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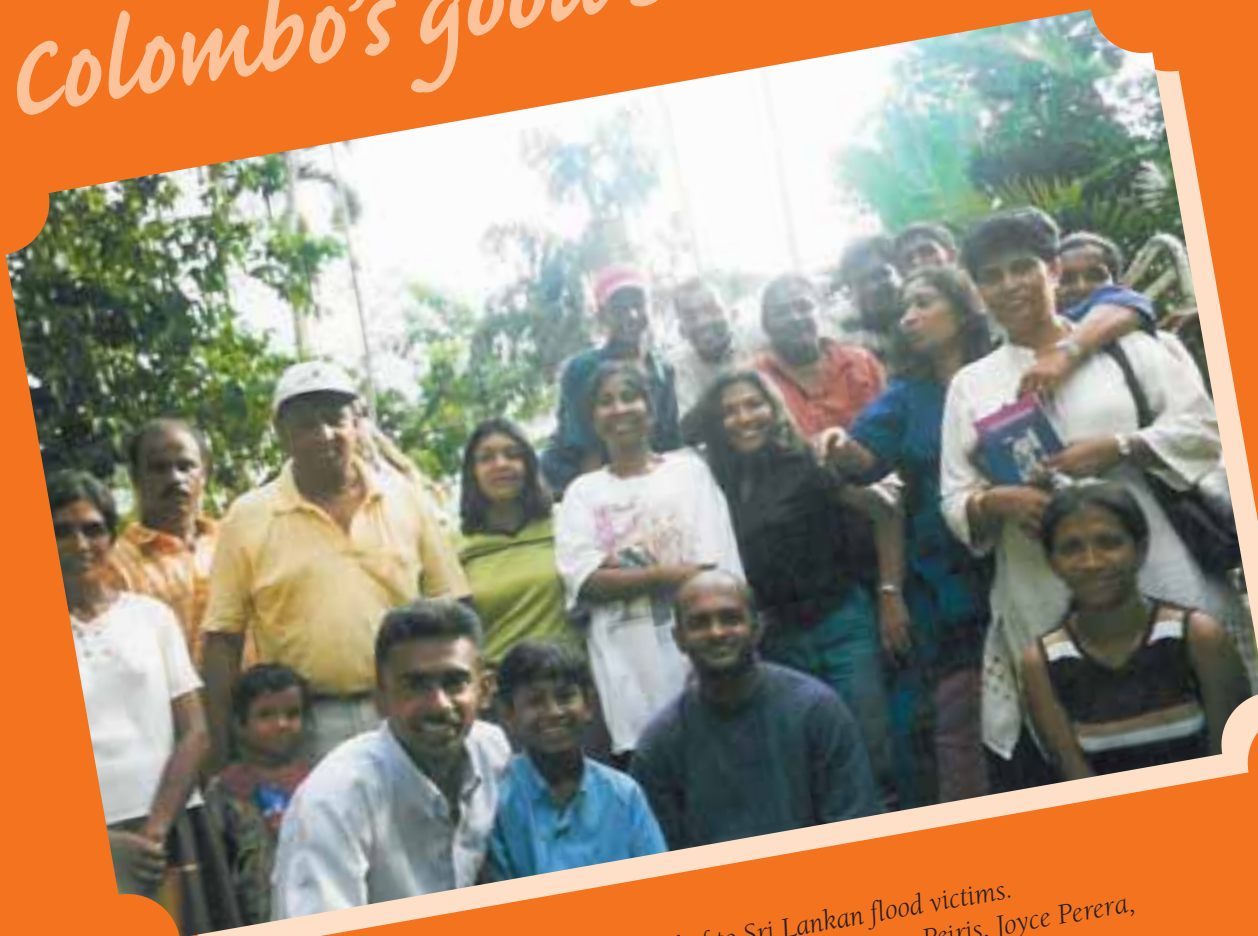
Septembre 2003

unión

- **Comédie d'automne**
- **Smoking ban: Now or never?**
- **K* et la rentrée**
- **Assurance chômage**

OIT • ILO • BIT
Boletín del Sindicato
Staff Union Bulletin
Bulletin du Syndicat
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/staffun/info/magazine/index.htm>

Colombo's good Samaritans



May 2003:
Staff from the ILO Colombo office bring relief to Sri Lankan flood victims.
Seen with grateful villagers are (L to R) Ayoma de Silva, Sharon Peiris, Joyce Perera,
Bernie Coorey, Srimalie Jonathan, Danura Miriyagalla (seated below, centre)

EDITORIAL

Comédie d'automne

1^{er} acte: saudade

C'était un temps, pas si lointain, où les institutions avaient du bon.

Prenez par exemple cette antiquité nommée Comité de sélection. Cette structure déjà tripartite avait été mise en place autour des années quatre-vingt pour éviter les dérives et les abus dans le processus de recrutement et de sélection. Ce n'était certes pas la panacée, mais il vous garantissait au moins, à vous humble fonctionnaire interne, que le poste auquel vous vous intéressiez avait fait l'objet de toutes les attentions de la part de vos représentants (qualifications adéquates requises, pas de costume sur mesure, publication du poste dans les langues des travail, choix du grade adéquat, etc. etc.), que votre cv avait été examiné non seulement par le demandeur du poste mais aussi par le Département du personnel, le Syndicat et les « indépendants » (nommés conjointement par les deux premiers).

Mais Las! Un beau jour, les autorités s'autorisèrent à décréter que cette vieille chose ne marchait pas, que les procédures étaient beaucoup trop longues, les brèches de confidentialité beaucoup trop fréquentes, que l'opacité des procédures ne pouvait plus durer et que, nom d'un petit bonhomme, il fallait absolument responsabiliser les chefs de services et donc leur donner beaucoup plus de latitude pour recruter leur personnels.

2^e acte: renouveau

La fin des années quatre-vingt-dix fut ainsi le théâtre d'après négociations entre l'administration et le Comité du Syndicat où ce dernier, à coup d'actions collectives (mobilisation ruban vert) fit tout son possible pour sauver l'esprit de cette institution. Magnanime et peut-être un peu trop confiant face au miroir aux alouettes brandi par son interlocuteur, il accepta finalement que de nouvelles règles de recrutement voient le jour, à condition qu'elles soient scrupuleusement évaluées après une période de deux ans.

