

# unión

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BIT

Bulletin  
du Syndicat

ILO

Staff Union  
Bulletin

OIT

Boletín  
del Sindicato

*Personnel du bureau de l'OIT  
à Antananarivo*





## Committee Corner

### Come and join us!

April is the month that the Staff Union Committee launches its membership drive for the year and this will start with a call for nominations for Union Steward posts throughout the office. A Bulletin on this matter will go out shortly. It is particularly appropriate that the ILO Staff Union is thinking of its membership right now as we approach May Day 2002.

As the *Union* magazine is widely distributed and widely read, it may well be that you, dear reader, are not currently a member of the ILO Staff Union.

#### *So... why should you consider joining?*

**First**, let's remember that the ILO Staff Union is the only staff body that officially represents the whole staff of our Organization, both in the field and at headquarters. This position was reaffirmed at a Global Meeting of Union representatives held in Geneva last year.

**Second**, we are a UNION, not simply a staff association as in a number of other UN organizations. We are therefore part of the trade union movement, which is an intrinsic part of what the ILO itself is all about. This imposes on us certain obligations and duties, not only in defending YOU against the erosion of conditions or real and potential threats but also in negotiating for you better conditions and rights.

**Third**, as a UNION we have strength. **Our strength is in our numbers.** No members – no UNION. No UNION and there is just your individual lone voice to bargain for a better deal. A lone voice is just not likely to be listened to!

#### *...So what difference does the Union really make?*

We certainly don't pretend that working for the ILO is like hell on earth, but neither do we believe that it is a workers' paradise. No employer, even the best, will freely propose improvements for staff unless the case is initiated soundly and firmly negotiated. Successful negotiation comes from the commitment and solidarity of Union members and solid initiatives.

Without Union vigilance, however, employer complacency and procrastination flourish, and agreements can be broken. That is why our strength must be in our numbers. That is why it is in your interests to be a Union member.

We are currently a reasonably credible 65 per cent of the personnel (with similar representation in the field and at headquarters) but our target is 100 per cent membership.

While we have been seeking to cooperate with the administration (and HRD in particular) whenever feasible, it should be clear that we are not an appendix of

HRD. The recent events at the JNC are ample proof of this. We have also often seen the common system as an obstacle to our interests in bringing about meaningful progress. The recent past has shown that we can go further than the common system when we want to – and this particular Staff Union Committee does indeed want to.

#### *...So where do you really stand?*

Try this checklist of ten reasons why you should NOT join or have your friends join now...

- You are not really so smart and don't care if you are ever likely to be harassed or overlooked.
- You don't really believe in the ILO principles of "Decent Work" or that they should apply in the ILO workplace.
- You don't really care if your competencies are fully used by the ILO and you don't seek job satisfaction.
- You don't seek a career path but expect it to be already carved out for you and, anyway, you can look after yourself.
- You are so well paid that you do not know what to do with the money.
- You are absolutely convinced that this Organization will desperately need you for the years ahead.
- You are slightly disenchanted but think things could be far worse.
- You are resigned to the fact that the UN common system will look after you and can't be influenced.
- You prefer others to do all the hard work for you.
- You don't really care about anything!

Those readers who feel they fit the above profile really have no place in a values-based organization.

Whatever your personal situation, whatever your problems, YOU should have a vested interest in ILO Staff Union activities, because the Union's activities do affect your daily life, your personal expectations and, most importantly, the realization of your goals.

We can negotiate even better conditions for you if we too are stronger. So if you are not a member, join us NOW.

**OUR STRENGTH IS IN OUR NUMBERS.**

**Mike Shone** ■  
Chair, Staff Union Committee  
syndicat@ilo.org

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*Union* magazine is published ten times a year (with double issues in July-August and November-December). The Editorial Board will consider every submission. Pseudonyms are acceptable provided the author's name (which will remain confidential) is supplied to the editors. The copy deadline for contributions is the first working day of each month (except June and October). If accepted for publication, the earliest they may appear is in the following month's issue. Articles may be submitted in English, French or Spanish. The preferred length of manuscripts is under 1000 words. If possible, they should be submitted in a common word-processing format (as simple as possible: unjustified, with no tabs, no indents, no underlining) as an email attachment or on diskette, together with a hard (paper) copy. Photographs should preferably be black-and-white bromide prints, or colour slides. Originals should be supplied of all drawings.

Le magazine *Union* paraît 10 fois par an (avec 2 numéros doubles, juillet-août, novembre-décembre). Le Comité de rédaction examinera toutes les propositions. Les pseudonymes sont acceptés à condition que le nom de l'auteur soit communiqué à la rédaction (information qui restera confidentielle). Le délai de soumission des contributions est le premier jour ouvrable de chaque mois (à l'exception de juin et d'octobre). Lorsqu'elles sont retenues, les contributions seront publiées au plus tôt dans le numéro du mois qui suit. Les articles peuvent être soumis en anglais, français ou espagnol. La longueur des articles ne devrait pas excéder 1000 mots. L'original devrait, si possible, être soumis sous format traitement de texte (texte au kilomètre: sans tabulation, sans alinéa, sans soulignement) en pièce jointe de courrier électronique ou disquette, accompagnée d'une copie papier. Les photographies sont les bienvenues, de préférence en noir et blanc sous forme de bromure, ou diapositives couleur. Tous les dessins devront être soumis sous leur forme originale.

La revista *Union* se publica 10 veces por año (con dos números dobles en julio-agosto y noviembre-diciembre). El Comité de Redacción examina todos los textos propuestos. Se aceptan los pseudónimos a condición de que se comunique a la redacción el nombre del autor (información que tendrá carácter confidencial). El plazo de presentación de las contribuciones acaba el primer día laborable de cada mes (excepto junio y octubre). Las contribuciones que hayan sido aceptadas se publicarán en el número del mes siguiente o en números posteriores. Los artículos pueden presentarse en inglés, francés o español y no deberían exceder de 1000 palabras. El original debería presentarse, de ser posible, en formato de tratamiento de texto (texto sin formato especial: sin justificación a la derecha, sin tabulación, sin sangrado y sin subrayados) como texto anexo al correo electrónico o en disquete, acompañado de una copia impresa. Las fotografías deberían ser preferentemente copias de bromuro en blanco y negro o diapositivas en color. Los dibujos que se presenten deben ser los originales.

