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Trade Union BRICS:

Union to overcome the crisis

The Third Trade Union Brics Forum reaffirms the integration of this group - composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - as a key element to overcome the international crisis and strengthen the sovereignty and the sustainable development in each one of these countries.

Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, emphasized that "due to informal and precarious jobs and to bad income distribution, consequence of neoliberalism in the economic activity of BRICS countries, it becomes rather essential the unity of this group, so that it does not convert into a customs union or into something merely mercantilist, as Mercosur has been reduced to".



"We are experiencing a moment of intensification of the crisis, in which, as never before, rich people are earning so much and workers are loosing so much. Our unity is extremely important to face capital and halt the hegemony of a few countries which want to keep us under their guard, without sovereignty", stated João Antonio Felício, president of the International Trade Union Confederation.

In order to keep the profits of major corporations, he denounced, workers from Europe and from the United States are also being victims of disrespect of rights, "for that is the logic of capital, which is displaced to where it might impose its hegemony".

On the opening of formal spaces for the trade union representation within BRICS, João Felício defended that this is a matter of justice, since businessmen already have their council recognized. "It is important to highlight that the Brazilian government expressed its position in favor of workers, but it is necessary that it is recognized by the five governments", he added.

To Vagner Freitas, president of the trade union central CUT, BRICSS represent an important alternative to the excluding logic dictated by central capitalist countries that, in crisis, try to keep themselves based on an increasing exploration of peripheral economies. With nearly 40% of the inhabitants and 15% of the world GDP, he recalled that this groups must be strengthened with the participation of workers, in order for a growth with income distribution and valuation of work to take place.

Shiping Zhang, vice-president of the Chinese trade union central ACFTU, enlightened that the goal of this event is strengthening actions towards a sustainable development and social inclusion: "we fight against capitalism and against the World Bank".

"The definition of a common agenda is required to give us voice", said Zwelinzima Vavi, secretary general of COSATU, South African trade union central, adding that this means tackling "against disparities, unemployment, inequality and environmental degradation". Mikhail Shmakov, president of FNPR, Russian trade union central, highlighted that the success of facing this crisis is closely linked to a unitarian action of the trade union movement. "We are going to share our views and build a platform in defense of salaries, employment and our rights", he proposed.

Suresh Kumar, officer from CITU, Indian trade union central, emphasized the role of solidarity of the working class in this moment of open conflict with transnational companies and the financial system. "More than ever, we must show that the workmen class is international", he concluded. *(Leonardo Severo to ITUC-TUCA)*

Unionists support social participation

In a debate that took place on July 24, at the national head office of UGT, unionists expressed their support to the decree that institutes the National Politics of Social Participation. Since it was issued, on May 23, 2014, by president Dilma Rousseff, the decree 8,243 has been questioned by part of congressmen of the House of Representatives, who presented a project to cancel its effects.

To Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, this decree is an important capillarity tool of demands of public policies that answer the areas of health, education, transportation, housing, security, among others.

"This national policy of social participation enables this important opportunity to all segments of society, recalling that democracy is a lot more than voting and being voted".



This debate was attended by Pedro de Carvalho Pontual, director of Social Participation of the General Secretariat of the Presidency, who cleared the main points of the decree mentioning to the unionists who were present, talking about the process of elaboration and going through its implications.

To him, the kerfuffle against the decree has been a result of a complete lack of knowledge and ignorance on the concept it brings. "Conservative sectors allege that popular councils are being created, and in any moment this decree deals with them. Councils of Social Participation include the participation of several sectors of society (popular movements, academics, businessmen, workers, among others) for the construction of public policies", Pontual affirmed.

He explained that this decree describes some minimum requirements for the well functioning of councils. Another positive point is that this decree also creates the National System of Social Participation, which has the goal of articulating and integrating the actions of the new councils to the existing ones. Within the federative relationship, it proposes the creation of a National Commitment of Social Participation. According to Pontual, 11 States and more than 40 cities already signed this commitment.

"It is necessary that unionists are to mobilize themselves in order to guarantee the implementation of this decree which is an achievement to the whole society. It concerns the labour world, for it enables trade unions to participate in a more effective way, pointing out alternatives of public policies", Pedro Pontual ended.

Over this debate, unionists also emphasized the need to create new councils, such as the one to prevent the abuse of drugs, the ones related to labour court and also the insertion in areas in which workers are not represented, such as Copom (Committee on Monetary Policies). (Joacir Gonçalves, UGT's Newsroom/ Pictures: FH Mendes)

Adjustments continue higher than inflation

Brazilian workers are achieving adjustments higher than inflation, points out Dieese

The annual report on wage salaries of Brazil, publicized by Dieese (Inter Union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies), which is made via system of salary follow up (SAS) points out that the 2013 values had a variation of R\$ 678,00, amount of the minimum wage in this period, and R\$ 3.600.00, which represents an average of R\$ 879,04 or a 9% raise.

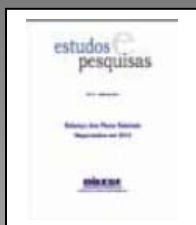
These data, researched for the nine year in a row, analyzed the wage floors defined in collective conventions and agreements established in 2012, comparing them with the same negotiations that took place in 2013 in 685 unities of negotiation of the sectors of industry, trade, service and rural of all Brazilian States.

This study also points out that 95% of the unities researched achieved an adjustment higher than inflation for wage floors.