3^e acte: rebondissement: changement d'acteur dans le rôle principal

L'entrée en scène d'une nouvelle vedette balaya tous ces chichis

EDITORIAL

An autumn comedy of errors

Act One: Before the Fall

There was a time, not so long ago, when institutions had their merits.

Take, for example, that venerable body known as the Selection Board. Resolutely tripartite, it was set up back in the Dark Ages of the 1980s to avert abuses in the process of recruitment and selection. True, it wasn't perfect, but at least it offered you, the humble internal candidate, a guarantee that the post you were interested in had received every attention from your elected representatives (to ensure the job matched the qualifications required, wasn't tailor-made for a particular person, was advertised in all working languages and appropriately graded, etc.), and that your CV had been examined not only by the responsible chief but also by the quaintly named Personnel Department, the Staff Union and the "independents" (who were jointly nominated by the first two).

Alas! One day, the powers-that-be took it upon themselves to decree that this old contraption no longer worked: it was far too slow, the breaches of confidentiality far too frequent, the procedures far too opaque and – isn't it obvious? – branch chiefs must be made more responsible and thus be given a lot more latitude in recruiting their staff.

Act Two: Hope Springs Eternal

So it was that the end of the 1990s witnessed fierce negotiations between the Administration and the SUC, which did its best through collective action (Green Ribbon campaign, anyone?) to preserve the spirit of the Selection Board. Magnanimously, and perhaps lulled into a false sense of security, the Committee finally agreed to new rules on recruitment provided they be thoroughly appraised after two years.

d'évaluation d'un autre temps. Nous étions entrés dans le XXI^e siècle, l'ère de la négociation collective. Un accord sur le sujet vit le jour qui scella rapidement le sort de l'équité, la rapidité et la transparence. Sa philosophie de corps de garde est d'ailleurs très simple et peut se résumer ainsi:

Art. 1: Le chef a toujours raison.

Art. 2: Si tel n'était pas le cas, l'art. 1 entrerait immédiatement en vigueur.

4^e acte: le chant des Sirènes

Si effectivement le but à atteindre était de donner plus de pouvoir en matière de recrutement aux chefs, celui-ci est largement dépassé. Quand à leur responsabilisation et leur capacité à rendre des comptes lorsque leurs décisions sont discutables, ceci est une autre affaire. Comme le Syndicat n'est plus vraiment impliqué dans le processus et que son rôle se borne à vérifier si les procédures ont effectivement été correctement suivies, on assiste, comme par le passé, à des dérives non contrôlables puisqu'il n'y a plus aucun garde-fou permettant de corriger les sorties de route. Donnons pour exemple la vaste fumisterie de l'accès par l'intermédiaire des centres d'évaluation à un grade supérieur. Saviez-vous qu'actuellement seuls les deux premiers candidats « short-listés » dans un concours avaient l'incommensurable honneur de pouvoir passer le centre d'évaluation afin d'accéder à un grade supérieur alors qu'à l'origine, ces centres avaient été conçus pour constituer un vivier de compétences lorsqu'un poste se déclarait vacant? Ceci n'est bien sûr que la pointe de l'iceberg des distorsions des règles; nous pourrions vous en conter par centaines.

Fin de partie

Le thème du recrutement et de la sélection est selon nous suffisamment grave pour que nous demandions qu'un grand débat de rentrée soit ouvert sur la question. Notre avenir professionnel et nos développements de carrières valent bien une réflexion approfondie sans doute?

Les rédacteurs
unionmag@ilo.org

Act Three: The Plot Thickens with a Change of Leading Actor

When a new star took centre stage, however, all this old stuff and nonsense about reappraisal was swept aside. For this was the twenty-first century, the new age of collective bargaining. An agreement was concluded that soon consigned equity, efficiency and transparency to the dustbin of history. Its down-to-earth philosophy is so simple that it may be summarized in two lines:

Rule 1. The chief is always right.

Rule 2. In the unlikely event that the chief is wrong, refer to Rule 1.

Act Four: The Song of the Sirens

If indeed the aim was to give chiefs greater power over recruitment, it has been amply accomplished. As for making them more responsible, and accountable for their debatable decisions, that's another matter. Since the Union is no longer really involved in the process, its role limited to checking whether the procedures have in fact been properly followed, we are now as in the past seeing things drift out of control because there is no longer any regulatory safeguard to tether them to. Example: to achieve a higher grade you must go via the assessment centres. Yeah, right. How many people know that currently only the first two short-listed candidates in a competition have the infinite honour of taking the assessment centre route to promotion? Originally the centres were conceived to constitute a roster of competencies when a post became vacant. Not any more.

When it comes to bending the rules, of course, this is merely the tip of the iceberg; we could go on, but won't.

Endgame

For it seems to us that the question of recruitment and selection is so crucial that it's now time to open a serious debate. Are the future prospects and career development of ILO staff not worth at least some minimal consideration?

The editors
unionmag@ilo.org

AROUND THE CORNER

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

Staff Union secretariat:
Tel. (+ 41 22 799) 7956
Email: syndicat@ilo.org

Union is the press organ of the ILO Staff Union. Its editorial stance and contents are determined by its Editorial Board. The communications of the Staff Union Committee, which is the executive organ of the Staff Union, are identified as such whenever they are published in Union.

Staff Union introductory courses

In September this year, the Staff Union will begin a series of introductory courses for new members and staff representatives on the following subjects:

- Introduction to the Staff Union in general
- Staff representatives
- Joint Negotiating Committee
- Recruitment/selection
- Grading questions
- P and G staff: differences, rules
- International relations (FICSA, Geneva Group, etc.)
- Salaries and allowances
- Headquarters and Field: differences, mobility
- ILO internal justice system (grievance procedure, Joint Panel, Tribunal)
- Contract types, including precarious
- T titularization, personal promotion
- Gender, ILO Youth
- ACOSH, industrial accidents and diseases/compensation
- Staff welfare
- Staff Health Insurance Fund
- Pensions
- MEC, Staff Union Assistance Fund
- Communications, website, *Union* magazine

It will be a first cycle, on a trial basis, to be repeated if and when there is a demand. The first cycle will comprise 13 sessions: one session every Monday from 1 to 2p.m. in the Staff Union Committee room (6/20). Facilitators will either be Staff Union Committee members or colleagues from Headquarters. The papers prepared for the different sessions will be made available to the field for similar actions.