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## 1<sup>er</sup> mai

Le 1<sup>er</sup> mai n'est pas la fête du travail, mais la journée des travailleurs!

Depuis le début du siècle, les travailleurs du monde entier défilent pour clamer leurs revendications légitimes, visant à améliorer leurs conditions de travail.

Cette année, comme les deux années précédentes, les travailleurs des organisations internationales sont invités à se joindre aux travailleurs genevois pour marquer notre engagement et notre solidarité dans la lutte commune!

## 1<sup>o</sup> de mayo

¡El 1<sup>o</sup> de mayo no es la fiesta del trabajo, sino el día de los trabajadores!

Desde el principio del siglo, los trabajadores de todo el mundo desfilan clamando sus reivindicaciones legítimas, con vistas a mejorar sus condiciones de trabajo.

¡Este año, como los dos precedentes, los trabajadores de las organizaciones internacionales están invitados a unirse a los trabajadores ginebrinos para marcar nuestro compromiso y nuestra solidaridad en la misma lucha!

## May 1st

May 1st is not Labour Day; it is Workers' Day!

Since the beginning of the century, workers worldwide have marched to proclaim their legitimate rights, aiming to improve working conditions.

This year, like the last two years, workers from international organizations are invited to join the workers of Geneva to mark our commitment and solidarity in this common struggle!

Barbecue: 12:00 at the WHO

March departure: 13:00 from Place des Nations

## Roger Beattie

On 13 May, a tree will be planted in the ILO grounds at headquarters in memory of our departed colleague, friend and comrade Roger Beattie (see *Union* 313, September 2001). The Administration has very generously agreed to meet the costs involved. Fittingly, the simple commemorative plaque that will stand alongside the tree is to be paid for by the Staff Union.

For details of time and place, contact the Staff Union secretariat.

MG ■

# Comité des Pensions: déjà la centième !

La 100<sup>e</sup> réunion du Comité des Pensions de l'OIT n'a certainement pas donné des résultats exceptionnels pour les représentants des Participants; pourtant l'atmosphère de la réunion est restée détendue.

Au menu de cette centième, le comité a notamment abordé des sujets aussi savoureux que le surplus actuariel de la Caisse et la prochaine réunion du Comité Mixte.

Les membres présents à cette réunion étaient:

Représentants de la Conférence: M. Barde, M. Ringkamp et M. Schibli.

Représentants du Directeur général: Telma Viale (Turin), Antonio Busca, David Macdonald et Satoru Tabusa.

Représentants des Participants: Pauline Barrett-Reid, Guy Bezou, Adela Guastavi (Turin), Pierre Sayour.

Observateur pour les retraités: Mario Tavelli.

Conseiller juridique: Kelvin Widdows.

Secrétaire du Comité: Colleen McGarry.



(de gauche à droite) G. Bezou, M. Barde, K. Widdows

Pierre Sayour ■



Viviane Nakach (PENSIONS), P. Sayour, A. Guastavi



M. Schibli, M. Ringkamp, M. Barde, M. Tavelli

## Building a better environment at the ILO through social dialogue?

*by our Sports, Leisure and Construction Correspondent*

The ILO is proud of its achievements as an organization in fulfilling its operational and strategic objectives. Proud, too, of a new-found dynamism that has led to the expansion of a number of programmes at headquarters that require more office space.

It has responded appropriately in the short term to a crisis – the fire in the Publications Bureau in January 2002. And it has also been proud of its ability to offer a range of sports and leisure activities.

However, short-term measures to requisition space devoted to such activities at the ILO are causing considerable inconvenience and frustration.

Many of them have had to be transferred to temporary and rather unsuitable venues, or suspended altogether, for almost four months now.

There is as yet no sign of a plan to address this issue. The Staff Union Committee has requested speedy remedial action, but no progress has yet been made.

Could the ILO consider, as a matter of urgency, the possibility of creating new office space or multi-purpose sport and leisure facilities in its grounds, to tackle this problem in a longer-term manner?

## Social and economic insecurity in the ILO

I know which side my bread is buttered on. And I know that I shouldn't complain. After all, this is a well-paid job. One only has to come past the Douane at Ferney to see that, indeed, the grass is greener in Genève.

However.

As the Preface to a recent ILO publication strongly asserts, "security [is] very important for the well-being of workers, their families..." Very few would disagree with this sentiment.

Yet what do these words actually mean? In particular, what does the ILO really mean by family?

As I have quickly come to appreciate, the ILO's definition of family is at odds with the experience of many people today – including that of the ILO's own staff. My personal interpretation of "family" is of a couple living together, partners in life. In this era of the rational economic man, this partnership is often made concrete by legally binding contracts such as the joint ownership of a home, underpinned by a mandatory joint "life" insurance policy. This has been my personal experience.

Over time, families tend to grow. In our case, where once we were two, now we are three. And who knows what the future may hold.

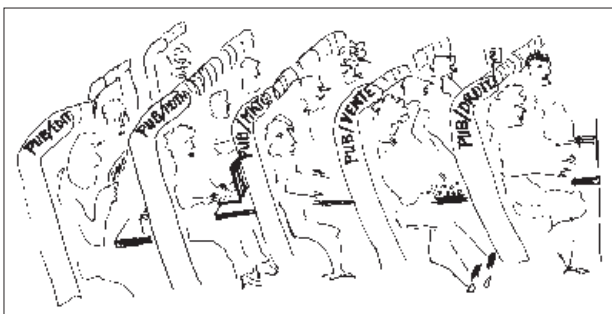
From the perspective of my daughter and myself, the ILO appears to be a good employer. I receive a good wage and my employee benefits offer healthcare and schooling fees for my child. Social and economic security for us both.

