

PSI ENERGY MEETING
Luxembourg 24-25 September 2013
FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Participants agreed to pursue the following priorities to strengthen union capacity

1. Stimulate union growth by demonstrating relevance of PSI work to national and local unions, and by the following work:

2. Defend trade union and worker rights (TUR), including :

- improve capacity for union effectiveness in collective bargaining
- joint union work to address occupational health and safety issues
- coordinate to ensure that workers employed by multinational corporations (MNCs) jointly defend their rights and interests
- unions should also look at how to bring more young workers into the sector and into the unions, and work to ensure that the rights of migrant workers in the sector are protected.

3. Defend universal access to energy services within the context of global and national quality public services (QPS) campaigns. This will include work on global and national policy, related to:

- financing for the sector
- climate change policies, including renewable energies

4. Energy unions should also join the global campaigns on free trade, fair taxation, and anti-corruption.

What PSI can do

Connect unions

- Sustain global and regional networks, with political and staff support
- Facilitate bilateral and multilateral union contacts and projects

Use our common electronic platform to enhance the gathering and exchange of information

- Facilitate the writing and dissemination of (successful) union campaigns in the sector
- Restructure the energy section of the website to reflect the core priority areas identified, post relevant documents and allow unions to post links to their own materials accessible to others
- Create email listserves for urgent actions and for union queries

Influence policy

Identify key policy decisions and institutions with decision-making powers, develop and implement advocacy strategies in coordination with key unions.

Finance and guide the PSIRU research and knowledge dissemination platforms

What unions can do

- Participate in regional and global networks
- Participate in regional and global campaigns
- Support other unions in specific campaigns
- Assist to bring other unions into PSI
- Write down and share their success stories on the various challenges
- Share their policy documents
- Specific recommendations on issue areas

Networks

PSI Congress mandated the strengthening of sectoral networks within PSI. Networks should be the basis for coordinated action and support. Their purpose is to facilitate union coordination and solidarity actions for local and national trade union campaigns and to ensure that union concerns are projected into regional and global decision-making bodies. Networks will be regional, in order to better reflect the political realities and to facilitate union coordination. PSI global will assist as needed and will provide support from the PSI web platform, as well as from PSIRU.

A number of clear areas of network action :

- Defend against privatisations
- Share campaign tactics to integrate outsourced and informal workers
- Develop proposals for renewables
- Exchange information on relevant legislative, regulatory and judicial/legal matters, including with reference to Occupational Health and Safety

Meeting participants discussed key issues, which are summarised below

Growth

Need mapping to show union density among the workforce in the sector in each country, identify areas of unions growth and facilitate union organising.

Identify new unions and potential PSI affiliates, conduct outreach activities towards them.

Identify ways of organising casual and outsourced workers and getting them permanent contracts.

Demonstrate and disseminate contracting-in of outsourced workers as a way to grow the unions, including the global framework agreements with multinational corporations.

Privatisation

Identify enemies and threats, develop materials and mechanisms to counter, with a particular focus on multilateral development banks and bilateral donor institutions

Unions to provide early warning of such threats to PSI energy network in order to enable appropriate support

Make better use of available research and policy tools : PSI Research Unit (PSIRU) provides international comparative analyses across the range of issues in the sector, as well as specific material about multinational corporations. It also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, and will accept union submissions for inclusion.

Develop and disseminate compendium of successful resistance strategies - unions should write up good experience and lessons - case studies, send the details to PSI/PSIRU.

Support in specific campaign activities – see current campaigns against privatisation of ANDE in Paraguay, PSI to help organise a delegation to visit end October, and another in November; ENEL's recent lawsuit seeking damages and claims against the state of El Salvador at the World Bank's International Centre For Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), and the ongoing fight in Nigeria against the corrupt privatisation of the electricity system.

Seek out new allies – to be successful, the unions will need allies from across the range : families, health sector, women's groups, businesses, environment, etc. PSI to help identify global organisations which may be helpful, and national unions to link local allies to our global networks.

Develop and demonstrate alternative policies - public finance, ownership, management, cooperatives, municipal, remunicipalisation (PSI to explore the potential role of union-trusted pension funds).

Climate and Renewables

- Develop solid analytical basis for trade union positions on reduction of carbon emissions and on renewable energy.
- PSI support ITUC Just Transition in national and global negotiations.
- Campaign to stop public subsidies for private profits, especially in renewables.
- Coordinate lobbying and political pressure.
- Integrate public health focus of policy decisions (public transport).
- Support Trade Union Energy Democracy (TUED) network, disseminate information and encourage affiliate participation.
- Energy sector to join PSI work on disaster prevention, reaction, recovery.
- PSI to support campaigns to stop fracking (hydraulic fracturing for shale gas) and the sale of environment (carbon trading...).

MNCs

PSI is part of the Global Framework Agreements (GFAs) which exist in EDF, GDF-SUEZ (energy), and ENEL-ENDESA, and is connecting the unions to the various working groups. PSI coordinates closely with the European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU), which coordinates the work on European Works Councils (EWCs) in a number of MNCs. These EWCs have helped solve problems in the non-European subsidiaries of a number of companies.

PSI should exercise pressure using the corporate social responsibility (CSR) clauses which companies declare – some of them are negotiated with unions. Unions in all countries should look at the electricity sector reporting requirements under the Global Reporting Initiative, to be used by both public and private utilities in annual reports. <https://www.globalreporting.org/reporting/sectorguidance/sector-guidance/electric-utilities/Pages/default.aspx>

PSI and unions should examine the potential role of union-trusted defined benefit pension funds as shareholders, for appropriate action in specific companies.

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Unions to send in information about privatisation threats, problems etc., to be used to update PSIRU data and for publication in PSIRU bi-monthly newsletter.

Anyone can ask PSI/PSIRU for information on a company which is bidding for private business, which will generate a report on that company. Unions should update PSIRU about corporate acquisitions, mergers, subsidiaries and sales.

Occupational Health and Safety - OHS

PSI should devote resources to exchange information and union experience, including on legislation/regulation and best practices.

The following issues were not discussed at length, but unions are encouraged to comment :

Possible global campaigns

(A) Aluminium/metals/mining

Campaign against subsidised energy prices for big aluminium smelters - re-focus the debate on subsidies, would reduce prices, and expose the corporate abuses and lobbying.

(B) Diesel/Aggreko

Target private development of diesel as major problem for renewables in developing countries, with Aggreko as main offender for promoting. Would link privatisation/IPP's with filthy/temporary /expensive energy; undermine activities of Aggreko etc.; and make developing countries concentrate on developing long-term public power not short-term deals with companies.

Other issues suggested, which have a regional perspective:

Set up a Mediterranean network for democratic development of renewable energy, including (a) PSI unions from N Africa, east Med Arab countries, and southern European countries (b) civil society NGOs environmentalists etc. Try to build alliance which can (a) defend against aggressive private initiatives (b) develop coherent public sector proposals for developing renewables. NGOs and other allies are important part of this to extend and strengthen base, and also they have a much better chance of being able to raise funds for meetings papers etc.

Central America, where there is already money from MDBs being captured for over-priced wind/solar IPPs, the common transmission grid links the countries, and there is already too much privatisation, who have expanded diesel-fired power stations.

Pay specific attention to Francophone Africa, where unions are weak.