Help-desk

Also as from September the help-desk will be reintroduced. Every Wednesday from 12 to 2pm a member of the Staff

Union Committee will be in office 6-20 to answer questions of staff seeking advice. If necessary, legal consultation can be arranged. It is not necessary to make an appointment for such consultation.

Extraordinary General Meeting

Following the decisions of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) relating to salary survey methodologies, which, if applied, would lead to a considerable reduction in salary for locally recruited staff both in the field and at headquarters, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 25 June 2003 which unanimously adopted a resolution on local salaries methodologies. The Resolution calls upon the Director-General to inform the UN Secretary General and his counterparts in other Agencies of his serious concerns with decisions made by the ICSC during its spring 2003 session concerning methodologies for salary surveys and asks him to instruct his representatives at the July 2003 sessions of the HRD Network and of the ICSC to act in favour of the withdrawal of all the impugned decisions. It also instructs the Staff Union Committee to contact the ILO Administration to jointly review the consequences of the changes in the methodologies and the ways in which the Office should face them in the interest of local staff.

At their meeting in New York, the Human Resources directors from the UN and Agencies considered, among other things, the issue of changes in methodology for G staff salaries. In this respect, staff mobilization and action have been extremely useful. Many Agency heads representatives took a strong stand against changes proposed with the sole aim of reducing salaries in the short to long term. The ILO Management and the Staff Union issued a joint statement. The outcome of the last ICSC in July is not yet known.

COME AND JOIN US!

- Become a member
- Communicate
- Participate

Not a windows doc

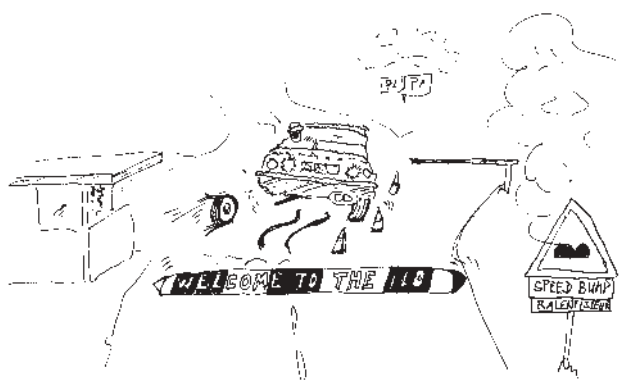
(*Financial Times*, 23 July 2003)

People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. But what about bureaucrats at United Nations agencies?

Lee Jong-wook, new World Health Organization head, has – shock – eschewed a windowed office. This flies in the face of the prevailing UN ranking system where office size and window count relate directly to rank.

A 20-year WHO veteran, Lee wants decision-making to be “more participatory”, so he ordered the partitions to be taken down. “My desk will be among other people’s,” he told staff. “This is not just a symbolic gesture. It is a way of ensuring that the lines of communication stay open, and that I stay in touch.”

What's next? An end to two-hour lunches?



Cursos de introducción al Sindicato del Personal

En septiembre de este año, el Sindicato del Personal organizará una serie de cursos introductorios para los nuevos miembros y para los representantes del personal sobre los siguientes temas:

- introducción general sobre el Sindicato del Personal;
- representantes del personal;
- Comité de Negociación Paritario;
- contratación y selección del personal;
- cuestiones sobre la clasificación de puestos;
- categorías de servicios orgánicos y de servicios generales: diferencias, normas;
- relaciones internacionales (FICSA, Grupo de Ginebra, etc.);
- sueldos y subsidios;
- la Sede y el Terreno: diferencias, movilidad;
- Sistema Jurídico Interno de la OIT (procedimiento de examen de reclamaciones, comité paritario, Tribunal);
- modalidades contractuales, incluidas las formas precarias de contratación;
- titularización; ascensos del personal;
- género; los jóvenes en la OIT;
- Comité consultivo para la seguridad y la salud; accidentes y enfermedades laborales/compensación;
- bienestar;
- Caja del Seguro de Salud del Personal;
- pensiones;
- MEC; Fondo de Ayuda al Personal;
- comunicaciones: sitio Web, *Unión*;

Se realizará un primer ciclo, a modo experimental, que se repetirá en función de la demanda. Este primer ciclo constará de 13 sesiones, que tendrán lugar cada lunes, de 1 a 2 de la tarde, en la sala del Comité del Sindicato del Personal (despacho 6-20). Los facilitadores serán los miembros del Comité o los colegas de la Sede. Los documentos elaborados para las distintas sesiones se distribuirán también en el terreno para fines similares.

Oficina de Información

A partir del mes de septiembre, la Oficina de Información reanudará sus actividades. Cada miércoles, de 12 a 2 de la tarde, un miembro del Comité del Sindicato estará a dis-

posición de cualquier miembro del personal que solicite asesoramiento (despacho 6-20). De ser necesario, se proporcionará asistencia jurídica. Estas consultas no requerirán cita previa.

Reunión General Extraordinaria

Como consecuencia de las decisiones adoptadas por la Comisión de Administración Pública Internacional (CAPI) relativas a las metodologías para la determinación de los sueldos, que de aplicarse supondrían una reducción considerable de los sueldos del personal local contratado tanto en el terreno como en la sede, el 25 de junio de 2003 se celebró una Reunión General Extraordinaria en la que se adoptó, por unanimidad, una resolución sobre las metodologías para la determinación de los sueldos del personal local. En dicha Resolución se pide al Director General que exprese al Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas y a sus homólogos de otros organismos su grave preocupación por las decisiones adoptadas por la CAPI en su reunión de primavera de 2003, en relación con las metodologías para la determinación de los sueldos, y que encargue a sus representantes en la reuniones de la Red del Departamento de Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos y en las reuniones de la CAPI –julio de 2003– que respalden la retirada de todas las decisiones impugnadas. Igualmente, se pide al Comité del Sindicato del Personal que se ponga en contacto con la Administración de la OIT para llevar a cabo un examen conjunto sobre las consecuencias de los cambios en las metodologías y sobre la forma en que la Oficina debería afrontar dichos cambios en interés del personal local.

