



## MINUTES

PSI INTERAMERICAS REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - IAMREC  
GUATEMALA CITY, MARCH 27th and 28th

### 1. Welcome, introduction and adoption of IAMREC 2013 minutes

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The Regional Secretary, Jocelio Drummond reported the absences of Evile Umaña and Roxana Deras, titular and first substitute of Central America, as well as of Patricia Lozano, titular of the Andean countries.

## WELCOME

**Candice Owley, IAMREC Co-chair**, highlights the solidarity reasons why IAMREC was held in Guatemala.

**José Paulino Martinez, CNC Coordinator PSI affiliates Guatemala**, emphasizes the solidarity provided by PSI throughout all these years and announced that he is holding a meeting with the president of the country. He also notes the importance of the meetings held during this week with the UN Human Rights Commissioner, the General Attorney and other authorities, where PSI General Secretary, Rosa Pavanelli, was also present.

**Omar Auton, IAMREC Co-chair**, welcomes the participants and informs that the discussions around the ILO Conference and the situation in Guatemala were transferred to March 28, starting at 08:30 a.m., on account of the meeting with the President of Guatemala on the 27th. With this modification, the agenda of IAMREC was adopted.

**Rosa Pavanelli welcomes the participants** and notes that IAMREC is politically important because decisions about PSI's structure in the region will be taken at the preparation of the regional conference IAMRECON and on the priorities to be undertaken during Inter-Americas, working closely on what is adopted by the Congress and in campaigns around key issues, including FTAs such as the Trans-Pacific one and others, as well as on the financing of public services and the defense of labor and trade union rights. She highlights the importance of IAMREC in Guatemala, due to the risks posed by trade union action in the country and demands that PSI actions in this country are kept. She declares that the struggle in Guatemala will be backed by a specific project.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE IAMREC 2013 MINUTES**

IAMREC 2013 minutes are regarded and **adopted without objections**

## **2. Budgetary issues and PSI restructuring in the region.**

**Omar Auton, IAMREC co-chair**, emphasizes in his introduction that this is a matter of public debate and it is very difficult to incorporate such a delicate theme right at the beginning of Rosa Pavanelli's administration. He states that some people were surprised by the issue which arose from the deficit and from other economic problems experienced by PSI. The idea of raising membership fees was constantly rejected within the region, but the new administration has taken on the discussion from a new political perspective, in order to reach economic balance.

The identification of such debate with a neoliberal conception, which belongs to the State realms, is rejected. PSI does not have the power to issue currency and when facing difficult economic situations, all organizations are subject to the adoption of concrete decisions in order to overcome them. We must make an effort to think over the political decisions to be taken in favor of affiliates without mixing up personal situations. Decisions should be made towards a balanced budget, advised by the PSI Executive Board. Decisions must exhaust all possibilities to avoid affecting any PSI worker. No individual or labor rights of any worker will be violated.

**Jocelio Drummond, Regional Secretary, presents the situation.** In 2012, PSI's structural deficit, estimated in 500.000 euros, was already evident. The Executive Board advised the regional committees to discuss the issue and take concrete measures towards it. The theme was taken up by the Regional Secretary and Regional co-chair. In November 2013, the Board of Directors had a clearer view of PSI's situation and previewed a deficit of 400,000 Euros, caused by previous situations and by a membership decrease in countries like Greece and other European countries, due to the economic crisis. Decisions such as freezing PSI officials' salaries had already been taken.

The Executive Board arrived to the conclusion that it could no longer drag this situation and demanded that PSI's structure, actions and the statutory meetings were thought over. The Regional Secretary and co-chair of the region analyzed the situation taking into account the situation of other regions such as Africa and Asia, which was why they committed to analyzing the issue at IAMREC and in the sub-regions, in order to achieve balance in 2015.

Within the Sub-regional Consulting Committees, SUBRACs, the situation was discussed and they unanimously decided to support measures to help achieve fiscal balance. Thus, they propose that Brazil and the Southern Cone are left without a sub-regional Secretary until at least the end of 2014; after that, the sub-regional structure encompassing Brazil and the Southern Cone will be discussed. The sub-regional office in Central America will be closed and Oscar will continue to work under a new system and will coordinate regional projects. On the Andean Countries, the Quito office will be closed, but the legal status will be kept and will be supported by the affiliates. The Bogotá office will be preserved, once it is where donors mostly support PSI projects. About the Caribbean, the possibility of closing the office or reducing PSI's costs in this sub-region was discussed. In the same way, a cost reduction must be considered at the US office. The structuring measures may be temporary, but they must contribute to a fiscal balance for the year 2015.

