



with the new minimum wage...

Workers are the ones that are more damaged

After an intense movement in the Chamber of Deputies, the vote to approve the minimum wage finally came to an end on the night of February 16. The plenary session approved the amount of R\$ 545 proposed by the government, defeating the R\$ 560 defended by trade union centrals and R\$ 600 suggested by the PSDB party.



The amount of R\$ 545 (US\$ 300) will be effective a month after the future law is approved, until then, the R\$ 540 minimum wage stipulated by the Provisory Measure 516/10 will be effective.

In roll-call votes, the plenary session rejected, by 376 votes against 106, the amendment of the PSDB party that established a R\$ 600 amount; and by 361 against 120 the amendment of trade union centrals that established R\$ 560.

Besides setting the amount of the minimum wage to 2011, the projects establishes adjustment policies until 2015. Under the Brazilian politics, the minimum wage will be adjusted every year based on the inflation rate of the previous year and the economic growth achieved two years earlier.

Check how the deputies voted regarding the proposals that established a R\$ 600 minimum wage (amendment 1) and a R\$ 560 minimum wage (amendment 2).

UGT defends R\$ 560 minimum wage

Francisco Canindé Pegado, general secretary of UGT, defended the minimum adjustment to R\$ 560. According to him, trade union centrals do not want to end the agreement with the Federal Government that establishes politics to valorize the minimum wage until 2023 (a variation calculated by the GDP achieved two years earlier plus the inflation rate of the previous year).

However, according to Canindé, the adjustment above the expected one that was established in the agreement this year, is an "important and exceptional fact to decrease the gap of salary inequality in Brazil, especially in the north and northeast regions, where the minimum wage is the only income that moves the local economy".



Minimum wage adjustment will input R\$ 20 billion in economy

In the evaluation of Sergio Mendonça, coordinator of Dieese (Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies), the adjustment, besides the input of a considerable amount of resources in economy, it also influences a raise in the workers wage floors and decreases the inequalities among the several regions of Brazil.

Solidarity to the Mexican unionism

UGT and other Brazilian union institutions had a meeting in front of the Mexican Consulate, in Sao Paulo, on February 15, in sympathy to the Mexican union movement and to the families of victims of the explosion of the coal mine in Pasta de Concho, Coahuila, Mexico. Dozens of unionists participated in the protest, including representatives from UNI Americas and Trade Union Confederation of the Americas.

During this act, a document, that asks for the end of the violation of the right of union freedom in that country, and was written to the Consul José Gerardo Traslosheros Hernández, was handed to him, who will deliver it to Mexican authorities.

To Laerte Teixeira da Costa, vice-president of UGT, the trade union central had an expressive participation in the protest, that also happened in dozens of cities worldwide and in Mexico itself.



Tragedy

The explosion in the mine took place on February 10, 2006. Five years have gone by and 63 out of the 65 miners' bodies are still buried, in Pasta de Conchos. That happened due to the fact that governmental authorities have abandoned the searches and do not investigate and neither juridically prosecute the responsible parties.

UGT in the World Social Forum in Dakar, Senegal

On February 06 the World Social Forum 2011 began in Dakar. Nearly 50 thousand people participated in the opening march of the event, that started at the head office of the Radio and Television Senegal and went to the Cheikh Anta Diop University, where the WSF was hosted. Unionists and anti-globalization militants walked around four kilometers under the hot sun. UGT's delegation participated in the march.



In the union forum, that took place on February 09 and was organized by the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, union leaders from different countries discussed the role of the union in the World Social Forum, the importance of partnerships with other organizations of the civil society and the impact of this space that has been responsible for joining forces against neoliberal measures that have a negative impact on women of our countries.

João Vidal, youth representative of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) at the WSF and adjunct secretary of UGT's Youth Department, emphasized the role of young people in the changing process. To Vidal, "there are young people with a consciousness out there, and a challenge to unions is incorporating them into a movement that, in its turn, should claim the rights of this part of the population."

In a crowded auditorium of the Dakar University, **UGT** gathered with popular organization from all over the world in the Social Movements Meeting. The plenary session defined two common dates of fight for 2011. On March 20, a global mobilization in sympathy to the rebellions in the arab world is expected. October 12 is a day connected to the Native American resistance in Latin America.