For the mother of my daughter – and I chose my words purposely – things look less secure. And why? Because, like many millions of other couples in the world, the mother of my daughter is not married. Bluntly, she is not married to me, or to anyone else for that matter.

However, and crucially, all three of us live as a family – and have done so for years. In fact, and in contrast to the experience of close friends, our family has outlasted many families – that is "families" as defined by the ILO. In other words, couples that have chosen to become legally married – ostensibly for life...

Mirroring wider social security debates about the relevance for many millions of people of ILO Convention 102 in particular, is it not time for the ILO openly to recognize that, increasingly, its employee benefits policies are irrelevant to the life experiences, not least the need for social and economic security, of many of the ILO's own staff and their families?

Roddy McKinnon ■



Salon du personnel – nouvel aménagement

## VENDREDI 24 MAI SERA LE JOUR « SUAF »

*C'est quoi?*

Le Fonds d'entraide du Syndicat.

*Que fait le SUAF?*

Il aide vos collègues du BIT qui ont moins de chance que vous.

*Pourquoi et comment?*

Maladie de longue durée, incapacité, deuil... Ces situations peuvent arriver à n'importe lequel d'entre nous, impliquant des dépenses inattendues et un urgent besoin d'aide financière, que se soit à court ou long terme. C'est alors que SUAF peut aider.

*Alors c'est là que va ma contribution syndicale?*

Non, le SUAF fonctionne grâce à des dons volontaires provenant de membres du personnel.

*Et que se passera-t-il le 24 mai?*

Vous le saurez en temps voulu.

## VIERNES 24 DE MAYO ES EL DIA DEL SUAF

*¿Que es?*

El Fondo de Ayuda del Sindicato.

*¿Que hace el SUAF?*

Ayuda a aquellos colegas de la OIT, menos afortunados que usted.

*¿Como?*

Las enfermedades de larga duración, una incapacidad laboral... estas situaciones pueden pasarnos a cualquiera de nosotros, incluyendo gastos inesperados o una necesidad urgente de ayuda financiera sea ésta temporal o le larga duración. Es acá donde el SUAF entra en acción.

*Entonces, ¿es ahí donde van los fondos de mi contribución al sindicato?*

No, el SUAF depende de las donaciones voluntarias de los miembros del personal.

*Y ¿que sucederá el 24 de mayo?*

Usted lo sabrá muy pronto.

## FRIDAY 24 MAY IS SUAF DAY

*What's that?*

The Staff Union Assistance Fund.

*What does SUAF do?*

It helps those of your ILO colleagues who are less fortunate than you.

*How?*

Long-term illness, disability, bereavement.... These things can happen to any of us, involving unexpected expenses and an urgent need for financial assistance, whether temporary or long term. That's where SUAF comes in.

*So that's where my Union dues go?*

No, SUAF depends on voluntary donations from individual staff members.

*And what's happening on 24 May?*

You'll know soon enough.

## From ILO Communications:

### News you may have missed...

#### SPORTS SPECIAL

**“ILO in focus”** Dynamically presented in a 15 minute format, the video was essentially conceived as a curtain-raiser to “explain” the ILO to a variety of audiences including the general public, ILO constituency, NGO activists, and the larger spectrum of civil society. The “ILO in Focus” portrays a lasting and dynamic international organization whose historical dimension and present-day relevance places it as one of the key players in the international scene.

*DCOMM User Broadcast 8.5.01*

**ILO-COMMENT: Are we key players on scene...?**

**ILO DG targets decent work deficit** He told the assembled delegates: “To move forward we need to confront the widespread perception that we who address social issues are playing in the minor league of the global economy, while the hard ball actors in the world of commerce and finance occupy a superior sphere of policy.”

*Press Release ILO/01/19;*

*mirror/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2001/19.htm*

**ILO-COMMENT: ...or sportspersons hitting the bat?**

**ILO waves “red card”** at child labour at the 2002 African Cup of Nations in Bamako, Mali. The new campaign against the use of child labour is symbolized by the red card handed out by referees for serious violations of rules on the soccer field. “Working hand in hand with the world’s most popular sport, we hope to galvanize the global campaign with this potent symbol – the red card that means you’re out of the game.”

*mirror/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2002/1.htm*

**ILO-COMMENT: Working “hand in hand” in soccer? Child labour – a game?**

**Sports and decent work** A number of contacts have been developed between the ILO, UNDP and the International Olympic Committee, and with the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Adolf Ogi, concerning research activities that may lead to the launch of specific projects to facilitate the entry of young people into society and the world of work through sport.

*mirror/intranet/english/universitas/download/report.pdf*

**ILO-COMMENT: Life is a game, work is a game, and Decent Sports will be fun.**

**Mission Report, Athens** Purpose: To present SafeWork’s SOLVE training methodology to the Organizing Committee of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. Background: SOLVE is designed to allow an organization or an enterprise to integrate psycho-social issues (stress, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, HIV/AIDS, violence) into overall corporate policy and establish a framework for preventive action. The initiative could pave the way to a larger partnership with other Olympic Organising Committees such as Turin (2006) and Beijing (2008).

*mirror/intranet/english/protection/safework/misreports/bsdg\_gr02.pdf*

**ILO-COMMENT: Has SOLVE been tested at the ILO? (Incidentally, SOLVE is an acronym. Can you solve it?)**

**Health Questionnaire** (Inter-agency Games, Antalya, Turkey, 1 to 5 May) to be filled by participants in athletics, badminton, basketball, football, table tennis, tennis and volleyball. It should be sent to Medical Service at the moment of your inscription to the Games. Do you perform your discipline: more than once a week/once a week/at least once a month/hardly ever?