En su reunión en Nueva York, los directores de Recursos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas y de los organismos examinaron, entre otras cosas, la cuestión relativa a los cambios en las metodologías para la determinación de los sueldos de las categorías de servicios generales. En este sentido, la movilización y las medidas llevadas a cabo por el personal han sido de extrema utilidad. Los representantes de muchos de los directores de los organismos adoptaron una postura muy firme ante estos cambios, cuya única finalidad es reducir los sueldos de corto a largo plazo. La Dirección de la OIT y el Sindicato del Personal presentaron una declaración conjunta. Todavía no se dispone de información sobre los resultados de la última reunión de la CAPI, celebrada en el mes de julio.

¡UNANSE A NOSOTROS!

- Afiliarse • Comunicar • Participar

UNDP's positive signal to the poor

(*Financial Times*, 8 August 2003)

Sir, The United Nations Development Programme's new management assessment techniques are long overdue ("A game of management survival", August 4).

I resigned from UNDP in 1992 precisely because I could not imagine a career in an institution with arbitrary, even whimsical, performance assessment practices. Staff rotations, promotions and assignments were based on political connections and nationality rather than on criteria related to quality. This approach to staff resulted in country programmes without focus and clear objectives.

Much as I believed in UNDP's mission of human development, I found it impossible from my post in Africa to elicit a response from human resources staff on what they were measuring; and how.

Since my departure from UNDP, more than 10 years ago, the development industry has been increasingly questioned about results. I look forward to seeing UNDP apply the same rigorous processes to staff at different levels in New York and in the field, including human resources staff. It is the least that can be done to increase accountability to the poor people ostensibly served by these programmes.

Veena Siddharth ■
Washington, DC

AUX QUATRE COINS COMMUNICATION DU COMITÉ

Secrétariat du Syndicat
Tél. (+ 41 22 799) 7956
Courriel: syndicat@ilo.org

Union est l'organe de presse du Syndicat du personnel du Bureau international du Travail. Son Comité de rédaction détermine la ligne éditoriale et le contenu du journal. Les communications du Comité du Syndicat, qui est l'organe exécutif du Syndicat, sont identifiées en tant que telles dès lors qu'elles sont publiées dans Union.

Cours d'Introduction organisés par le Syndicat

Le Syndicat organisera dès septembre prochain une série de cours d'introduction pour les nouveaux membres et les représentants du Syndicat sur les sujets suivants:

- Présentation du Syndicat en général;
- Représentation syndicale;
- Comité de Négociation Paritaire;
- Recrutement/Sélection;
- Questions de Classification;
- Grades P et G: les différences, le statut;
- Relations internationales (FICSA, Groupe de Genève, etc...)
- Salaires et allocations;
- Siège et bureaux extérieurs: différence, mobilité;
- Système justice interne au BIT (procédure de plainte, comité mixte, tribunal);
- Types de contrats, y compris précaires;
- Titularisation; Promotions personnelles;
- Genre; ILO Youth;
- ACOSH; accidents professionnels et maladies/compensation;
- Bien-être;
- Caisse Maladie; Pensions;
- MEC; Fonds d'Entraide du Syndicat du Personnel;
- Communications; site WEB; magazine UNION.

Il s'agira d'un premier cycle, sous forme de test, qu'il faudra répéter si besoin. Ce premier cycle comprendra 13 séances: tous les lundis de 13 à 14h. à la salle de réunion du Syndicat (6-20). Les intervenants seront des membres du comité du Syndicat ou des collègues du siège. Des documents seront préparés pour chaque séance et disponibles pour les collègues du terrain en cas de projets similaires.

Help Desk

Depuis septembre également la fonction Help desk sera introduite à nouveau. Tous les mercredis de midi à 14h. un membre du Comité du Syndicat sera présent au 6-20 pour

répondre aux questions des collègues. Si besoin, une consultation avec un juriste pourra être organisée. Il ne sera pas nécessaire de prendre rendez-vous pour le Help desk.

Assemblée générale extraordinaire

Suite aux décisions de la Commission de la Fonction Publique Internationale (CFPI) concernant l'enquête salariale, qui, si elles sont appliquées, engendreraient une réduction importante du salaire pour le personnel recruté localement tant sur le terrain qu'au siège, une assemblée générale extraordinaire s'est tenue le 25 juin 2003. Cette assemblée a adopté à l'unanimité une résolution sur la méthodologie du calcul des salaires. Cette résolution demande au Directeur général d'informer le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies et les chefs des autres agences de sa préoccupation concernant les décisions prises par la CFPI durant sa séance du printemps 2003 concernant la méthodologie de l'enquête salariale. De plus l'assemblée demande au Directeur général de donner les instructions nécessaires à ses représentants dans le réseau des Ressources Humaines et à la CFPI afin qu'ils agissent en faveur du retrait de ces décisions douteuses. Elle a également demandé au Comité du Syndicat de contacter l'administration du BIT afin de regarder ensemble les conséquences des changements de la méthodologie et comment le Bureau pourrait y faire face dans l'intérêt du personnel local. Lors de leur réunion à New York, les directeurs des Ressources Humaines des Nations Unies et des Agences affiliées ont étudié, entre autres, les changements de la méthodologie pour le calcul des salaires pour le personnel G. Sur ce point-là, la mobilisation et les actions entreprises par le personnel ont eu un impact certain. Plusieurs représentants de chefs d'agences ont pris une position très ferme contre les changements proposés dans le seul but de réduire les salaires à court et long terme. L'administration et le syndicat du BIT ont fait une intervention commune. Nous ne savons pas encore quels sont les résultats de la dernière réunion de juillet de la CFPI.

REJOIGNEZ NOUS!

- Adhérer
- Communiquer
- Participer

Assurance chômage pour les fonctionnaires internationaux

Suite aux négociations menées par l'Association pour la protection sociale des fonctionnaires internationaux (APSF) et l'Association des fonctionnaires internationaux français (AFIF) avec les services de l'assurance chômage française UNEDIC, certains fonctionnaires internationaux¹ ont la possibilité depuis septembre 2002 d'adhérer à un régime facultatif et volontaire d'assurance chômage.

Pour les fonctionnaires en poste l'adhésion est possible jusqu'au 31 décembre 2003; pour les nouveaux fonctionnaires l'adhésion est possible dans un délai maximum de 12 mois à partir de leur date de recrutement.

La cotisation, entièrement à la charge de l'assuré, correspond aux cotisations employeur + salarié et s'élève à 6,4% du salaire pensionnable, plafonné à 9728 euros par mois. Le taux des prestations est de 57,4% du salaire de référence pour la cotisation².