Meeting of Finance Ministries of G20 fails

The international trade union movement has sharply criticised the failure of last meeting of G20 Finance Ministers to focus on the global employment crisis.

"The Finance Ministers have failed to grasp the depths of the global jobs crisis, with world unemployment of at least 205 million and a whole generation of young people facing a lifetime of unemployment or underemployment. The G20 leaders need to send them back to the drawing board to come up with real initiatives to create jobs, and indicators on which success can be measured," said **ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow**.



The conclusions adopted by the meeting include a series of key indicators for economic recovery, but in a bizarre twist, employment has been left off the list.

The text includes scant references to jobs and provides no indication of a constructive approach to tackling unemployment, with several G20 members focusing almost exclusively on cutting government expenditure as their main policy approach.

"Massive cuts to government expenditure as some of these governments are doing must really be a magic solution, because there is no evidence at all that it will generate jobs and growth – only greater inequality and social exclusion," said Burrow.

Although the meeting did not specifically endorse a Financial Transactions Tax as called for by current G20 host President Nicolas Sarkozy, the references to "systemic levies" are encouraging.

After three days marked by an intense debate, in Washington D.C., UGT, represented by its **president, Ricardo Patah**, and by its **secretary of Economic Issues, John Fernandes**, had the opportunity to discuss and interfere with the debates that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have, once a year, with the main world labor leaderships.

To **John Fernandes** a rational solution to the crisis is "*getting the financial sector to pay for the damages. A transition tax was widely discussed and supported by most economists. At a point in which it might be globally reinforced by the creation of an organization that would have powers similar to the World Trade Organization, which is an excellent proposal, but it is still not enough to do what must be done.*"

Several developed and developing countries (16 out of them are part of the G20) found it necessary to use such taxes to control the capital transactions, thus, the unity of this measure was tested at a national level and proved to be efficient." ([read the proposals of UGT that were taken by John Fernandes and Ricardo Patah to the meeting of union leaders with the IMF and the World Bank](#)).

To UGT, it is necessary to "get the central structure of banks, that is, people that make decisions and those that create and implant a raise in the risk of financial tools, to become personal responsible for their actions".

To Ricardo Patah, "*what's more disturbing is the fact that the proposals that were discussed along the international unionism by G20 leaders and presidents of financial institutions are different than the proposals of finance ministries - that is unacceptable.*"

Raise of interest? No!

To UGT, raising the Selic tax only stimulates speculation



UGT feels deeply sorry for the decision of Copom on increasing the Selic tax to 11,25%, on the pretext of fighting against inflation. We know that workers are the ones that are most damaged by inflation, but experiences from the past showed us that it's not increasing the interest rates up to the skies that the price increase is controlled. On the contrary.

Brazil needs more investments in production to absorb consumption, and the increase of the Selic tax produces exactly the opposite effect, stimulating the speculation and raising the internal indebtedness of the country. It is worth it to remind that, even before the tax was increased, Brazil was already considered the country with the highest real interest rate in the world. And with this decision from Copom, Brazil continues to go further apart from other nations.

Ricardo Patah, president

Mantega discarded correction in the Income Tax

Unionists reacted to the statement of Mantega that discarded correcting the Income Tax rates

Representatives from trade union centrals reacted to the statement of the minister of finance, Guido Mantega, that discarded, today (January 27), any kind of studies to correct the rates of the Income Tax for Legal Persons.



According to the president of UGT, Ricardo Patah, the minister isn't synched with the government. "Guido Mantega didn't participate in the meeting and is making comments that are different from the rest of the government. He is still living in an outdated situation. Yesterday, it was clear that we are going to achieve the correction. The government has already shown that. What we are going to negotiate now is the minimum wage. We will keep on insisting, but if we do not succeed, we'll head to the Legislative Body", stated Patah .

UGT State Branch of Paraná goes to court

Following the example of the process that began on January 18, occasion in which UGT and other trade union centrals went to court, in Sao Paulo, asking for an adjustment of the Income Tax Rates, similar actions have been taking place in other States. In Curitiba, UGT's State Branch of Paraná filed a lawsuit in the Federal Court asking for a 6,46% adjustment of the Income Tax Rate.

