

Pressure for labour rights in Latin America

Graphical unions and employers in Latin America are pressing governments to use the tendering process to enforce labour rights. This follows a historic joint commitment by UNI Graphical and the Latin American Graphical Industry Confederation. Governments are urged to ensure that companies tendering for public contracts in paper processing, packaging and print adhere to core labour standards - the rights to join a union and bargain collectively plus freedom from discrimination and child or force labour - and observe the legality of labour contracts. (marvin.largaespada@uniglobalunion.org)

Recognition at G4S in Malawi

13,000 security workers in Malawi have won recognition at Group 4 Securicor. The deal was signed in July at the company's head office in Malawi and is another success for UNI Property Services' global campaign to organise the security giant's workers. "This is just the beginning of better things to come," said Grace Nyirenda, General Secretary of the Malawi Textile, Garment, Leather and Security Services Workers Union. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)



Signing the G4S recognition agreement in Malawi

Inside:

IBM virtual strike in Second Life
Call for negotiations over Eland strike

Time to rate the rating agencies

UNI Finance wants rating agencies supervised - following their key role in the US subprime mortgage disaster that plunged the world's financial system into crisis and will cost tens of thousands of finance jobs. UNI Finance is later this month expected to call for greater transparency and tighter regulation - including on rating agencies who gave the go ahead (for a fee) for the sale of packaged subprime debt. "It's workers who will pay the price while most of the fat cats who gambled with other people's money will walk away from the wreckage," said UNI's Oliver Roethig. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Prize for dialogue companies in Asia Pacific

Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah presented UNI-Asia Pacific's first ever partnership awards to five companies in the region who have built a record of dialogue and constructive engagement with unions. The Prime Minister opened the second UNI-Asia Pacific conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The awards are part of new, innovative ways for unions to build dialogue with multinationals. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)



Prime Minister of Malaysia Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi presenting UNI-Asia Pacific awards for Outstanding Partnership to Telekom Malaysia, Star Publications (Malaysia), Banco de Ore Universal Bank (Philippines), Overseas Chinese Banking Corp (Singapore) and MediaCorp (Singapore)



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Bulletin

Real negotiations demanded at Eland



UNI-Asia Pacific is calling for real negotiations to end the on-going dispute at Eland stores in Korea and demanded the release of detained union leaders. Delegates to the regional conference in Kuala Lumpur pledged solidarity with Eland strikers in their campaign to win reinstatement of 1000 short service workers. The sackings provoked a strike and a sit-in and a consumer boycott is now urged. The International Labour Organisation joined calls for the release of detained trade unionists.

(uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)



Top left: Lee Hyun-Yoo, General Secretary of KFCLU Korea addressing the UNI-Asia Pacific conference in Kuala Lumpur

Left: UNI's Eiichi Ito and Jan Furstenborg visit Kim Kyung-wook at Seoul's Mapo police station

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Unions "can do" in transforming Asia Pacific

Unions in Asia Pacific are stepping up their efforts to transform the low wage economies that are endemic in the region. "The future of Asia is not in a low wage economy and workers in Asia are demanding a fair return for the work they put in," UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings told the regional conference's closing session. Stepping up recruitment and winning labour rights are key. "Our ability to succeed with recruitment will ensure that our voice is heard," said Regional President Joe de Bruyn. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

October is customer service organising month

In October UNI is again coordinating an Action Month for customer service professionals. This year's theme is "For your eyes only - Kill secret monitoring!" The month is aimed at developing organising and recruitment activities in customer service centres - wherever the work is undertaken - as well as highlighting the high levels of monitoring that customer service workers are exposed to. (Visit: www.killsecretmonitoring.org)

UNIreport backs European postal campaign

A special UNIreport has been published in five languages to support the continuing campaign to protect Europe's universal postal services. The report - "Fighting on to save postal jobs and services" can be downloaded from: uniglobalunion.org/uniflashes.nsf/unireport?openpage