Regarding the reduction in the number of SUBRACs, to be carried out during regional conferences, the affiliates conclude that all SUBRACs should be kept, even if they have to reduce budgets to operate this organic instance.

**Right after this presentation, the debate was opened and the following interventions take place:**

**Juan Ayala (Mexico).** He worries about the possibility that those who were responsible for PSI's deficit are not held responsible for it and do not suffer the due sanctions. Regarding the organization of the Durban Congress and what it generated, he states that erasing the past and making a fresh start is not a possibility. He asks about the decisions taken in relation to Europe, since the measures taken in this region were not mentioned. He is concerned about the closure of the Central America office closure and announces the rendering of a document outlining the C.A. affiliates situation in face of this situation. Mexico is engaged in growing. Those who caused PSI's deficit must be held responsible.

**Ana Bell (Chile).** She informs that the Southern Cone SUBRAC responsibly discussed about how to take on the deficit issue and the measures to be taken. Such an ambitious project, as the one proposed by Rosa Pavanelli, requires a healthy financial situation. The SUBRAC appointed a commission to study the direction and possible effects of closing the Chile office, since there was no full agreement on the issue. A hard work towards growth was undertaken in the sub-region and it is very important to keep the Southern Cone sub-region independent from the Brazilian one. They presented a proposal in favor of keeping the Chile office, increasing the collection of fees and the search for national projects in each country.

**Federico Dávila (Argentina).** He points out that, in the Southern Cone, the discussion revolves around whether to support or not the guidelines of the Steering Committee in respect to costs reduction considering different alternatives, from which the following two remained: increasing quotas and reducing expenses. The two options were accepted. At no time the adopted resolution proposes that the Southern Cone office is preserved or raises a proposal to ensure the continuity of the PSI policy in the two sub-regions: Southern Cone and Brazil.

**Ivonne Iturriaga (Chile).** She notes that the Youth of Chile supports the proposal of keeping the Southern Cone office open.

**Luis Isarra (Peru).** In the Andean SUBRAC the restructuring issue was analyzed and they share Juan's thoughts on the responsibility of those who caused the deficit. On the closure of the Quito office, there is consensus on the need to maintain an office in Quito held by the affiliates. This is due to the importance of the trade union political project that leverages PSI in this country and it is decided that the office will work at the affiliate's headquarters at no cost to PSI. At the Bogota office efforts will continue to be made in order not to spend a single euro more than estimated in the budget. As for the reduction of SUBRACs, there is agreement on the maintenance of the five SUBRACs but with contributions from the affiliates, so as to reduce the budgets for these organic bodies.

**Maria Fernanda (Argentina).** We must ensure the continuity of the PSI policies in the respective sub-regions. PSI priorities must include the support and assurance of programs, internal communication and union action.

**Rosa Pavanelli.** She points out that she doesn't like this discussion. When taking responsibility for PSI she did not know how deep financial instability was, and that this is a spiraling situation. The responsibility is not exclusive to Peter Waldorf, since several decisions had been taken by the PSI Directors. In the future, situations concerning the staff need to be solved, as PSI's wage policy is not clear. Decisions were taken, such as not replacing the three people in Africa and the two in Asia who left. Regarding Europe, the offices are kept by the affiliates with their own quotas. PSI's quota is 0.91 per affiliate, but in Europe they pay 0.30 cents more in order to keep the offices. Supplier's contracts have also been revised. Cutting expenditures with PSI activities is not the goal; this is why we have to revise the structure and the expenses made with suppliers and reduce

200,000 Euros in costs despite the shortening of revenues due to the decrease in the membership numbers in European countries.

Every proposal that is made in regard to the restructuring must take as a reference 120.000 Euros. We must grow in membership and unions. Europe contributes 5,000,000 Euros in 2013, Asia Pacific is 963,000 Euros, in Tokyo the East Asia office is paid by the affiliates and in Oceania one person was fired. Africa and the Arab Countries contribute 333,000 Euros. Inter-America contributes one million Euros per year, but there is great potential for growth in the region. There are countries and organizations with potential to contribute to PSI in the development of their activities. In other regions additional contributions to solidarity, which are used in this direction, are made.

