



EQUAL PAY – WAGE JUSTICE

On March 8, PSI stands with women around the world demanding an end to gender-based discrimination at work and calling for the transformation of the division of labour.

Unequal pay remains one of the main indicators of unbalanced relations between men and women in the labour market, which is compounded by the gender-based division of labour. Wages are not merely an expression of value, but also imply concrete social structures. Differences based on class, gender and race divide workers, intensifying the pay gaps that feed an intricate system that seeks to exploit the vulnerable foremost.

We can change this bitter reality through transformative equal pay policies that demand an intersectional approach.

We can observe higher representation of certain groups in distinct occupational clusters or sometimes in different professional groups within an occupation. Women workers are often not equal as they experience different layers of discrimination in addition to unequal wage relations between them. “Collective bargaining remains one of the most effective instruments to address these issues. Ensuring that women are represented at the bargaining table and in trade union leadership are two fundamental conditions for progress to be made”, says Irene Khumalo, incoming Chair of PSI’s World Women’s Committee.

“Beyond Equal Pay we need to build a movement for Wage Justice: Equal pay for work of equal value needs to be a means for raising women’s labour value, while at the same time transforming the wage hierarchy that segregates women by occupations, plants them at the bottom of pay scales as well as addressing the continued sexual division of labour. Therefore, PSI calls for building a Wage Justice global movement”, says Rosa Pavanelli, PSI General Secretary.

The future of public services needs to be gender responsive to consider the strategic needs of women and men. Gender-Responsive Public Services (GRPS) are fundamental to support a more balanced labour market. They allow for the redistribution of unpaid care work between men, women and society as a whole. GRPS can provide women with the structural support required for the construction of their economic, political and social autonomy. “This also involves challenging patriarchal traditions that heavily impact how these services are organized, provided and conceptualized. We need to consider public services through a gender-lens, including in terms of budgeting and the financing of public services through taxation”, says Juneia Batista, out-going Chair of PSI’s World Women’s Committee.

PSI and its long history of struggle for gender equality reached a milestone in 2017, when a fully gender mainstreamed programme of action was approved at PSI’s Congress for the first time ever. It puts our fight for economic justice and the need of the re-distribution of income and wealth at its very center, calling for urgent solutions for how women’s work is organized and valued.

New gender relations are needed in the general interest and a better future for all, a joint call to action for men and women alike. Male public services trade unionist pledged “*to work to transform gender relations including the historic sexual division of labour, the undervaluing of women’s work and the fight for the real materialization of women’s rights*”.

PSI supports the millions of women on strike on 8th March around the world, their fists high in massive marches, their actions representing a loud call refusing sexism, racism, militarism and all kinds of physical, symbolic, social, economic or institutional violence. Together we stand!

Let us build true equality and economic justice together!