La durée des prestations est de 18 mois à condition d'une durée d'affiliation continue ou non d'au moins 18 mois sur une période de 24 mois précédant la perte d'emploi. Pour des durées de cotisation plus longues (36 mois sur 48 mois, 54 mois sur 72 mois) et selon que l'assuré a 50 ou 57 ans, la durée d'indemnisation peut être de 30 ou 42 mois.

Les périodes d'affiliation dans un régime chômage national avant le recrutement dans une organisation ou après avoir quitté l'organisation sont cumulables et peuvent ouvrir des droits dans les limites des durées d'affiliation et du barème de prestations prévus par le nouveau régime facultatif ou par un régime national auquel aurait été affilié l'intéressé avant son recrutement ou après avoir quitté l'organisation. Pour toucher les prestations, il faut justifier d'une adresse en France et s'inscrire comme demandeur d'emploi auprès des services français des ASSEDIC. Si la personne concernée ne souhaite pas rester en France, elle doit néanmoins indiquer son pays de résidence dans l'UE et s'inscrire au régime chômage de ce pays dans un délai de sept jours. L'UNEDIC lui

Suite p. 11

versera les indemnités, via le régime chômage du pays de résidence, pendant trois mois, à l'issue desquels elle sera prise en charge par le régime chômage de ce pays selon les conditions et le barème de ce régime pour autant qu'elle travaille au moins pendant un jour (par exemple via une agence d'intérim) afin d'être affiliée au régime chômage du pays concerné. Si, au bout des trois mois, elle décide de revenir en France, elle continuera à percevoir les indemnités UNEDIC.

J F Santarelli ■

¹ Personnes employées par des organisations intergouvernementales, internationales ou régionales en vertu d'engagements permanents/indéfinis, de durée limitée ou à court terme, qui sont ressortissants d'un pays membre de l'Union européenne, de l'Islande, du Liechtenstein, de la Norvège ou de la Suisse, et qui justifient d'une adresse en France.
² Il faut souligner que le revenu de remplacement fourni par les prestations chômage pourra être bien supérieur à 60% du salaire net pour ceux dont le salaire mensuel de référence ne dépasse pas le plafond de 9728 euros (environ 11.500 \$), du fait que le salaire de référence est le salaire brut pensionnable, qui dans la plupart des organisations internationales est considérablement plus élevé que le salaire net après les retenues pour la pension, l'assurance maladie, la contribution de personnel etc. La prestation chômage peut alors représenter 80% du salaire.

Information: expatries@garp.unedic.fr

Pourquoi les fonctionnaires ne sont-ils pas heureux? Episode XXI

Je sais, je sais, j'ai été infidèle, et il semble même que je vous ai manqué... au moins un petit peu, si j'en crois le courrier massif qui m'est parvenu pendant les vacances: parmi ces missives énamourées, j'aurai la fatuité de vous lire un passage de la plus récente: «Ka est un bouffon de la pire espèce, un patrocineur qui verbiage, un folliculaire cataglot-tiste et cacographe, qui nous inflige ses jérémiades à long-ueur d'année – un numéro double nous épargnant heureusement par deux fois les picoteries de ce plumitif»... Y'a pas à dire, ça fait chaud au cœur.

Mais mettez-vous à ma place! Vous croyez que c'est facile d'écrire avec un verre de pastis dans une main et une olive noire aux herbes dans l'autre? Il faut admettre de surcroît que la canicule qui sévit depuis deux mois n'arrange pas nos affaires, nos cerveaux déliquescents appelant la fraîcheur comme la pelouse grillée de nos jardins, nos bouteilles mises à vieillir dans des caves mal isolées, et tout un peuple muet et agonisant de lombrics enfouis. Aligner plus de deux phrases avec sujet verbe complément et si possible, parce que c'est souvent là que réside le charme, un complément indirect, relève de l'exploit, surtout si l'on envisage de manipuler des mots de plus de deux syllabes.

Mais grâce à l'air conditionné de notre Bureau, me voilà de retour...

Et justement, je suppose que lorsque vous revenez de vacances, vous ne manquez pas, tout comme moi, de rapporter quelques babioles à vos collègues méritant(es): le jour de la rentrée, vous vous garez au P2-Nord (ce détail a son importance, vous verrez), et sortez de votre coffre (un break) les divers petits cadeaux que vous comptez distribuer: une bouteille de muscat Beaume-de-Venise; des calissons à la pâte moelleuse et parfumée; un service à café en faïence artisanale, signé par l'artiste; une reproduction au 10^e du mobile-home où vous étiez logé, avec ses meubles à l'échelle et même le linge de toilette; un bocal rempli de pignons que vous avez patiemment récoltés sur les pommes d'un pin parasol aujourd'hui disparu dans la fournaise d'un incendie criminel et impuni; quelques paniers d'osier tressés à la main par des gens du voyage; 15 sachets de lavande rebrodés et parfumés à l'extrait idoïne; un laurier rose dans son

unión

Editorial Board/Comité de rédaction:

Mike Gautrey (Editor-in-Chief/Rédacteur-en-chef), Catherine Comte-Tiberghien (Rédactrice adjointe/Deputy Editor); Wisler Frédéric, Marcos Hurtado, Colleen McGarry, John Myers, Simar Proust, Renate Meyer (Staff Union Committee/Comité du Syndicat); Ivan Elsmark (Former Officials Section/Section des anciens fonctionnaires); Robert Defour, Constantin Pinto de Magalhaes (honorary members/membres honoraires).
Mail/Courrier: *Union*, bureau 628; unionmag@ilo.org

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cache-pot; un carton de côte-de-Provence; ainsi que quelques aquarelles glanées sur le port de Saint-Tropez, et, j'allais oublier, trois pots de miel bio si l'on excepte les antibiotiques et les présence de la centrale nucléaire au bord des champs de fleurs odorantes au violet raffiné, de 500g chacun cela va sans dire.

Un peu chargé donc, vous parvenez au bas de l'escalator, et là, surprise: un plot rayé, comme chapeau de clown mais en moins festif, en condamne l'accès, proclamant en gras et sur un papier A4: HORS SERVICE.