Americas is the only region that has no solidarity fund. It is very difficult to maintain Inter-Americas' seven offices in such conditions. We must consider the priorities set by the Congress and by the Executive Board and the need to strengthen the sectorial work and the fight for workers' rights. We must not focus exclusively on territories, but we also have to look at sectors and we must be where there is potential for growing. The Southern Cone sub-region will be preserved and the implementation of strategies will be defined for the sub-region. We may need to rethink the way we look in the future, so as to take sector values into account. We must consider it as something that makes sense to us as an organization. We must comply with all obligations PSI has in the labor field.

**Candice Owley.** She reports that this was discussed in the Canada and United States SUBRACs. The US office is located at an affiliate's office, but must cut costs by making its own work a more effective one. PSI should remain strong towards the future, but the deficit poses a big obstacle. This is why the budget must be changed and we must face this reality. We must take political decisions as a region and not leave the situation in the hands of the Executive Board.

**Juan Ayala.** He says that the Central America sub-region is taking steps to overcome deficit. Temporary decisions may be taken to find long term solutions. A collective action is required, sacrificing something today in order to build the best future conditions.

**Omar Auton.** He considers it necessary to make clear choices:

- First, to be willing to support the decisions of the Executive Committee and Board in search of financial balance from 2015. **Adopted**
- Second, that decisions are taken by this Executive Committee, taking into account the contributions to the discussion around strengthening PSI's political actions in the region and implementing administrative measures to reduce costs, supporting the proposals made by the Regional Secretary and the regional co-chair... **Adopted**. Transience shall be considered in the adopted decisions.

### **3. PSI General Secretary's report**

**Rosa Pavanelli presents a report on the main actions undertaken by PSI, in line with PSI's priorities and the decisions made by the Congress and the World Executive Board. From the Plan of Action:**

It reports on the PSI participation in international arenas and in discussions such as those developed in the OECD on the erosion of the tax base. It draws attention to the way we should address domestic subjects in regard to trade agreements and the impact they have on public services, particularly the Multilateral Agreement on Trade in Services and organize lobbying in international institutions, such as the ILO Conference, to focus the expansion of international standards. It illustrates the most disturbing situations in countries like South Korea and others.

The organization's growth should be focused on sectors, so that more effective responses can be provided. The health sector activities in the region must be reorganized. SEIU (United States) has assigned a person to be responsible for mapping the health sector. Nevertheless, the incidence of multinationals in the region and among our affiliates will be mapped. It is also necessary to increase the number of memberships.

**After the reporting, a space for interventions is opened.**

Ana Bell (Chile), reports that she requested information from the Chilean government on the TPP and she was told that they have enabled the "cuarto adjunto/next room" and requested support, so that PSI is represented in this consultation mechanism.

#### **4. Regional report.**

**Jocelio summarizes the report which was submitted in writing.**

- General context
- Organization by sectors
- Global Governance
- Trade union rights
- Equity, Equality and Diversity
- International solidarity
- 2014 activities
- Other activities

#### **ACTIVITIES REPORT 2013**

In this report, we detail the priorities and resolutions that were approved at our Regional Conference (Cartagena, 2010) and report on the associated activities carried out in 2013. This

report does not detail the sub-regional activities, but focus on the regional directives and activities.

The most important events of this period, along with the impact of the economic crisis in the region, include:

- ✓ the ILO Conference in June,
- ✓ the OAS Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor
- ✓ the ACTRAV/ PSI Bipartite Meeting on Trade Union Rights in the Public Sector in August, and
- ✓ the PSI mission to Guatemala in August.

Moreover, we take note of the shameful deterioration of trade union rights in the region, particularly in Peru and Paraguay.

## I TRADE UNION ORGANIZING

### **1) Union development and regional organization by sector**

A PSI priority is to continue to structure each of the sectors it represents in a way that is conducive to the organization of common struggles at the regional level and ongoing exchange of experiences. Each sector should have a coordinating structure to facilitate activities between meetings and will be responsible for the development of the sectoral work plan. These activities should include advocacy efforts targeting international institutions and trade agreements to defend quality public services and labor rights.

