



AP NEWS

Public Services International

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Asia Pacific Regional Organisation

Regional secretary: Ms. V. Lakshmi

Wisma AUPE, 295 Upper Paya Lebar Road Singapore 534929

Tel: +65.6282.3219 and Fax +65.6280.4919 E-mail: lakshmi.vaidhiyanathan@world-psi.org

Japan earthquake and tsunami - solidarity with PSI affiliates



Photo by JICHIRO (<http://www.iichiro.gr.jp/disaster/03/110322.html>)

On 11 March 2011, Japan's most powerful recorded earthquake hit the country's northeast coast triggering a catastrophic tsunami and causing major damage, particularly to the region of Sendai. The earthquake affected the surrounding area and the capital of Tokyo. Numerous aftershocks continue. PSI has sent messages of solidarity along with sincere condolences expressing our deepest sympathy to those who have lost family members and friends in this disaster. We are also deeply concerned about the hundreds of thousands of people displaced or exposed to radiation leaks from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant. PSI stands in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Japan, who will certainly be in the frontline of repairing the damages.

As always, women and men in the public sector are working tirelessly to rescue, assist and comfort people and to re-establish basic public systems and infrastructure. PSI acknowledges their courage and the support they are providing to fellow citizens in need in Japan. PSI and its affiliates from all over the world have been quick at sending solidarity messages and making donations to support earthquake and tsunami victims through the PSI affiliates in Japan. For more detailed information, please click [here](#).

Public Services International is a global union federation representing 20 million members in 150 countries. **AP News** is published and electronically distributed every two months by Public Services International Asia and Pacific Regional Organisation (PSI APRO). Please send comments and contributions to: indah.budiarti@world-psi.org or mike.ingpen@psa.org.nz



Hideaki Tokunaga, JICHIRO President, and Deputy Minister Suzuki

Union demands government act quickly to aid Japanese people

On 16 March 2011, JICHIRO visited the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications to hand over the petition on rescue and recovery supports for Tohoku earthquake. Following the experience of Hanshin earthquake (January 1995), Hideaki Tokunaga, president of JICHIRO, stated that JICHIRO will fully cooperate in the relief efforts and requested that the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications take the lead in managing relief efforts. In reply, Vice Minister Suzuki said, “We will make sure that the emergency disaster centre established in the cabinet, and governors and mayors coordinate and take appropriate actions.”

Japan’s Prime Minister Naoto Kan, says he will do his best to take fiscal measures. Hideaki Tokunaga described the distressed conditions of the affected municipalities generated by both the effects of the earthquake/tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear accidents that have forced many people to evacuate or stay indoors. For more information, please contact: inagaki@jichiro.gr.jp

PSI campaign exposes labour standard violations in ADB projects



During its meeting in November 2010, the PSI Executive Board received a progress report from the Asian and Pacific Regional Executive Committee on the PSI campaign “Dialogue for Mainstreaming Core Labour Standards and Quality Public Services in Asian Development Bank (ADB) Projects”. This campaign is supported by SASK, Finland. On APREC’s request, the Executive Board is mobilising PSI affiliates in selected countries to support this regional campaign.

Many countries in the North have stakes in the ADB and are accountable to their people and citizens; it is important that they are made aware that workers’ rights violations are taking place in the ADB funded projects in Asia. This fact is not reflected in the ADB’s project completion reports which do not mention any labour concerns whatsoever.

Please find attached the letter that PSI has addressed to affiliated unions in ADB's major stakeholder countries outside the Asia Pacific region, asking them to lobby their governments to support the PSI campaign. For more details, please click [here](#).

Give your input on WHO guidelines on health worker recruitment



The World Health Organization has launched from 21 March to 17 April 2011 a web-based public hearing on the draft guidelines for monitoring the implementation of the WHO Code Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel. Public Services International strongly supports and welcomes the adoption of the Code. PSI members are requested to send comments on the draft guidelines by participating in this web-based public hearing on the WHO website: www.who.int/hrh/migration.

For more details, click [here](#).



Tonga PSA leaders with Hon. Prime Minister of Tonga, Noble Tu'ivakano (2nd from right)

Tonga: Quality Public Services Partnership proposal

Tonga Public Services Association held a meeting with the Prime Minister of Tonga, Noble Lord Tu'ivakano, on 10 March 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposal made by PSA for a quality public services partnership with the new Cabinet to improve governmental services to the people.

The partnership will address: enactment of the Industrial Relation Bill; Tonga as a member of the International Labour Organization; recruitment of more teachers; and a review Public Service Commission to reduce unlawful and unfair dismissal of public servants, and the low performance of the public service since the establishment of the Public Service Commission in 2006. The PSA also has plans to assist in the economic development of the country by setting up in the near future a credit union bank as well as other developmental projects. In all workplaces it is essential to have a good relationship between the employer and employees to ensure successful developments. Working together in partnership within the legal framework will benefit the workers, the government and the country as a whole. For further information please contact Sister Mele Amanaki, PSA General Secretary: psa_secretary@yahoo.co.nz



PSI Asia Pacific Regional Executive Committee Meeting

The PSI Asia Pacific Regional Executive Committee meeting was held in Singapore, 30-31 March 2011. Issues pertaining to this region were discussed and in particular the preparation of the 12th PSI Asia Pacific Regional Conference (APRECON) that will be held in Sydney, Australia 17- 21 October 2011.



A minute's silence was observed in memory of all victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, of flood victims in Queensland, Australia and of Christchurch earthquake victims in New Zealand.

The committee also reiterated their support and solidarity to the natural disaster relief efforts in the region. The committee also noted with pride that public service workers are always on the front lines, working tirelessly to rescue, assist and comfort people and to re-establish basic public systems and infrastructure in an environment of extreme devastation.