L'escalator a certes un emploi du temps très personnel, entre deux heures butoirs (8h ça monte, 17h ça descend): dans l'intervalle, il se permet de nombreuses facéties que l'objectivité m'oblige à qualifier d'incohérentes. Souvent, alors que vous revenez de votre pause-déjeuner passée à écumer les grandes surfaces à la recherche de ce qui constituera votre repas du soir, avec sous le bras un pack de six bouteilles d'eau minérale dont la poignée a malencontreusement lâché dans le parking, vous constatez que l'escalator continue inlassablement de descendre; vous grimpez l'escalier avec prudence, parvenez à votre bureau, un peu violacé sous l'effort (comme les champs de lavande, justement), et vous apercevez que vous avez oublié votre paquet de cacahuètes au chocolat, cette friandise écoeurante provoquant chez vous une accoutumance sévère. Vous repartez illico chercher vos bonbons aux couleurs suspectes sans lesquels l'après-midi vous paraîtrait insoutenable, et devez admettre que cette fois, l'escalator remonte... Vous dégringolez l'escalier en gambillant, récupérez le paquet de cochonneries croustillantes et, parvenu au pied de l'escalator, découvrez qu'il est arrêté.

Mais aujourd'hui, c'est encore plus fort de café, comme aurait dit A. Cohen qui s'y connaissait en incongruités onusiennes. Il vous faudra au bas mot trois quarts d'heure pour trimballer vos cadeaux qui vous semblent à présent inutiles, dérisoires, immérités. Sans parler de ce collègue que vous croiserez, également de retour après une semaine en club sportif, boitillant misérablement d'une marche à l'autre, mal remis d'une entorse écopée lors d'un match de foot mixte Paris-Provence.

Alors je vous le dis, avec difficulté car il me faut reprendre mon souffle, ahanant, la main appuyée contre le porte-man-teau du hall, tentant de détricoter un point de côté: c.v.t.i.

K* ■

ILO staff in Colombo undertake “Mission Flood Relief”

In a true sign of unity, the staff of the ILO office, along with project staff, travelled to Matara district on 25 May 2003 to assist in the relief efforts for the flood-related areas. The southern part of the country had been devastated by two days of intense rain, leaving 265 persons confirmed dead and over 150,000 families affected. These were the worst floods in 50 years, for a country that is more used to drought than flooding. The water receded in a few days, but the damage was enormous. With the destruction of houses and businesses, people’s lives were washed away. Indeed, relief efforts by government and relief agencies commenced immediately, but press reports of how the most affected were not getting assistance were numerous. Thus, the ILO Staff Union Colombo decided to collect funds and assist in the relief efforts. They knew that if they went to the worst-affected areas, they would be able to make a difference.

It was an early Sunday morning, perhaps too early for most, when the ILO team undertook “Mission Flood Relief”. A few days before, with generous donations from all, essential items such as household utensils and chlorine to clean the water-wells were bought. The plan was to meet some of the needs of about 80 of the worst-affected families. The journey to the affected area took five hours, passing previously very scenic villages and towns. At the closest town, the team climbed into the back of the truck with the household items, as the roads to the village were only accessible in four-wheel-drive vehicles. When they reached Pitabeddara village, close to Deniyaya town, the extent of the damage was obvious. People were picking up the pieces of their broken lives in silent suffering, shocked at how quickly their lives had changed.



(L to R) Danura Miriyagalla, Sharon Peiris, Joyce Perera

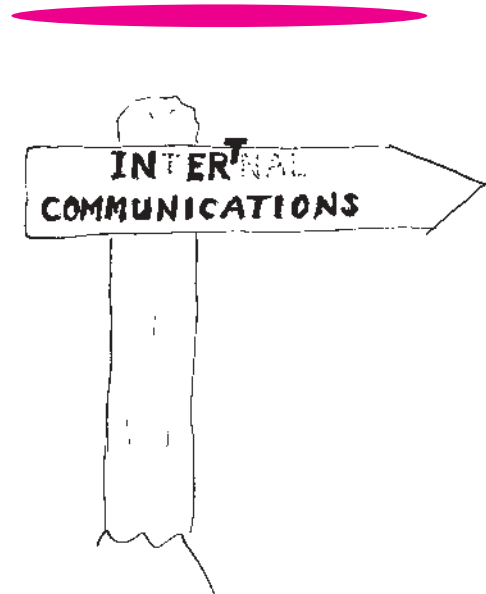
The once scenic village of Pittabedara is in the heart of a region that is known for its diverse ecology. The area was now filled with muddy and foul-smelling tracks, fallen trees and electricity poles and broken houses. Mud marks some 6m up on trees showed how high the water had been in some areas. The truck was parked at a central location, and the team quickly divided themselves into two: one group would visit the people house by house, giving each family a coupon, and the other would give out the household items as the coupons were brought back to the truck. The first team must have walked more than 8km, searching out the worst-affected to give them the coupons. People couldn’t believe that others were coming to their broken houses to give to help them restart their lives. The second team efficiently distributed the goods, ensuring fairness. The people could now rebuild their lives.

For all, it was a day to remember. When you see the appreciation in their eyes and how a few goods can make a big difference, you know your efforts are worthwhile. But above all, the staff of the ILO Colombo Office and the projects knew by helping others restart their lives, unity is strengthened within the office. (This would be the start of many more “Missions”. Look out for the next!)

Danura Miriyagalla ■



(L to R) Srimalie Jonathan, Bernie Coorey



CORRESPONDENCE

Men at work

Among the fascinating offerings in the May-June *Union* was the news that Yasuyuki Nodera had met the Staff Union Committee in Dhaka. The Committee’s General Secretary, we also learn, presented Mr. and Mrs. Nodera with a “rickshaw three-wheeler”, unfortunately not shown in the accompanying photograph. It is also unfortunate that we could not see Mrs. Nodera herself receiving the vehicle because that would have proved that at least one woman (albeit the Regional Director’s spouse) was present on that great occasion. If the 14 or so discernible – all male – heads in your snapshot are anything to go by, there may be some scope for gender promotion right there in the ILO. Maybe somebody better tell the Director-General (if Mr. Nodera hasn’t already done so). Or maybe we should go after those old-fashioned women’s rights!

Rick Shaw-Wright ■

No-smoking policy in the ILO:

Open letter to the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee

In March this year the Chief of HRD's policy branch promised to give more guidelines to managers on their obligation to ensure that the Office's non-smoking policy is respected. It is said that a draft has been prepared for discussion between administration and Union representatives. Against this background, a number of concerned officials have signed the following letter (Ed.).