The organizational model will vary according to the reality of each sector; it could be a network, a confederation or alternative structure, as appropriate for each activity area. We will continue to support organization in the following sectors: Health and Related services, Municipalities, Central Government, Water and Sanitation, Electricity and Gas, University Administrators, Judiciary employees, Comtrollers, Customs, and the Legislative sector.

PSI cannot provide financial support for all sectoral activities but will help to connect the trade unions on a sub-regional or regional basis, provide relevant information to each sector, assist in organizing work teams of trade union and other research experts, and encourage cooperation and alliances with NGOs. Sectoral work will also be supported by union development programs to strengthen the affiliates' bargaining, organizing and campaigning skills and capacity within the limits of external funding possibilities and PSI's own core budget. Each sector should set priorities that are in keeping with this plan and PSI's Global Policy and Strategic Objectives.

**In 2013, the IAMREC resolved to support meetings to bring together affiliates in the membership areas of Municipal government, Judiciary, and University workers.**

- The Municipal affiliates' meeting was held in Brasilia on August 5-7, 2013 and resolved to establish a PSI Latin American Confederation of Municipal workers union affiliates in the next meeting in Mexico, in 2014.

- The Judiciary workers affiliates' was held in September 2013 in Lima, Peru, and was organized by the Latin American Confederation of Judiciary Workers Unions (Spanish acronym CLTPJ).
- The University workers unions met in October in Mexico and this meeting was organized by CONTUA.

Moreover, the Central Government union affiliates had three meetings in 2013: in Bogota, Colombia (May), in Panama (October) and in Mexico (December). Lastly, the PSI global energy sector meeting was carried out in September in Luxembourg with representatives from our region.

In 2013, PSI has also started the work in the new sector for educational support staff, media and culture workers.

The reports of these activities are available in the PSI Regional Office and can be requested over the e-mail: [vivian.makia@world-psi.org](mailto:vivian.makia@world-psi.org)

## **2) National Coordinating Committee (NCC)**

In view of the growth in organization and the significant increase in affiliates, we must strengthen and organize NCCs in each country in order to coordinate our actions, campaigns and projects at the national level. The NCC will foster common spaces for dialogue around each area of work in the International, while respecting trade union differences among affiliates, and should be our affiliates' entry point into the life of PSI. Well-structured committees will also facilitate country representation at PSI's sub-regional forums.

**The priorities for 2013 were Paraguay and Guatemala. PSI had meetings with the local affiliates in order to plan actions for the defense of trade union rights. The respective reports are included in items 17 and 20.**

## **3) Towards a balanced budget in each sub-region**

PSI must adopt a plan consistent with its growth that ensures the economic viability of each sub-region and in the region as a whole, independently of external assistance. While outside assistance is welcome, we must be financially self-sufficient. Union development projects and programs implemented by PSI should aim at empowering unions to be self-sufficient through increased membership dues.

The proposal is to increase membership and, to the extent possible, the dues paid by current affiliates, so that the Brazil, Southern Cone, Central America and Caribbean sub-regions' revenues cover their administrative costs, including offices and statutory meetings such as the SUBRACs. The goal for the Andean sub-region is to reach 50% of that amount. Outside assistance, including project funding, should always include this component to grow and strengthen PSI. Canada and the USA have already far surpassed this financial equilibrium and their growth goal should include prioritizing new memberships to strengthen PSI in both countries.

The sub-regions of the USA, Canada and Brazil all surpass their expenses in relation to collected revenues and the Caribbean and Southern Cone regions are headed in the same direction. There continue to be challenges to receiving payments from Central America and the Andean countries. In addition and according to PSI's global briefing, there is agreement to draft a restructuring proposal for the region to reduce expenses in light of PSI large budget deficit in recent years, a deficit amplified by the reduction in payments made by several large affiliates. Membership growth and reduction of expenses are needed to guarantee PSI's viability. The Regional Secretary along with the co-chairs elaborated a plan to reduce expenses throughout the region. The proposal was presented in the Steering Committee (SC 17) and will be discussed in the SUBRACs and IAMREC in 2014.

## II GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

### 4) The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

PSI's growth is not measured solely in numbers, but also in terms of political influence in the region. In this regard, we must have a presence in international institutions that will strengthen our advocacy for quality public services. This is one of the main roles of an international labor organization.