Of the unities that were researched, nearly 27% defined a unique amount of wage floor in their collective agreements or conventions, which resulted on a slight decrease if compared to 2012, year in which this number reached 28%. (Fábio Ramalho – UGT's Newsroom)



Read the
decree 8,243
(portuguese)



Dieese -
Annual report
on wage
salaries of
Brazil

Solidarity to the Palestinian people

Brazilian trade union centrals issued a note of solidarity to the Palestinian people

This note, signed by Ricardo Patah, president of UGT and by the presidents of CUT, Força Sindical, CTB and Nova Central, repudiated the violence against Palestinians:

"The world watches terrified another violence wave perpetrated by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people of the Gaza Strip. The bombing and the ground invasion made by armed forces of Israel already caused hundreds of civilian deaths - essentially children and helpless women - and the destruction of the precarious urban infrastructure of Gaza, where more than 1,7 million Palestinian people live."

Due to the "horror caused by the Israeli offensive", the Brazilian trade union centrals "strongly condemn this new aggression against the Palestinian people, and demand an immediate cease fire and the withdrawn of troops from the Gaza Strip as a way of enabling a humanitarian assistance to the civil population".

The Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) also condemned the violent response of the Israeli government.

The note issued by TUCA, signed by the secretary general of this institution, recalls that "the disproportional response of Israel to Palestinian bombings involved almost a thousand bombs on a narrow area, widely populated and lacking any infrastructure to resist to these attacks that destroy thousands of houses and deepen the emergency situation of health, education and water provision, among other activities that are vital to the civil population of the Gaza strip. More than 20 thousand people were displaced from their homes and from their workplaces".

And it continues: "the trade union of the Americas calls out governments of that region to express their disapproval to this new aggression to the Palestinian people and to promote an immediate international action to halt violence against the population of Gaza and demand accounting Israel responsible for its criminal position against the Palestinian people".

The Trade Union Confederation of the Americas asked its affiliated institutions to take a position in the condemnation of Israel.

World Day for Decent Work

The world has followed a not sustainable path. A major number of workers face insecurity at work and a higher number of inequality level takes place.

Half of the total amount of families of workers already experienced unemployment or a reduction of working shifts over the last two years, while 1,2 million people survive in extreme poverty.

The essential rights of having a trade union representation and collective negotiation are being threatened in many countries and being directly attacked in others. Employers want to suffocate the right to strike, putting in doubt decades of legal recognition of this essential right of ILO.

There are many government that currently do not protect workers and that cannot build a sustainable future for the next generations.



The ruling global economic model is destroying employment and devastating the planet. This weakens democracy and suffocates justice for all. The international trade union movement is the strongest force able to defend democracy and to fight for democracy and for a sustainable future.

On October 7 - World Day for Decent Work, trade unions worldwide will organize protests, activities in the workplace, public actions and multiple events in support to justice for workers and for climate justice.

Together we can reinforce the power of workers, organize and mobilize ourselves to demand actions from politicians and companies, and we will be able to change the current broke economic system into one that might bring prosperity to all in a sustainable planet.

Sharam Burrow

Secretary general of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)



Seven years of UGT

This July, month in which UGT celebrates seven years of its foundation and fights for an increase of rights of the working class, the Ministry of Labour and Employment issued the numbers of 2013 concerning trade union association, numbers that show that UGT is the trade union institution that grows the most in Brazil.

During this period, UGT, which was created out of three trade union centrals with the support of independent trade unions, showed that it is possible to perform a unique, modern and combative trade union movement, which fights for causes that involve issues connected to capital/labour, but one that is also concerned with society in general and that contributed to the creation of public policies that benefit all the population.

"When we fight for a more just society, for an improvement in the quality of life for the population and for the creation of efficient public policies for areas such as urban mobility, health or education, we are fighting for an increase of the rights of the working class, since they are all connected", explains Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT.

Data publicized by the ministry show that UGT has a representability of 11,92% of workers - data of 2013 and that continue to grow in 2014. According to these same data, CUT has an index of 34,39%, followed by Força Sindical, with 12,59%, UGT with 11,92%, CTB with 9,33%, Nova Central with 8,01%. (*Fábio Ramalho – UGT newsroom*)

National Day of the Latin American Black Woman



This march, pre scheduled to take place in Brasilia/DF, on May 13 2015, National Day to Report Racism, is being organized by trade union officers from the Inter-american Trade Union Institute for Racial Equality (INSPIR) and other national secretariats of issues concerning this subject of the 6 major trade union centrals (UGT, CGTB, CTB, CUT, FS, NCST). (*Giselle Corrêa, from UGT*)

Trade union representation in the public service

Trade union centrals had a meeting in the seminar of trade union representation of public servants in a large and wide debate on the current representability of public servants.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, said that this institution clearly has in mind, since its foundation, that these issues might come up in extremely adverse situations. "However, workers should not bend to anti-unionists practices", and he also said that "discussions, such as the one that took place today, show that, as a whole, trade union centrals have the ability to fight for the interests of public servants all over Brazil".



According to Wagner José de Souza, assistant secretary of UGT's Department of International Affairs, who coordinated the tables of discussion, at the end of the meeting there was a consensus among participants as for the trade union unity in terms of representation of the class, concerning the federal, State and city areas of action. "Regarding the categorization of the branch and sector of the respective professions, discussions should be deepened".

The UGT Global is the Newsletter of International Information of the União Geral dos Trabalhadores do Brasil.

The UGT union is an organization formed to defend the Brazilian workers across a broad trade union movement, national, ethical, supportive, independent, democratic and innovative.

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