Great new contract at MGM Mirage

MGM Mirage workers in Las Vegas have settled a great new contract. The contract covers Unite-Here culinary members and bartenders and they pledged to help all culinary workers across the city to win a new a contract. The deal covers 21,000 workers at ten MGM Mirage properties and is the biggest economic package in the union's history. It includes the biggest wage plus benefit increase in the history of the culinary and bartenders unions. (alke.boessiger@uniglobalunion.org)

Alcan concern over jobs

UNI has been closely monitoring the bidding war for Alcan - which is a major packaging company as well as a large aluminium producer. UNI Graphical represents workers around the world in Alcan's packaging business, which could be offloaded in the take-over process. "Alcan workers are anxious to know how this bidding war will affect their lives," said UNI Graphical's Adriana Rosenzvaig. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Metro criticised for social dumping in Germany

Ver.di has strongly criticised Metro group for opening a new Real hypermarket in Lubeck, northern Germany that undermines the collective agreement. Longer hours and lower pay will give the store an unfair advantage over competitors who adhere to agreements. The company created a special structure to circumvent agreements with ver.di. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

Virtual strike over IBM cash cuts

Social networking platforms on the Internet are now union reality as IBM workers in Italy and UNI organise the first ever virtual strike on the popular Second Life website. It's an international protest at IBM's decision to scrap a "productive results benefit" that leaves staff 1,000 euro a year worse off. RSU and UNI plan the first virtual strike this month and on-line strike kits are being offered to help activists make their Second Life protest. Media interest has been intense. (uniglobalunion.org/SecondLife)



UNI's Lorenzo De Santis checks activity on the Second Life website

Concern for staff at La Salle

UNI Finance is pressing for an urgent meeting with Bank of America to discuss the fate of jobs in the La Salle subsidiary sold by ABN Amro. More than 10,000 jobs could go in the Chicago area over the next two years. The battle to take over ABN Amro continues with union members expected to picket the bank's shareholder meeting later this month. Barclays and a trio of banks headed by RBS are still battling to buy ABN Amro but the global stock market collapse has undermined the paper element of bids tabled back in July. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Gender deficit worsens in IT

A widening pay gap and falling numbers of women in IT jobs in the UK will be among the issues debated at the UNI ICT Forum, being held in Ljubljana, Slovenia later this month. IT unions want greater diversity in the industry but a recent survey shows an increase in the number of women leaving IT - probably caused by a widening pay gap behind men. In 2006, women got a 2.9% salary increase while male counterparts enjoyed a 3.1% increase. (gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)

Costa Rica urged to oppose trade deal

A UNI solidarity mission urged Costa Rica to reject the proposed free trade deal with the United States, which is the subject of a referendum on October 7. UNI affiliates in Costa Rica are opposed to the deal because it will undermine social policies. UNI Telecom Americas President Francisco Hernandez Juarez urged the Labour Minister and Deputies to learn the lessons from other trade deals, including Mexico where poverty remains and where the minimum wage is, in effect, lower than before. (uni-americas@uniglobalunion.org)

Recognition strike settled at Vodacom

CWU South Africa members went back to work on August 7 after the longest ever strike in the country's mobile phone industry. At the same time the company - a subsidiary of Vodafone - lifted a lock out. In a joint statement Vodacom acknowledged that affiliate CWU has built up a 15% membership in the company. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Women stepping up in Asia-Pacific

UNI Women in Asia Pacific are stepping up organising to bring gender equality to the region as a key step in eradicating poverty. Delegates to the UNI-Asia Pacific Women's conference committed to promote decent work and a better work-life balance. Unions in the region are being urged to recruit more women and to ensure they have a bigger role in their union and in negotiating agendas. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Global unions HIV/AIDS project

Global unions - including UNI - are running an HIV/AIDS project in Africa that has been given new impetus by the appointment of a project coordinator Clementine Dehwe, now based in Johannesburg. 10 workshops have been held in the last year and one key issue has been cooperation with the World Health Organisation to support unions in the fight against HIV/AIDS. More workshops are planned along with improved networking and closer collaboration with UN offices. (zakari.koudougou@uniglobalunion.org)