*mirror/public/french/snl/circulaire.htm*

**ILO-COMMENT: “Hardly ever” doesn’t sound very sportspersonlike. Now back to the studio...**

## GOING BACK A BIT

### ILO and the tobacco lobby: A smoking gun?

The shocking report of a WHO committee of experts tasked with investigating attempts by the tobacco multinationals to subvert the Organization contains 32 references to the ILO. If nothing else, this is a measure of the global influence the cancer merchants perceive our organization to have, largely due to its tripartite scope.

Perhaps more intriguingly, some interesting names also feature: *Page 65:*

“Documents further show that Philip Morris used its regional offices and non-tobacco subsidiaries to press business groups such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to lobby the World Health Assembly (WHA) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), another UN agency. Philip Morris attempted to use the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ILO or other UN agencies, WHO Regional Offices and Coordinating Centers and the governments of developing countries to influence WHO tobacco policies and WHA resolutions. To this end, Philip Morris hired several former UN officials. For example, the documents indicate that the company hired a former Deputy Director-General of the ILO as a consultant and arranged for the appointment of former ILO Director General, [DG1], to the board of directors of the Institute for International Health and Development (IIHD), an organization that also carried out some of the strategies described in the Boca Raton Action Plan.”

*Page 77:*

“Efforts to prevent the ILO from supporting WHO programs had included a meeting with the new Director-General, [DG2], at one organization utilized in the Boca Raton Action Plan, the New York Society for International Affairs, and the appointment of his predecessor, [DG1], to the board of another, the IIHD. Meanwhile, Philip Morris’ Eastern European Middle East and Africa division (EEMA) had retained a former Deputy Director-General of ILO as a ‘consultant on taxation issues with respect to the labor movement’ and was in the process of expanding this consulting assignment.”

*Pages 119-120:*

“Publications by IIHD were to play an important role in Philip Morris’ campaign against WHO. IIHD described itself as a ‘non-profit, tax-exempt educational foundation devoted to examining public health and developing policies affecting developing nations. The Institute provides a forum for debate on existing governmental and private programs and encourages policymakers in the field to explore alternative ways of meeting the pressing health and economic needs of developing nations’.

“But IIHD had been set up by [DG3], a one-time head of the UN’s International Labor Organization (ILO), who worked for Jones, Day, Reavis and Pogue, a law firm that has done significant work for tobacco companies. The tobacco company documents record that [DG3] had a long association with Philip Morris that dated back to the 1970s, when he went on a Philip Morris ‘Mission’ to Russia. [DG3] was also the Chairman of the Advisory Group of LIBERTAD, an organization funded by Philip Morris and run by a Philip Morris employee... IIHD appears to have received indirect funding from Philip Morris..., and was used by Philip Morris to carry out several elements of its Boca Raton Strategy.”

Readers will draw their own conclusions about the veracity or otherwise of these claims.

But I simply ask: surely this cannot be the reason the ILO smoking ban has never been enforced?

MG ■

- *Tobacco company strategies to undermine tobacco control activities at the World Health Organization*, World Health Organization, July 2000.

**NB** The *Union* Editorial Board wishes to make it clear that publication of the above abstracts should not be taken to mean that the Board endorses the allegations made in the report.

## New ILO publication

### Organized labour in the 21st century

Edited by A.V. Jose

The volume presents the result of comparative research organized by the International Institute for Labour Studies on "Trade union responses to globalization". It includes a representative sample of the country case studies, edited and abridged to illustrate experiences drawn from three broad groups of countries: industrialized economies, middle-income countries, and developing nations.

The comparative research has yielded several significant findings. Together, the studies highlight the importance of organizational strategies to enable unions to exercise voice and influence policy. They bring out that a major challenge for unions in all countries, notably in developing countries, is the representation of non-traditional constituents and the provision of new services. They show that changes in the world of work and in social attitudes are leading to union alliances and coalitions with other civil society actors for common goals.

The studies included in the volume are intended to generate wider understanding of the role and changing priorities of organized labour in countries at varying stages of development. By stimulating greater reflection and analysis, they could contribute to the formulation of effective policies and strategies for labour movements in the years ahead.



## Open letter to Mr. Habra

cc. *Union magazine*

Dear Nadim,

I should like to express my sincere thanks for the technical problem earlier this week that blocked e-mail service for about four hours. On the basis of that experience, I should like to invite you to reflect further.

Productivity of all staff was improved markedly that day. Certainly, in my own section, people had more time to go through official correspondence, analyse national law and practice, and generally lower the level of their in-trays, than they have had in recent memory.

In addition, I believe there was a general improvement in health, as officials were constrained to get out of their chairs and go to the next office to communicate with their immediate colleagues, instead of sending them an e-mail. Many thousands of additional calories were burned that day, transferring exercise from index fingers to legs.

**Proposal:** one day each week should be an e-mail-free day, with all servers shut down and systems not functional.

In addition, considering the terrible cost of not answering one's e-mail for a day, all electronic communications arriving in the ILO on the designated days should be deleted automatically, without notifying the senders that this is being done. If the communications are sufficiently important, they will be sent again when no answer is given; if not, we didn't need them anyway.

In order to make it more difficult to avoid this measure, it is apparent that a random e-mail-free day should be chosen each week.

In accordance with ILO practice, I propose the creation of a Task Force to study this proposal, chosen from among the heaviest e-mail users in the Office, but also including the three or four officials who must remain somewhere, without computers on their desks.

With best wishes and renewed appreciation,

Lee Swepston ■  
12 April 2002

## UN cuts heat, late meetings

(*Inter Press Service, 11 March 2002*)

A cash-strapped United Nations has launched an austerity drive, slashing some \$75 million in mostly operational expenses at its Secretariat.

A UN official said the austerity measures are necessary to conform to a zero-growth budget. Since there will be no staff – including interpreters – working overtime after 6pm or on weekends, no meetings will be held at those times, said Joseph Connor, under-secretary-general for management.

Delegates were able to feel the changes starting on March 4, when heating in the 39-story building was turned down. Air conditioning will also be limited during summer months, particularly after 5pm.

