respect labour rights and decent work. We also agreed to discuss how labour rights can be included in the selection criteria for future bids from host cities for the World Cup."

"Migrant workers in Qatar have no labour rights, wages are exploitative and occupational health and safety risks are extreme. Qatar is a country wanting to gain acceptance from the global community of governments but refuses to acknowledge their treatment of migrant workers," said Burrow.

The delegation also raised concerns about working conditions in preparations for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil and advised FIFA that the union movement would continue to press for improvements nationally and internationally.

November 20

Black Consciousness Day

Report emphasized exclusions and discrimination of African-American young people in Latin America

"The African-American youth is one of the most affected groups by structural processes of exclusion, inequality and poverty". That's what the report **Juventud afrodescendiente en América Latina: realidades diversas e derechos (des)cumplidos**, (Afro-descendant Youth in Latin America: diverse realities and rights (un) acknowledged' states), released on November 18 during the International Year for People of African Descent Ibero-American Summit, Afro XXI, in Salvador, Bahia.



The document, prepared by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and by the **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**, presents a regional overview of afro-descendant youth, emphasizing their demographic and socioeconomic reality and the importance of promoting their inclusion in society as a whole.

Based on information from Afro-descendants' organizations, the report indicates that these young people face a "triple exclusion: ethnic, being of African descent; class, for being poor; and generational, given their age. Youth Afro-descendant women additionally face exclusion based on gender.

"Afro-descendant youth find themselves the focus of several tensions, and therefore, they have many demands, including the following: compared to the rest of society, they demand a higher inclusion, full access to development and the exercise of their rights, as well as regarding the world as whole, they request more participation and decision", it summarizes.

According to the study, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama together have more than 24 million Afro-descendant young people, between the ages of 15 and 29. Brazil has the highest number of these countries: 22 million. *(Karol Assunção - Adital)*

DIEESE points out discrimination

Study from Dieese points out that African-American people make almost 40% less per working hour

A study publicized on November 17 by the Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies (Dieese), points out that African-American people make an average of 60,4% of what's paid to the rest of the population. The main reason of this inequality is that the insertion of African-American in the job market mainly takes place in the less specialized and worse remunerated positions.

In 2010, 10,8% of the African-American economically active population worked as domestic workers. Among the white population, this proportion was equal to 5,7%. In civil construction, 8,8% of workers were African American and 5% from other ethnic groups. According to the study, these sectors are the ones in which job positions with less professional qualification are the majority, as well as lower remuneration and precarious working relationships.

The research African American Workers in the Job Market in the Metro Region of Sao Paulo, shows that an average African American worker makes R\$ 5,81, while other workers make an average of R\$ 9,62.

According to the study, the public service absorbs a higher proportion of non-African American (8,4%) than African American (6,2%) workers. The difference is also relevant among autonomous workers with college degrees and owners of family business. The percentage of African American people in these activities is 3,9%, against 9% of non-African Americans. *neiros*.

Meeting of CCSCS in Sao Paulo

On November 12, UGT received, in its national head office, in Sao Paulo, the visit of representatives of trade union centrals, to discuss the paths to be adopted by the Coordinator of the Central Trade Union of the Southern Cone (CCSCS).



The **president of UGT, Ricardo Patah**, participated in the opening of the meeting, that had the participation of five Brazilian trade union centrals: **UGT, CGTB, CUT, Força Sindical** and **CTB**, that, along with **CTA** and **CGTRA** from Argentina, **CCOO** from Spain and **PIT-CNT** from Uruguay, discussed the increase on the fight of Latin workers to improve their working conditions, quality of life, respect to human and labour rights, equality of opportunity between men and women and on how the world economic crisis is faced.

According to Valdir Vicente de Barros, general secretary of CCSCS secretary of UGT's Public Policies Department, the coordinator must have clear positions to face the consequences of this crisis that set up in the world. Proposals will be taken to the VII Union Summit of Mercosur, that will take place on December 14, in Salvador, Brazil.

Bank workers have a meeting with the president of UGT

UGT's Department of Finance and Credit Issues, that is directed by the president of the Union of Bank Workers of Franca, Edson Roberto dos Santos, promoted on November 16, at UGT's National head office, a meeting with the members of this department. The meeting had the participation of Ricardo Patah, president of UGT.

Ricardo Patah stated that the priority of UGT in this tenure will be strengthening UGT's State branches and the classes represented, emphasizing the organization of bank workers all over Brazil. The president also emphasized the work developed by DIEESE and reaffirmed the importance of unions affiliating with UGT.

2nd Congress of UGT SC debates the challenges of unionism

"The Challenges of Trade Union Movement" was the topic discussed on the night of november 17 in the 2nd Congress of the UGT/ Florianópolis that brought Senator Paulo Paim for the opening.

Paim spoke about the challenges of the Trade Union Movement and reiterated the importance of UGT in the fight against the security factor, reduction of working hours, income tax, income distribution by increasing the minimum wage and other issues that are of interest to the worker and that proceed through the Congress.



Representatives of UGT Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Goiás, Minas Gerais, Rondônia, Paraíba, Pará, the Federal District and São Paulo, represented by the president of the National UGT, Ricardo Patah, the General Secretary, Canindé Pegado, the Assistant General Secretary, Avelino Garcia, the Education Secretary Francisco Pereira, the Finance Secretary, Moacir Pereira, the Assistant Press Secretary, João Luiz Riedlinger, invited guests and hundreds of union leaders from UGT Santa Catarina, honored the event.

Once again, the fellow colleagues from Santa Catarina were extremely praised by all the present authorities, in his speech, Patah congratulated the Board of Executives, and reminded that Santa Catarina is one of the states in which the number of affiliated unions grows the most, and it has been an example to the rest of Brazil.



"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

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