To Paulo Rossi, president of UGT-Paraná, the denial of the minister of Finance, Guido Mantega in correcting the rates is a confiscation of the workers income, since, according to him, over the last eight years, unions have always negotiated salary adjustments higher than inflation, using such good moment of economy, and all this work to achieve a real raise in workers income is being lost, since a failure in the adjustment of the Income Tax Rates would mainly damage those that earn up to 03 minimum wages.

Good practices of labor inspection in Brazil

ILO releases the collection "Good practices of Labour Inspection in Brazil" in tribute to the **National Day of the Labour Inspector**.

On the **National Day of the Labour Inspector**, that pays homage to the inspectors that were murdered in the UNAI region while performing their work, ILO - recognizing the dedicated and committed work of these colleagues and labour inspectors all over Brazil - releases, with the support of the Labour Inspection Department, 4 publications on the Brazilian experience.

The collection "**Good practices of Labor Inspection in Brazil**" consists of the following documents:

- **Labour Inspection in the Brazil: For the Promotion of Decent Work**
- **The Prevention and eradication of Child Labour**
- **The Eradication of Labour Analogous to Slavery**
- **The Maritime Sector**



ILO recognizes that Brazil is well structured to share its good practices with other inspection services. A good practice is every practice that, totally or partially, has proofs that works, with positive impacts. These good practices are a contribution to make progress in the cooperation with several countries all over the world that Brazil is developing concerning the labour inspection.

These publications are also available in Portuguese and Spanish and were issued through a partnership between ILO and the Labour Inspection Department concerning the project of technical cooperation "Strengthening Labour Inspection Services", financed by the Norwegian Government.

Meeting of Tripartite Labor Group/ Decent Work



On February 02, representatives from the six trade union centrals that are part of the Tripartite Group of Employment and Decent Work, were in a meeting at the head office of UGT - Brasilia to discuss the internal rules of the I National Conference of Employment and Decent Work that will take place next year, conferences at a municipal, state and district levels that begin this year.

The goal of the meeting was discussing action strategies in the tripartite meeting and strengthening the workers bench concerning the discussions with the business bench and with the government.

UGT is represented in the work group of employment and decent work by Josineide de Camargo Souza, secretary of Social Policies, that evaluates the previous meeting of the workers bench as a positive point of unity and synch of the union movement in the discussion of one of the most important topics in the Union Agenda, which is DECENT WORK.

UGT Youth has a meeting with the Solidarity Center

The secretary of the **Youth Department of UGT**, **Elimar Damin Cavaletto**, emphasized the work of unionization of young workers.

On January 27, **Elimar Damin Cavaletto**, secretary of **UGT's Youth Department**, participated, along with representatives from other Brazilian trade union centrals, in a meeting organized by the Solidarity Center, related to **AFL-CIO**, to discuss objectives and goals for the union youth in 2011.

According to Elimar, the meeting that took place in the head office of **TUCA/ITUC**, in Sao Paulo, had, as its objective, the elaboration of combined proposals of action of union centrals in themes related to youth.

To Elimar, "UGT has already worked towards the creation of a youth collective, within the central, activity that should be increased in 2011, as a focus in unionization and by the stimulation to the creation of new leaderships", he stated.

Gustavo de Pádua, from UGT's State branch of Pernambuco, **Mário Medeiros** (Sintracobi/Ibitinga) and **João Vidal** (adjunct secretary of UGT's Youth Department), were also representing UGT in this meeting.



Publicizing campaign elaborated by SIEMACO



New webpage for Gender and Decent Work

The new site of ILO Regional Program of Gender and Decent Work for Latin America and the Caribbean gathers relevant informant on the issue of gender equality, such as articles, statistics, and related links, and it has a special section with ILO articles in Portuguese. It tries and spreads the actions of ILO in this region and all over the world concerning the promotion of gender equality within the four strategic goals of the organization, that are:

- promoting fundamental principles and rights at work;
- creating more and better jobs and achieving equality of opportunity for men and women;
- increasing the social protection and
- strengthening the social dialogue and tripartition.

The webpage can be found at <http://igenero.oit.org.pe>

"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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