One delegate said the reductions are an infringement on the authority of the General Assembly. Because of cutbacks, people had "to fight cold and sickness in conference rooms" in the last few days, and some were arriving at meetings with their overcoats on.

As a result of the new measures, even the pitcher water supplied to conference rooms has been discontinued, forcing delegates to get their water from coolers in the building.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan and diplomats representing 189 member states will also have to forgo the luxury of elevator operators and coat attendants. Both services have been discontinued "with immediate effect."

In a circular to staff members last week, Connor said that he anticipated that working conditions in the Secretariat would be affected by the "sharp cutbacks."

The cuts include \$19.7 million in general operating expenses, \$10 million in information technology, \$7.2 million in furniture and equipment, \$6.4 million in contractual services, \$2.8 million in staff travel, \$2 million in the hiring of consultants and experts and \$1.4 million in supplies and materials.

The UN Secretariat now has a staff of about 8,900 worldwide, of which nearly 4,500 work at headquarters in New York. The number has declined from a high of 12,000 in 1985, mostly through attrition.

Staff cuts and the zero growth budgets have been triggered by outstanding dues from member states, which have peaked at more than \$3 billion for the UN's regular and peacekeeping budgets. The worst offender is the United States, which owes about \$1.9 billion.

Annan said the Secretariat would review a number of administrative and management procedures. One area that is particularly ripe for scrutiny, he pointed out, is documents. "It seems to me there is a need to consider not only the quantity of these documents that we currently prepare, but also the way we do it," he said.



# ILO DIARY

## 31 days embedded in the mainstream

• Your eyes do not deceive you. The Diary is back. A desperate, last-ditch, barrel-scraping bid by the deadbeats on the Union Editorial Board to boost flagging circulation? No doubt. Cap in hand and on bended knee, barely two years after their craven hatchet job on this blameless column, they come crawling back and beg your humble scribe to resume the modest task of chronicling our great organization's due travails. Could refusal be an option for one who lives only to serve? Not a chance. So here goes.

• Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, *majeure et vaccinée*, brimming with competencies, centrally assessed, job-matched and gender-audited (yippee! all parts in working order), the diarist comes to the task not merely refreshed, but a much better person. All thanks, of course, to the active participation that now characterizes our enlightened workplace. Collective agreements, joint circulars, management luminaries addressing Union meetings... every idealistic vision that we militants were striving for has become a reality. Such an exciting time, isn't it, to be an ILO official? Speak up – can't quite hear you.

• So encouraging, at the Union's 5 March occupational safety and health meeting, to hear the Director of HRD promise a crackdown on smokers. The first time you're caught puffing in the office, he said, you'll get a warning. The second time, it's an official reprimand. The third time – instant dismissal! This three-strikes-and-you're-out regime will only be instituted once proper facilities have been provided for the addicts. So now that problem's been solved, let's hope attention will soon turn to another, less visible but no less important health scourge blighting the ILO – alcoholism among senior staff. If not, Ilote fears long-term damage to the quality of ILO communications.

• Ah yes, ILO communications. The title of a frankly offensive item that all too often disgraces these pages – but also the subject of a quixotic valedictory piece here last June by Michel Barton, outgoing chief of the (also outgoing) Bureau of Public Information. "There are no easy shortcuts", he intoned before leaping onto a TGV bound for Paris and an exciting new job, "in the battle for hearts and minds." But take heart – he must have changed his mind. For what's this we read in the editorial of the latest (sic) issue of UNESCO's excellent magazine *Sources*? "It has been decided to suspend UNESCO *Sources* as of this issue. The UNESCO *Courier* will also cease publication in its present form." The author? Michel Barton. No shortcuts there, then – just cuts, *tout court*.

• *The Matrix* – what a terrific movie that was! All about a bunch of brilliantly gifted people whose jobs involved doing amazing and heroically selfless things that deserved the highest reward – except that it was all virtual and only went on inside their heads. So no connection at all with Ilote's job description matrix then? I see.

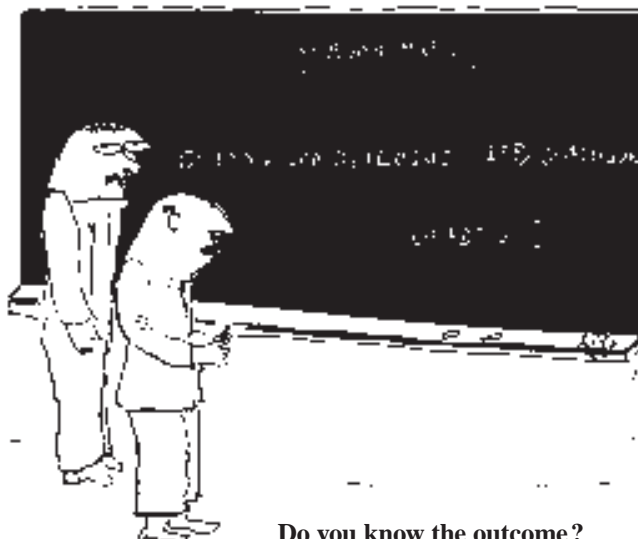
• And right on cue, here's a new collective agreement on a procedure for job grading. It's dated February 2002, so it will have been signed on behalf of the Union by the new SUC Chair, obviously. But wait – what's this? Alongside the name of the Director of HRD is that of someone styling himself "Co-Chairperson of the JNC". Is there something they haven't told us?

• INDISCO – you may be surprised to learn – is not in fact where Ilote boogied away all those hot seventies nights. It's an ILO activity. A worthwhile one, too: the full title is Inter-regional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations, and it's largely funded by the Danish development organization, DANIDA. Which makes it a shame that the visionaries who now hold power in Copenhagen put pressure on DANIDA to withdraw its funding. Not only that – they actually tried to get back the Danegeld that's already been donated. You may like to bear this in mind next time somebody offers you a glass of Carlsberg.