Dear Mr. Somavia,
Dear Mr. Gruat,

1 September 2003

We write to you about a matter that concerns us all very much; and by all, we mean everyone who works in the ILO, in Geneva and across the world.

We are given to understand that, in September, the Joint Negotiating Committee will consider a new policy statement or perhaps even a new circular on the no-smoking policy in the ILO. We consider this not only timely but long overdue.

As you know, a first ILO Circular on the hazards of smoking in shared offices was published in 1970. A second circular on non-smoking was published in 1991. Circular Series 6 No. 581 of 12 December 1997 informed the staff that the ILO building in Geneva was to become smoke-free as from 1 January 1998. Eighteen months later, it was thought necessary to issue a reminder (No. 596) that smoking is forbidden in offices and throughout the building, except in the designated smoking areas. A survey of Geneva-based staff in 1999 showed that the majority of all staff wanted a smoke-free environment. To their immense credit, many smoking colleagues do respect the rules. Yet, as most of us experience every day, these circulars are routinely flouted by officials at all levels and on all floors in Geneva. Many other ILO offices also face these problems.

We urge you to move decisively, quickly and as a matter of the highest priority, to agree on effective steps which remove confusion about smoking on ILO premises and ensure that the right to a healthy (smoke-free) working environment is guaranteed to us all.

The ILO Circulars and surveys have been reinforced by the recommendations of a 2001 working group involving many of the concerned ILO units in Geneva. We think that its recommendations provide a critical set of points for your negotiations:

- members of the Senior Management Team should be called on to implement the policy in their respective Sectors with a view to having a completely smoke-free Office by 1 January 2004
- this goal and outcome should be announced to all staff and visitors
- enforcement of the no-smoking policy should be the responsibility of line management who should be clearly given this responsibility and authority
- smokers should be given active assistance and support in quitting tobacco dependency through medical counselling, therapy, and application of SHIF benefits
- facilities for smokers should be improved, such as an additional indoor smoking area and pleasant outdoor areas at a distance from all entrances, providing seating and ashtrays

There is no reason in our opinion for the ILO to be anything but a leader on this issue. As an organization, the ILO is committed to SafeWork, a programme which argues for a tobacco-free environment in all our member States. Yet, in the ILO, we do not apply these principles. Worse, the gender dimension of smoking within the ILO is lamentable: according to a survey conducted by the University of Lausanne following the 1997 ILO Circular, the incidence of tobacco use among women staff members in the ILO, particularly younger women, is on the increase.

We believe that the ILO's commitment to safe work is comparable to the WHO's commitment to Health for All. The WHO has adopted a stringent series of measures to make its building in Geneva a smoke-free workplace. Moreover, in May this year, the WHO adopted the first Convention in its history, the

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. WHO member States, which in most cases coincide with ILO's member States and will therefore include our constituents, are now changing their laws in order to ratify the Convention once it comes into force. Its Article 8, on Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, provides for "the adoption and implementation of effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures, providing for protection from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places".

It follows that the successful steps taken in the WHO to give its staff a smoke-free workplace and to help people give up smoking should inspire long overdue action in the ILO. We call on you, therefore, to negotiate comparable conditions for people working in the ILO, and to follow the example set by our sister organizations – FAO, IOM, UNEP, UNESCO, UN New York, WHO and others. You have a chance to remove confusion about smoking on ILO premises once and for all. We also call on you to see to it that management and Union representatives in the JNC make up for lost time by ensuring that the right to a healthy (smoke-free) working environment prevails permanently in the ILO.

As part of this action, we ask also that you act *immediately* to ensure that:

- all ILO vacancy notices and contracts state plainly that "the ILO is a smoke-free workplace"
- the operators of kiosks and shops on ILO premises worldwide stop selling tobacco products, including cigarettes
- all bars, cafeterias and restaurants on ILO premises worldwide become no-smoking areas
- a helpline be established for those wishing to come to terms with their tobacco dependency or deal with a tobacco-related problem in the workplace

There are other workers here who also deserve protection. Because the cleaning and catering staff are not all subject to our Staff Regulations or enjoy the same rights that ILO officials do, it behoves the Office to ensure that no workers are assigned the tasks of cleaning or serving in or near designated smoking areas. As in the WHO, the realization that all such areas are unhealthful and incompatible with safe and decent work should lead to their abolition – through negotiation and with the promise of tobacco cessation programmes for colleagues suffering from dependency.

We are aware that progress towards a smoke-free ILO should, in an organization like ours, be achieved through negotiation. Although we understand that negotiations take time, we consider that there has been enough time to achieve an effective tobacco-free environment, and there is no further room for delay. Our health and lives are at stake.

We trust in the ability of our employer and our Union representatives to sit down together and arrive at a solution in keeping with the facts on tobacco use, including the effects of second-hand smoke, and the noble purposes of the Organization we serve. Respect for our social dialogue and healthy workplace principles deserves nothing less.

Yours truly,

Carin Håkansta (SAFEWORK/COMBI), **Bill Ratteree** (SECTOR), **Shizue Tomoda** (SECTOR), **Anne Trebilcock** (INTEGRATION), **Christiane Wislow** (SECTOR), **Bernd Treichel** (SAFEWORK), **Jo Garnham** (DECLARATION), **Yasuhiko Kamakura** (SECTOR), **Wisler Frédéric** (INFORM), **Karin Klotzbuecher** (ED/EMP/MSU), **Brigitte Froneberg** (SAFEWORK), **Martine Bisoffi** (ISSA), **Anamaria Vere** (SECTOR), **Richelle van Snellenburg** (INFORM), **Patricia Philipps** (IMPR), **Bob Pember** (STAT), **Zydrė Pember** (WCSDG), **Margaret Antosik** (SOC/FAS), **Jill Wells** (SECTOR), **Naomi Grobety** (DECLARATION), **Norman Jennings** (SECTOR), **Jackie Nahum** (SECTOR), **Raquel Ponce de León** (RELOFF), **Florian Léger** (SOC/FAS), **Ely Gaerlan** (TRES/OPS), **Mark Levin** (ED/EMP/MSU), **Anne Drouin** (SOC/FAS), **Liliana Cañadas Mejía** (INFORM), **Keith Brehmer** (INFORM), **Clara Foucault-Mohammed** (SECTOR), **Yasmine Karanuh** (ROAS), **Rasha Tabbara** (ROAS), **Judica Makhetha** (SRO Harare), **Mohammed Mwa-madzimo** (SRO Harare) and others.