**October
organising
month in call
centres**

Taking unions to logistics workers in Asia Pacific



Top table at UNI-FES workshop in Kuala Lumpur for logistics workers and their unions

Europa Youth school in Bournemouth

The second UNI-Europa Youth Summer School was held in Bournemouth, England in June, hosted by affiliate CWU. 15 participants from Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Romania, Sweden and the UK shared experiences and looked at trade union work at a European level. The school ended with a mock conference. Speakers included the CWU's Billy Hayes and UNI's Philip Jennings. (colin.medland@uniglobalunion.org)



A drive to step up organising among courier and logistics workers across the region emerged from a conference in Kuala Lumpur held by UNI-Asia Pacific and FES foundation Germany. Post and logistics unions from 14 countries pledged to organise to bring union protection to workers in this fast growing industry. Workers are typically low paid and many have little job security - often working for contractors. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI-Europa backs equal treatment for agency workers

"Temporary agency workers should enjoy the same pay and conditions as their fellow workers." That was the message of UNI-Europa Secretary Bernadette Ségol to the Portuguese Presidency and to EU governments who are seeking a compromise on EU draft legislation. The new UK prime minister Gordon Brown committed to legislation on agency workers to TUC delegates in Brighton. (fabrice.warnecke@uniglobalunion.org)

SEIU wins for casino workers in Halifax

Casino workers at Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax, Canada have won their right to be recognised in the SEIU. The overwhelming vote came after Labour Board hearings. It's not just a victory for casino workers - it's the largest private sector union organising victory in 25 years in the province. Still outstanding is an application for a separate unit for 41 security officers at the same casino who voted in early June to join the SEIU. (seiu.org)

Committee investigates G4S, FirstGroup and Tesco

Group4Securicor, FirstGroup and Tesco are the first UK companies to be scrutinised by a Parliamentary committee that's looking at corporate accountability. It aims to examine the operations of British companies outside the UK and work towards establishing legal requirements to protect the labour rights of those who work for UK-based multinationals in other countries. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

Complaint of G4S violations in Panama

UNTAS, the union representing G4S workers in Panama, met the Ministry of Labour to complain of G4S violations of its agreement with the union. Dozens of violations were listed in the complaint, including inadequate and unsafe working equipment, unpaid overtime and late salary payments, harassment of workers, failure to properly administer the deduction of union dues and to meet their obligations for social security. (uni-americas@uniglobalunion.org)

Long-term e-skills agenda for EU

The European Commission is proposing a long-term e-skills agenda to help foster competitiveness, growth and jobs. It wants states to base an e-skills agenda on longer-term cooperation, human resource investment, attractiveness, employability and e-inclusion and lifelong acquisition of e-skills. The IT sector is currently hampered by the absence of an EU-wide approach, a skills shortage, digital illiteracy and a growing gap between formal and industry-based education. (gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)

Private equity threat to telecom

Private equity is a threat to the telecom infrastructure, the annual conference of UK union centre the TUC was told by Connect General Secretary Adrian Askew. Evidence in Ireland and Denmark shows that research and development are neglected by equity owners in a rush to make short-term profits and by companies burdened with take-over debts. The TUC condemned short termism and a lack of transparency in buyouts in the sector. (connectuk.org)

New strategy for UNI-Africa

UNI-Africa Executive adopted in July a new vision and strategy for the region. The aim is to build strong unions in Africa, decent jobs, justice, equality, democracy and peace. Multinationals in the region will be a particular target. The 2nd UNI-Africa Regional Conference will be held in Nairobi in October next year to refine the strategy. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)