• Congratulations to the *World of Work* team for managing to get four photos of the DG into the March issue. The pick of these, under the craftily punning headline "Lyons meet", pictured the king of our jungle busily manestreaming with a couple of fat cats. You folks at DCOMM are on message and we salute you for it. But surely others can do better. That's why Ilote is this month launching a competition to find the ILO publication with the largest number of DG-pix. All nominations, please, to the address below by 1 April 2003. The prize? There's no prize. You were expecting a DGital camera maybe? No, sorry. Virtue is its own reward. And the ILO can only be the winner.

"Ilote" ■

(Editor's note: Ilote's ramblings in no way reflect positions adopted by any Staff Union committee. All contributions welcome. Write in confidence to [ilote2002@hotmail.com](mailto:ilote2002@hotmail.com))



Do you know the outcome?

# La Sagesse africaine

## Histoire de cauris

Les cauris sont de petits coquillages blancs du groupe des porcelaines, provenant de l'Océan indien, qui ont servi très tôt de monnaie d'abord en Afrique orientale puis en Afrique subsaharienne. Ils ont servi aussi de bijoux et de parures décoratives (masques, habits de cérémonies) dans l'Afrique traditionnelle ainsi que de supports de géomancie, dans les pratiques divinatoires. Ils ont conservé leur puissance et leur langage et demeurent encore aujourd'hui fort utilisés dans les arts modernes.

Au temps jadis, les cauris ont connu d'autres succès comme moyens de communication entre les peuples. Ainsi, d'après Amos Tutuola, grand narrateur de contes et légendes du Nigéria, aujourd'hui décédé, chez les Egba, peuple de la grande famille des Yoruba, parce qu'il n'y avait pas de connaissance livresque, les cauris ont constitué les symboles de la correspondance entre individus. En voici quelques exemples: si deux cauris sont liés ensemble, face contre face, cela veut dire «Je veux te voir». Et si on les renvoie en y ajoutant une plume, cela veut dire «Attends-moi». Si deux cauris sont liés dos à dos, cela signifie «Je ne veux pas de toi». Et si on ajoute un cauri supplémentaire en retour, cela veut dire «Fiche-moi le camp». Mais si on envoie en retour un morceau de charbon de bois, cela signifie alors «Je ne comprends pas pourquoi tu m'évites» et ainsi de suite...

Bien sûr, ce savoir a disparu. Si les cauris pouvaient parler...

## « Le mensonge devenu vérité »: conte peul

Un jour, une hyène, furetant aux abords d'un village, trouva un chevreau mort. Toute heureuse, elle le ramassa, s'éloigna du village et le traîne dans un bosquet pour y faire tranquillement ripaille. Mais au moment où elle s'apprêtait à manger, elle aperçut au loin un troupeau d'hyènes qui venaient droit sur elle. De peur que ses congénères ne lui ravissent son déjeuner, elle se hâta de cacher le chevreau, puis vint s'installer au bord de la route. Là, elle se mit à roter et à bailler bruyamment: «Bwaah! Bwaah! Bwaah!»

Les coureuses s'arrêtèrent: «Eh bien, Hyène sœur, qu'y a-t-il? Courez vite au village! Tout le bétail est mort et on a jeté les cadavres sur le dépôt d'ordures. Je me suis bien régalée. Maintenant, je rentre tranquillement dormir chez moi.»

A cette nouvelle alléchante, la troupe d'hyènes fonça vers le village avec une telle ardeur qu'elle souleva sous ses pas un véritable nuage de poussière. Contemplant ce spectacle, l'hyène se dit: «Voilà que mon mensonge est devenu vérité, car jamais un mensonge à lui seul ne pourrait soulever un tel nuage de poussière! Courons vite, c'est devenu la vérité! C'est devenu la vérité!» Et laissant là son chevreau, elle fonça à son tour vers le village...

*Telle est la force du mensonge qu'à force d'être répété, un beau jour le menteur lui-même finit par y croire.*

Rappelons pour les lecteurs d'*Union*, non au fait de la typologie des animaux dans les contes africains, que l'hyène est le symbole de la bêtise, de la couardise mais aussi de la voracité et de l'ingratitude. D'aspect rebutant, avec sa gueule noire, ses ricanelements, son vêtement aux couleurs ternes, son arrière-train abaissé et son odeur repoussante, l'hyène est le personnage le plus antipathique de la mythologie africaine.

## Les agences internationales abusent des temporaires:

### Un syndicat dénonce des violations des droits de l'homme

(Tribune de Genève, 12 mars 2002)

« Les Nations Unies sont l'incarnation de la violation des droits de l'homme! » L'accusation est grave. Elle provient de Jacques Vigne, le président du Syndicat New Wood des Nations Unies. L'homme est scandalisé tant par les conditions de travail dont sont victimes les employés temporaires des organisations internationales que par leur nombre. « Au moins 25 % des fonctionnaires internationaux ont des contrats à durée déterminée », estime-t-il. Et selon le Syndicat New Wood, ces travailleurs précaires représenteraient près de 30 % des employés de l'Office des Nations Unies et jusqu'à de 40 % de ceux de l'OMS. Au total, ils seraient au moins 4000 à œuvrer dans les différentes organisations implantées à Genève.

Pas de droit au regroupement familial, aucune couverture maladie ou accident professionnelle, pas d'assurance sociale, aucune certitude quant à leur avenir socioprofessionnel, pas de droit aux différentes indemnités dont jouissent leurs homologues « fixes » (aide au logement, à la scolarisation des enfants...): le statut des « ex-cols » (collaborateurs extérieurs) ne tient pas plus compte des normes prônées par le Bureau international du Travail que des Conventions européennes de Strasbourg.