To smoke or not to smoke: Should that be the question?

When it comes to that addictive, smelly, pleasurable (?) habit we call smoking, the UN is in agreement that it is something we should stop doing, or at least do less often. We should in particular avoid smoking if we are ill or pregnant. And since the scientific community agrees that second-hand tobacco smoke causes cancer, heart and lung disease as well, we might want to consider saving our friends', colleagues' and families' lives by not exposing them to our tobacco smoke. The WHO has been working on a political instrument since 1999 for this purpose, and the final text of their Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (this is the first time in history that WHO creates a convention, should that give us a hint about the seriousness of this threat to world health?) was adopted on 21 May during this year's World Health Assembly. After adoption, the delegation of New Zealand congratulated the WHO but asked whether it would be possible for the UN buildings to make their bars and cafés smoke-free. That is indeed a good question.

The FCTC is primarily a public health instrument, but not exclusively: Under Article 8 on Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, we can read the following:

2. Each Party shall adopt and implement in areas of existing national jurisdiction as determined by national law and actively promote at other jurisdictional levels the adoption and implementation of effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures, providing for protection from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places.

The ILO is in no position to disagree. Through modest initiatives in the SafeWork department, the ILO informs our constituents that workers smoking, or at least smoking at work, is a bad idea for the following reasons:

- Non-smoking employees are more productive since they live longer, have fewer days' sick leave and do not need several smoke breaks per day.
- Non-smoking workplaces need less cleaning and equipment maintenance.
- Insurance costs are lower for smoke-free enterprises since they are less likely to suffer from fires or explosions, and workers are healthier.
- Workers who quit smoking will live a longer and healthier life – with more money in their pocket!
- A non-smoking working population is more productive and contributes more to the national economy, at the same time as being less of a burden for the health budget.

As discussed during a Staff Union meeting in March, and commented on in the March-April issue of *Union*, no one really disagrees about our non-smoking policy. It quite simply makes common, human and economic sense. All the same, we struggle with its implementation.

Then what is happening in our sister agencies? Do they also have a policy that is not adhered to? Do they also have

secretly closed office doors behind which pipes, cigars and cigarettes are indulged? Do they also turn a blind eye to visitors smoking away on the premises?

The truth differs. Some agencies struggle similarly to the ILO but others have been successful. One example of a non-smoking UN office is FAO, where smoking is totally banned in headquarters and outside smoking areas have been established. Our FAO colleagues in Rome also have a smoking cessation programme, but we have no information about their policy in the field. UNEP in Kenya has smoke-free offices and meeting rooms, but implementation differs in other areas of the building. UN in New York is apparently also smoke-free, unlike the office in Geneva where it is apparently still OK to pollute the air in the bar, as commented on during the 2003 WHA.

WHO is not surprisingly the least-smoking UN agency, but the transition was not without complications. It was only after Dr. Brundtland stormed into the organization, quite simply convincing her colleagues that smoking could not be permitted in an organization promoting world health, that a real change occurred. The change to non-smoking, we have been told, was relatively smooth. We have reason to believe that they did it the way the introduction of our smoking policy should have been done, i.e. informing all employees about the new measures well in advance; involving the medical section and giving it a mandate to inform/help all smokers who wanted to quit (since 2000 WHO has a free cessation programme within their insurance scheme); making restaurants and cafés smoke free; giving clear directions as to the details of enforcement; and making sure that all visitors are unable to avoid obeying the non-smoking policy.

Another agency across the street from us in Geneva is the International Organization for Migration, IOM. An information note was recently circulated to all IOM employees, reminding them about the policy and expanding it to all field offices.

In an organization promoting healthy and decent work, it should be obvious to provide clean air to its employees. That is why fresh-air fans, asthmatics and those who want long and healthy lives within the ILO await with anticipation the new drive from HRD (promised during the March meeting) to improve implementation of the no-smoking policy; and why should we not expand the policy to all our offices and staff like the IOM is doing? We also wait for the ILO's cafés and restaurants to go smoke-free, or at least provide enclosed smoking sections with ventilation strong enough to carry all contaminated air out of the building. And how about resources/encouragement to the health section so that they can carry out awareness campaigns and quit-smoking treatment? Or the odd non-smoking sign, so that visitors are at least aware of our policy when entering an ILO office (yes, I have seen a couple in headquarters but more are needed for the largest building in the city)?

To smoke or not to smoke really should not be the question, because the answer is undoubtedly not. A more interesting question is: When?

From a GASP supporter ■

We at the ILO, as in other UN agencies, are called on year after year to observe special international days. However, we promptly seem to don our blinkers and earmuffs when 31 May comes around every year.

Although, since 1989, a certain international day has been celebrated worldwide on 31 May every year, the ILO has not stood on ceremony in its observance of WNTD – World No-Tobacco Day. It is a day like any other.

Yet such days are only meant to sensitize people to issues on the international agenda. The member States of the World Health Organization first created World No-Smoking Day in 1987, then World No-Tobacco Day to alert the public to the dangers of consuming tobacco, to what people around the world can do to fight what the WHO calls the tobacco epidemic and protect future generations.

This year, the theme of WNTD was "Tobacco free film, tobacco free fashion – Action". The WHO and other organizations are calling on the entertainment industry, in particular the world of films and fashion, to stop promoting tobacco products. A worldwide movement has invited Hollywood and Bollywood

(the Indian film industry in the city of Mumbai) to rid films of their tobacco-promoting role. Cigarettes, as we know, vehicle a message of elegance and glamour, confidence and ease, and quietly seduce young people with the mystique of stardom. Cigars, too, are associated with wealth and professional business success.

All the same, we hope that we shall not be asked to observe yet another international day at the ILO. We may not be able to cope! Please do not ask us to take a stand on yet another issue (especially when we don't know that over the next ten years, more than 50 million people worldwide will die of tobacco-related diseases, most of them in developing countries where the multinational tobacco companies are bulldozing their way into captive markets).

If you wish to know more about WNTD, log on to <http://www5.who.int/tobacco/page.cfm?pid=65>

And those who prefer a book may find out all, or almost all, from Iain Gately's *Tobacco: A cultural history of how an exotic plant seduced civilization* (New York, Grove Press, 2001: available in the ILO library).