UNI-Africa Women meet in Dakar

IT organising project steps up in Ukraine

On July 23 in Kiev the organising project of UNI and the IT-industry trade union of Ukraine took to the streets. The aim was to attract attention to the union and employee issues like healthy and safety. UNI Moscow staff, the ITT-UA's members and members of the city's public organisations leafleted in front of the two major IT companies and at Kiev polytechnic university. (olga.vinogradova@uniglobalunion.org)

Union busters at Cable & Wireless

CWU UK has attacked Cable & Wireless for hiring a notorious American firm of union busters, the Burke Group. The CWU is currently seeking recognition for the company's 330 strong UK field services workforce and have presented their case to the Central Arbitration Committee. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

ICT to help meet anti-poverty goals

A World Information Technology Forum was held in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in August. One of the aims is to help developing countries use ICT to achieve global anti-poverty targets. It was organised by the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and other Ethiopian agencies, brought together 1,000 participants from 66 countries. (gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)

US immigration raids criticised

Commerce affiliate UFCW condemned unwarranted physical force used by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to illegally detain workers in misguided attempts at enforcing failed US immigration policies. "Politicians cannot continue to say our immigration system is broken and needs fixing, then turn around and insist on excessive and illegal enforcement measures that make the problems worse," said UFCW President Joe Hansen. (ufcw.org)

UNI team visits Cuba

A UNI delegation - led by Deputy General Secretary Philip Bowyer and Regional Secretary Rodolfo Benitez - visited Cuba at the end of June. The delegation met union leaders and workers in post, a call centre, DHL, a restaurant, a hotel and a diesel electricity generating plant. (philip.bowyer@uniglobalunion.org)

Postal strike in Nepal

NECSEU-Postal Nepal and other unions held a strike in July to demand respect at work, union rights, postal allowances and improvements to postal services. Further stoppages were threatened as discussions got underway with the government. Post Nepal employs 10,000 workers and faces growing competition from the private sector. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

More youth participation urged for Africa

UNI-Africa was challenged to ensure that more young workers are included in its activities. The Regional Executive met in Dakar, Senegal in July and heard that youth have the potential to change the world. UNI-Africa Youth President Solomon Adebosin from Nigeria urged UNI-Africa to include young people in the project "UNI-Africa facing up to its future". (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Campaign for secure funding for public broadcasting in India

The federation of Indian unions in All India Radio and TV (Doordarshan) are stepping up their campaign to win secure funding for public broadcasting and to resolve the status of workers. A "mass casual leave" campaign is due to start at the end of this month if talks fail to resolve the issues. Workers have been on secondment to the public broadcast authority for eight years. A key issue is the under-funding of public broadcasting. (unidocindia.org)



Postal workers demonstrate in Katmandhu



DR Congo workers interviewed by television during their May Day demonstration

New union born in Sweden

A new union - Unionen - is being launched in Sweden out of a merger between two UNI affiliates, HTF and SIF. The aim is to offer greater benefits to 500,000 members in what becomes Sweden's second largest union on January 1. (The new union's website will be: unionen.se)

Call for collective agreement in Malaysia banks

Bank employees in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia have been waiting for more than 18 months for a new collective agreement. UNI-Asia Pacific's finance steering group called for an early settlement of a new agreement and a fair share for employees of the banks' recent profits. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Recognition talks for BT Ireland staff

Talks have taken place over the claim by CWU Ireland to represent BT Ireland staff. The talks headed off a protest by about 50 of the union's several hundred members in the Republic of Ireland. The UK-based company has been resisting recognition - even though CWU Ireland is recognised for BT staff in Northern Ireland. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Class actions could help equal pay in UK

Affiliate Connect is pressing the UK government to introduce US-style class actions to tackle the 17% pay gap between women and men. At the moment pay and discrimination cases are dealt with one by one - deterring many women from pressing cases for fear of victimisation and leaving systemic problems unchallenged. In the USA large numbers of cases based around similar facts and points of law can be joined together in a single class action. (connectuk.org).