#### Temporaires depuis douze ans

Le mot « temporaire » est trompeur. Certains portent ce titre depuis plusieurs années. Pour Catherine, ça dure depuis six ans. « J'ai été reconduite huit fois à mon poste dans une première organisation et six fois dans la seconde. Les contrats vont de quelques semaines à maximum onze mois. Car au-delà de ce délai, on devient fonctionnaire fixe. Les supérieurs font donc en sorte qu'il y ait des interruptions d'un ou deux mois entre chaque mandat. J'ai des collègues qui sont temporaires depuis douze ans. »

Les permis d'établissement à Genève et en France voisine n'étant délivrés qu'aux bénéficiaires de contrats de travail, une personne qui n'obtient pas de nouveau mandat peut se voir refouler à la frontière. « C'est une véritable épée de Damoclès, confirme Jacques Vigne. Si les temporaires ne donnent pas satisfaction ou qu'ils se plaignent d'un quelconque problème, ils sont menacés de ne pas être reconduits. » Et, à terme, d'être refoulés du territoire. D'où la difficulté d'obtenir des témoignages. Les « temporaires à long terme », comme on les appelle sarcastiquement, vivent dans la crainte perpétuelle de leur non-reconduction...

#### « No man's land juridique »

De par leur statut d'organisme supranational, les différents offices des Nations Unies ne sont soumis à aucune législation nationale en matière de droit du travail. Les collaborateurs ne sont donc protégés que par les normes internes de l'organisation qui les emploie. En cas de litige, ils peuvent saisir le Tribunal administratif du BIT. C'est ce qu'a souhaité faire Catherine, mais elle s'est vite résignée. « Les travailleurs sociaux et les ressources humaines m'ont fortement déconseillée de porter plainte. Ils disaient que ça me vaudrait d'être considérée comme une personne qui pose problème, que donc je ne retrouverai pas de nouveau contrat et que les frais d'avocats me coûteraient très cher. »

## ILO becoming disability-friendlier

Arising from the Access Audit at the ILO Geneva headquarters building carried out in July 2001 by Disability Matters Ltd., the following changes have been made:

- Signage to reserved parking spaces, lifts, ramps, toilets and meeting rooms has been improved.
- Ramps into the building have been installed at main entrances to the building at R3 level.
- A planed granite ramp has been installed, in place of the rough granite ramp at R2 South.
- Ramps have been installed to the podium in most meeting rooms.
- A building plan has been prepared, indicating an accessible route through the building, and the location of accessible lifts, toilets, parking, spaces as well as the restaurant, bank, meeting rooms.
- Two large lifts have had new buttons installed at a lower level, inside and outside.
- Telephones have been installed at a lower level near the Governing Body Room.
- Additional parking spaces have been reserved for wheelchair users, and existing reserved parking spaces have been increased in size according to recognized standards.
- The surface of the reserved parking spaces has been treated to prevent slipping.
- Changes have been made by EUREST in the cafeteria, to improve accessibility.
- Visible banding has been placed on most glass doors.
- Black, anti-slip tape has been placed on all the stairs of the main building, to improve visibility and ensure that the edge of the stairs can be seen even in case of an electricity breakdown.
- An additional wheelchair-accessible toilet has been installed.

### Changes planned in the immediate future

- Changes to the paths leading to the park, so that wheelchair users can have access (by June).
- Plans have been prepared for the installation of wheelchair-accessible toilets on every floor of the building, although there are some doubts about this, due to the amount of resources required.
- The balcony adjacent to the delegates' bar will be made accessible through the installation of an automatically opening glass door, and a ramp.

Thanks go to Alan Wild for arranging funds for the Access Audit, to Antonio Busca and to Gérard Dubosson for their cooperation in implementing the recommendations of this Audit, and in particular to Eloy Alonso, who really devoted himself to ensuring that as many of the changes as possible were made prior to the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on the ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace, last October.

**Barbara Murray** ■  
Manager - Equity Issues  
(IFP/Skills)

## "Petty" theft in the ILO

As a member of the group of volunteers who organize, come rain or come shine, the annual ILO children's end of year party, I have seen many strange things in my time. As in every type of event, there's always room for improvement, and our committee members are always looking for new ideas or ways of making things run a little smoother. One of the ideas we had this year regarding the sale of the photos of our dear little cherubs was the "do-it-yourself" approach. Instead of the photographer being present to take the orders, we thought it would be easier for everyone if we placed envelopes beside the photo display, and colleagues would take down the order they need, put the money in the envelope and send it to my office. This way, I grouped the orders, took them to the photographer on my way home from the office and collected the corresponding photos from my post box – fortunately the photographer lives in my area so he would drop them off regularly.

Yes, but you see there's a snag. It became apparent after the holiday boom was over and the photos needed to be taken down to give way to more current events, that... well... how can I put this... quite a few of the original photos were missing. After checking in the usual places, in my office, back of my car, on the floor of R2 where the photos were on display, it became clear that 12 photos were missing. I may be naive in my approach, but I always like to give people the benefit of the doubt, and if one or two were missing, then it would be perfectly understandable: but 12!

How do you explain to the poor photographer, who not only spends the whole of the Saturday afternoon running after our kiddies to catch that magic moment, then develops over a hundred photos and displays them in the ILO premises, all free-of-charge, that, well, you see, 7 Swiss Francs really is a bit too steep for the average international civil servant to cough up for a photo, so, if nobody's watching, I could just... maybe... help myself...

Yes, and it's not as if we don't know who the culprits are. You see the average photo is the usual group photo where Santa sits in his chair surrounded by five smiling, unsuspecting children. Little do they know that one in every five of these poor innocents' parents is a potential petty thief... Of course when a portrait shot goes missing, then it's a cinch. Fortunately for those concerned, the last thing I want to be doing in my spare time is to be running after my fellow colleagues and harassing them for seven Francs.

Looks like we'll have to find a new system next year, where these expensive photos are under lock and key, behind glass. That is, if the photographer decides that it's worth his while taking any photos next year.

**Caroline De Giorgi** ■  
Groupe de l'Arbre de Noël

Feeling a bit tired? The best thing you can do is to put your head down on your desk at work for a quick snooze. And if your boss asks what you're up to, tell him or her you are only taking the advice of Nasa scientists.

