

## **Introduction by Rosa Pavanelli, PSI General Secretary PSI WOC 2015**

Dear Sisters,

Today we celebrate the third PSI World Women's committee since the congress in Durban. In the context of very difficult times for public services unions, our delegates laid plans to work for alternatives to privatisation, promote quality public services, fight inequality, and strengthen the trade union movement.

We carefully considered our priorities over the Congress mandate, reminding ourselves of the importance of building our power to fulfil these key roles on behalf of our members. We have clearly defined PSI's long term priorities: fighting privatisation, advancing trade union rights, influencing global policy, and organising and growth.

In 2014 we progressed our political agenda but we also placed PSI on a more sustainable organisational footing. In partnership with our staff and affiliates, we have reduced our deficit to near negligible levels and simultaneously expanded our activities. We have done this by changing the way we work, by working more closely with our affiliates and by strengthening our relationships with civil society organisations, making common cause on the need for quality public services, tax justice, trade and other issues.

We have made strong progress in our plan to increase our membership, and our strength, by at least one million new members over the five-year Congress mandate. Since January 2014 we have attracted 421,867 new members through increases in affiliations and 17 new affiliates across all regions. When balanced against the membership losses - the majority from decreases in affiliation numbers from austerity hit European unions - we have a net increase of 335,584 members.

However, more needs to be done if we are to build the power required to fulfil our aspirations for change. This year,

- We have continued to project union power into the powerful international organisations and financial institutions which threaten our members' rights and interests, and the rights and interests of ordinary people who use public services.
- We have increased our pressure on those who use public money to privatise and seek to inject the profit motive into public services.
- We have responded to the global threat from employers to steal our right to strike in the ILO, and led the global labour movement in response.
- We have responded rapidly to the threat of Ebola, demanding that our sisters and brothers on the frontline be protected, and pointed out that the tragedy could hit again if Universal Public Health does not become a reality soon. The Ebola crisis affected the planned Regional Conference for Africa and Arab countries, which was postponed until 2015.
- We have continued the battle against dangerous trade agreements that facilitate privatisation and threaten democratic governance, and we are the recognised leader in the fight against TISA.
- We stood firm against violations of trade union rights.

Today and tomorrow we will discuss how we can work together to continue to claim spaces at the global and regional levels with UN and other international organizations and influence global policies that affect us all.

We work also work together to make progress on mainstreaming gender policies in our sectors and make targeted use of international labour standards to support our campaign actions for equal pay.

I look forward to spend two active days with you!

Have a great meeting.