Other issues discussed were regional and sub-regional plans, and PSI's 2012 Congress and the need for some constitutional changes. The new *Quality Public Services—Action Now!* campaign is guided by the Geneva Charter on Quality Public Services. Please contact Sister V. Lakshmi, Regional Secretary, for more detailed information: lakshmi.vaidhiyanathan@world-psi.org

Australia: Time to improve workers' rights and empower women and indigenous people

The state of workers' rights in Australia is reviewed in a new report by the International Trade Union Confederation, related to a World Trade Organisation review of WTO trade policies.

"In several areas there continue to be serious implications for workers' and union rights on a daily basis, including ongoing restrictions on the level of bargaining, industrial action and the content of collective agreements," said ITUC general secretary Sharan Burrow. "The Fair Work Act 2009 requires further improvements so as to ensure employees benefit fully from their rights in conformity with ILO Conventions 87 and 98." The enactment of the Fair Work Act of 2009 restored many of the rights taken away under the WorkChoices Act of the former government in Australia.

However, the ITUC report finds that certain aspects of the right to join and form unions, to bargain collectively and to strike are not in line with Conventions 87 and 98. The situation is especially serious in the building and construction industry, where special laws continue to operate despite being in breach of international standards on freedom of association.

Furthermore, workers cannot take industrial action when bargaining with multiple employers unless they form a single interest group. The report also finds that Australia has laws on racial, ethnic, disability and sexual orientation discrimination that generally conform with international standards.

Further, the government needs to do more to make sure that women's equal rights are respected in practice, as women face a significant pay gap and are underrepresented in senior positions. To read the full report on the ITUC website, please click [here](#).

Water Partnerships towards meeting Climate Challenge

The Centre of Excellence for Change along with UNICEF India organised an international conference on *Water Partnerships towards meeting Climate Challenge* on 6-7 January 2011 at Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The themes covered at the conference were water security, water and climate change, water governance and management, international experience sharing and Partnerships and the Water Organisations Partnerships platform.



The conference launched the WOPs platform to help share problem-solving knowledge amongst the various Water organisations, utilities, departments and stakeholders of India. To read more, please click [here](#).



Public Services International on TV

In a recent wide-ranging interview with Danish TV Europe, featured on CNN iReport, Public Services International general secretary Peter Waldorff speaks about PSI activities as a global union federation, including: supporting trade union rights from Egypt to the United States to Colombia; PSI's engagement in the Council of Global Unions' *Quality Public Services—Action Now!* campaign; how PSI's migrant health workers project is making a difference in this era of globalisation, and much more. Watch the video interview (English only) at this link [here](#).

Ethical recruitment protects health workers' rights and promotes quality services

On World Health Day – 7 April 2011, Public Services International affirms the commitment of our global union federation to support affiliates in working vigorously to strengthen the health workforce through ethical recruitment practices. PSI recognizes that a strong workforce is key to ensuring quality public health services and reversing the trend towards austerity, which will harm recovery from the global economic crisis. "Governments are responding wrongly to the crisis by cutting more jobs, limiting workers' rights and reducing public services, such as health and social care, that provide the safety nets for a sustainable economic recovery," warns PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff.



Consequences of the crisis are still rolling out. According to the International Labour Organization, despite a global economic growth rate of 4.8%, growth in employment is lagging, and the unemployment rate remains high at 6.2%; over 205 million workers were unemployed in 2010. Globally, health workers are inequitably distributed between urban and rural areas and between rich and poor countries. This has contributed to a global shortage of more than four million health workers. At the same time, ageing populations and rising care needs in industrialized countries are increasing the demand for workers.

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In May 2010, the World Health Assembly adopted the [World Health Organization Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel](#). The Code establishes and promotes voluntary principles and practices for the ethical recruitment of health workers, and helps to strengthen health systems. Application of this Code is essential to achieving quality public services. To read the PSI Statement, click [here](#).

Report of the Kanpur Street Vendors Wing of Hind Mahila Sabha

The sustained efforts of Kanpur Street Vendors Wing of Hind Mahila Sabha have resulted in the development of designs for model street vendor markets in Kanpur. The designs were rolled out in a seminar held in Kanpur on 2 April 2011 by Deborah Lambert, a landscape architect from Netherlands-based People4 Change. Participants at the seminar ranged from street vendors to heads of the Kanpur Municipal Corporation and from trade union and political leaders to administrative officials. Hundreds of vendors, especially women vendors, representing different markets of Kanpur joined the seminar.



The NASVI National committee member and general secretary of Hind Mahila Sabha addressed the seminar and applauded the efforts of the volunteers of the organisation. She called upon the vendors to get organised and unionised in every market to reclaim their livelihood and social security rights. She hailed the positive approaches of city administration and municipal authorities and demanded that there be a Town Vending Committee in Kanpur as mandated by the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors with an adequate representation of street vendors.

As more and more vendors demand such markets, the municipal cooperation officers suggest that the organisation helps the Municipal Corporation come up with a comprehensive city development plan integrating all city vendors. They also proposed that the Municipal Corporation uses the toolbox suggested by the visiting landscape architect and develops model vendor markets for the entire city. They also dwelt on the challenges facing organisational building and development.

The Union Cabinet Minister Shri Prakash Jaiswal, who opened the seminar, appreciated the efforts of HMS in raising the issues of unorganised sector workers, especially street vendors. He highlighted the unorganised sector workers' immense contribution to the national economy and said that all efforts should be made to ensure that justice is delivered to them. He also noted the effort of the HMS general secretary in creating such a platform for the vendors without any political support, and confirmed his full support to the organisation on this issue. The full text can be accessed [here](#). For more information, please contact Sister Abha Chaturvedi, HMS general secretary: abha_hms@yahoo.com