Nasa studies have shown that performance increases by 35% if employees take a 45-minute "power nap" in the afternoon. The research was carried out to find out how best to make use of astronauts' time in space but the scientists claim that the findings could also provide a productivity dividend for more terrestrial businesses.

(Guardian, 18 March 2002)

## Freedom of association: The Italian case

1. Freedom of association and trade union freedom. Trade union freedom has been solemnly proclaimed as a fundamental principle of Italian industrial relations by art. 39 of the Constitution (1947), declaring that “labour union organisation is free”. This norm is, first of all, a confirmation of the more general principle of freedom of association sanctioned by art. 18 of the same Constitution; the confirmation being necessary to mark beyond any doubt the distinction between present practice and that of the fascist regime.

2. The notion of trade union freedom. Trade union freedom has traditionally been held to imply the right of individuals to organise, to join a union without any condition required by law, to resign from it, to choose among different unions and to refuse to belong to any union (negative freedom). But it implies moreover a constitutional prohibition on the state to interfere in internal union affairs: e.g. predetermining by law their aims and models of organisation, defining areas of union jurisdiction (which on the contrary can be and is done by the legislature for other associations).

3. Recognition/registration of trade unions. The only condition explicitly required by art. 39 of unions asking for recognition – but considered applicable to all unions, even the non-recognised – is that union constitutions and by-laws be inspired by the principle of internal democracy. Nonetheless other conditions, such as a minimum number or percentage of members, have been, more or less legitimately, derived from the second part of art. 39 as presuppositions of recognition and are required to acquire the status of “most representative union”.

4. Trade union freedom and the two sides of industry. The constitutional guarantee applies not only to the workers, who are the direct beneficiaries of trade union freedom, but also to labour organisations themselves: meaning any association, coalition or organisation (even different from associations) of employees, whether temporary or permanent, connected or not

with the established trade unions, for the purpose of promoting the collective interests of the members pertaining to their working and, more broadly, social conditions. The guarantee applies as well, although indirectly, to the employers (who – differently from the workers – can as individuals be parties to collective agreements and industrial conflict) and to their organisations operating for the purpose of promoting common interests related to industrial relations. The recognition of this employers’ freedom does not imply that their activity – collective bargaining and lock-out – is protected and qualified by law in the same way as similar labour union activity.

5. Legitimate aims of trade unions. Legitimate aims of labour organisations, and of strike actions, can be not only of an “economic” but also of a social and, broadly speaking, political nature. To identify those workers’ organisations to which the constitutional guarantee – and of the connected freedoms sanctioned by ordinary legislation – apply, it is decisive to look not at their goals, but at the type of action used to promote them, particularly collective bargaining and strike action, which are the qualifying signs of labour unions.

Marco Biagi ■

*From a report on six national case studies in the field of freedom of association*

([www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav/learn/global/freedom2.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav/learn/global/freedom2.htm)),

12 February, 2001

• **Marco Biagi represented the Italian Government on the ILO Governing Body. On 19 March 2002, he was shot dead outside his home in Bologna. His murder is widely believed to have been a political assassination, and unions called a two-hour general strike to protest at the killing. One month later, on 16 April, the country saw its first full-day general strike for 20 years to oppose planned changes to article 18 of the 30-year-old labour law, which obliges employers to reinstate workers who can prove they were unjustly sacked. Professor Biagi was the architect of the proposed changes.**

MG ■

## New York, Geneva earn billion\$ from UN agencies

(from IPS UN Journal, 5 March 2002)

The United States and Switzerland earn more than 5 billion dollars annually from UN agencies and affiliated international bodies based in New York and Geneva, according to UN figures. The United Nations pumps about 3.3 billion dollars annually into the New York economy while the Swiss economy benefits to the tune of about 1.8 billion dollars every year, UN spokesman Farhan Haq told IPS. The monies are spent mostly on local staff salaries, rent, goods and services, and the hotel and restaurant industries in the two cities, which host the two largest UN centres in the world. In a nationwide referendum Sunday, Switzerland voted to join the United Nations as a full-fledged member, ending the country’s longstanding policy of political neutrality. If, as expected, the 189-member UN General Assembly and the 15-member Security Council accept its application, Switzerland would be the 190th member of the world body.

Geneva houses 12 UN agencies and affiliated bodies, including the World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, International Labour Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Meteorological Organization, UN Conference on Trade and Development, and UN Institute for Disarmament Research.

According to *Le Temps*, a Swiss newspaper, one employee in ten in the canton of Geneva is directly or indirectly dependent on the area’s 30,000 UN staffers, diplomats, and members of non-

governmental organizations (NGOs). *Le Temps* also said that 2,000 international meetings are held in Geneva every year, bringing in about 120,000 visiting delegates – and their tourist dollars. Steve Bernard, director of the UN Information Centre in Geneva, says all sectors of the economy benefit from the presence of UN agencies. The only negative aspect, he says, is that the UN staffers are exempt from paying taxes.

As a member State, however, Switzerland will have to pay about 41.2 million dollars in assessed dues, including about 32 million dollars for UN peacekeeping operations. In 1999, Switzerland made voluntary contributions amounting to about 290 million dollars to various UN agencies, bringing its total annual contributions to about 331 million. Compared to its earnings of 1.8 billion dollars, Switzerland will have a net gain of over 1.4 billion dollars from UN-related income in Geneva every year. The US share of the regular UN budget is about 298 million dollars annually. Of the nearly 500 million dollars in procurements approved by the UN Secretariat in New York every year, US companies get about 49 percent of the business. For every dollar that the United States contributes to the UN Development Programme, US companies receive about three dollars in contracts for goods and services, according to UN estimates. At one time, the United States also won at least 33 percent of all peacekeeping contracts. These included contracts for food rations, vaccines, relief supplies, office equipment, and military vehicles for UN operations worldwide. According to former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the 3.3 billion dollars earned by the city from the United Nations also generates about 30,600 jobs.

Thalif Dee ■