Don't casualise customer care says minister

A warning against casualising customer care work came from Zambia's Deputy Minister of Labour Austin Liato during a two-week training course organised by the International Labour Organisation and UNI. The course was aimed at boosting skills for customer care staff in telecom companies in Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Sitembeni Munyanyi from TelOne Zimbabwe appealed for help in restoring social dialogue in her country. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Accord on organising film production workers in Brazil

Leaders of SINDCINE, the film production workers' union of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and TEME, the Finnish media workers' union, have agreed a two-year cooperation to organise film workers and secure collective agreements with producers. Also involved in the discussions were SASK - the union-related Finnish funding organisation that has tentatively agreed to support the project - and UNI's media and entertainment global union UNI-MEI. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)

Boost for village post offices in India

A new scheme to bring work to the rural unemployed in India is helping to give a new role to village post offices. India has 150,000 rural post offices that deliver a daily postal service six days a week - 16,000 of them in the state of Andhra Pradesh. India Post in Andhra Pradesh has signed up to deliver payments to villagers under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which promises 100 days of work a year. (unidocindia.org)



Sitembeni Munyanyi from TelOne Zimbabwe

Involving more women in unions

Women activists from across Asia Pacific left Kuala Lumpur with plans to recruit and engage more women workers in unions. They had taken part in a five-day advanced course run by UNI-Asia Pacific and FES foundation Germany. The target is to build stronger grass roots organisation among women union members and to ensure their active presence is reflected across union hierarchies and on negotiating teams and agendas. 25 women from nine countries and seven UNI sectors took part. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)



Enjoying the advanced course for women in Kuala Lumpur

Project to promote finance EWCs

Affiliate GPA and the Austrian union centre ÖGB are taking part in an EU-funded project to promote the creation of European Works Councils. The targets are four Austrian financial corporations with a strong and growing presence in Central and Eastern Europe - BAWAG, Österreichische Volksbanken, Vienna insurance group and Uniqa insurance group. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Swiss company spotlighted over suspension

UNI-Asia Pacific Graphical is calling for an immediate lifting of the suspension of the union general secretary in a Thai subsidiary of Swiss-based SIG. General Secretary Thanat was suspended for talking to workers during company moves to introduce holiday working. Regional conference delegates in Kuala Lumpur denounced the suspension and UNI global union will now be contacting the Swiss parent management. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Negotiations fort Metro Cash & Carry Kiev

Preparations for negotiations at Metro's Cash and Carry in Kiev have involved UNI Moscow's Olga Vinogradova and local union leaders. They met members to discuss organising and met the company's Ukraine Human Resources director. The first negotiations promise to be challenging with the accumulation of grievances and unresolved problems. UNI Moscow will continue to support the union, which is a member of Kiev city's trade union Zashita truda. (olga.vinogradova@uniglobalunion.org)

Indian company buys Scottish call centres

Indian IT-enabled company Hero has bought Scotland's largest call centre company TSC, which employs 3000 workers. Hero is the third Indian operator to buy into the UK call centre market after HCL and FirstSource. The existing management will be maintained and TSC assured the media that jobs are not being switched to India and the company will continue to grow in the UK.

Pay rally in Argentina

UNI affiliate Cepetel Argentina held a rally in the Plaza Roma in Buenos Aires at the end of August. The union is fighting for a pay increase for members in Argentina Telecom, which is owned by Telefónica. (uni-americas@uniglobalunion.org)

Targeting Baltic graphical multinationals

Graphical union activists from the Baltic States have decided to target multinational companies with organising campaigns. They attended a training seminar organised by UNI-Europa Graphical in Tallinn, Estonia. The aim is to set up union networks and improve European Works Council involvement in companies like Tetrapak, SCA and Sanoma. (nicola.konstantinou@uniglobalunion.org)

Jeannie for Personal Accounts Authority

Jeannie Drake, Deputy General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union, has been appointed to the Personal Accounts Authority as a non-executive director from September 17. Personal accounts form part of the UK government's reform of the pension system.

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