A good example is to ensure PSI's participation in IDB forums, particularly in areas where public services are being debated. The IDB is somewhat closed to societal participation, but like other IFIs, sooner or later it will have to open up to dialogue. A PSI priority should be to create opportunities for participation in the IDB, based on the example of activities we have undertaken in other regions, such as the experience with the Asian Development Bank. This will enable public workers to have a clear voice in forums where our interests are being discussed. We must certainly recognize PSI's role and responsibility in these international forums.

This type of action should always be coordinated with other GUFs, the TUCA and regional NGOs in order to establish support networks for initiatives and policy-making. By connecting our sector-specific organizations to IDB actions, we can focus our efforts in PSI's main interest areas.

**Visits to the Governors and/or Directors of Brazil, Jamaica and Argentina were conducted during the IAMREC meeting week in Washington. In general, this effort to improve relations between the IDB and the labor movement was well received. Mark Langevin, with the support of the ITUC/Global Unions office in Washington, has continued to engage the IDB and develop relationships during the second half of 2013.**

**A positive development was the African Development Bank approval on the adoption of the basic ILO Conventions to finance projects in the region. Only in Americas the respective regional bank still lacks on responses to the trade union movement.**

### 5) Organization of American States (OAS)

Opportunities are available for dialogue with the OAS and civil society. However, the labor movement did not seek certification properly as a representative of society. There are ongoing discussions at the OAS on conventions such as those on the promotion of equal opportunity and civil rights. We could feasibly take advantage of this opportunity to make the voice of the public sector heard in the next 5 years. At the same time, we must be alert to the evolution of regional blocs, such as UNASUR, with a view towards promoting the labor movement's involvement wherever public services and workers' rights are being discussed.

**The 2013 Inter-American Conference of Labor Ministers (IACLM) was held in Medellin, Colombia, on 11-12 of November. It was an important moment in the defense of labor rights for the region, in particular where we have had difficulty creating a dialogue with governments, such as those in Peru, Paraguay, Chile and other countries. PSI had the largest delegation among the trade union organizations that attended the IACLM.**

In terms of UNASUR, governments have begun to discuss a consultation structure for discussions by creating national and regional councils where unions along with civil society organizations are present. PSI is accompanying these ongoing discussions.

#### **6) Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)**

Currently, free trade agreements are one of the greatest threats with increasing privatization of public services in our region. The European Union /Latin America and Caribbean, APEC, Canada / Caribbean and many others continue to pose a threat to our organizations and to the populations that rely on public services. The bad examples of NAFTA and, more recently, CAFTA, leave no room for doubt. One of the main points in our plan is to continue to fight such agreements inasmuch as they threaten the public interest in every country, especially the most vulnerable groups.

Our presence at the summits to share PSI's policies and experiences, working mainly through our affiliates in the host countries, is critical to joining forces with all of society in the defense of workers' interests. Sectorial organizations should be connected to this struggle so that they may contribute the knowledge and resistance of each sector threatened by a trade agreement.

**TPP: PSI continues to monitor these trade negotiations through the NoTPP Network, with civil society organizations (in Spanish only). Some of our affiliates are active in the PSI work group on TPP (in English only) that brings together affiliate representatives from the Americas and Asia. Negotiators have confirmed that they may not conclude negotiations in 2013, because there are important and divergent positions on such issues as: patents, pharmaceutical prices, agricultural subsidies, and others. The TPP negotiations are largely held in secret and in locations with limited accessibility. The next round of negotiations will be held in Brunei.**

**EU/CELALC: these negotiations continue after the Summit held in January in Chile. According to the Brazilian government, participating countries would announce their positions on goods and**

services until the end of 2013, to advance these negotiations and conclude an agreement in 2014. We need to continue to monitor these discussions.

**Pacific Alliance:** this effort brings together national governments that are more closely associated with the foreign policy of the United States, such as Mexico, Colombia, and Peru and serves as a counterbalance of sorts with the efforts to advance UNASUR in the region.

**Mercosur (Common Market of South America):** The decision of Paraguay to return to Mercosur and the approval on the addition of Venezuela's membership has brought a little revitalization to this trading bloc. Now, the problem is the perspective of the trade agreement with the European Union, which is rapidly advancing. In 2014, we must be very attentive to the proposals to be presented by the Mercosur countries.

**BRICS:** a meeting with unions from South Africa, India, Russia and Brazil was held in Brasilia in August. The event was organized by affiliates in Brazil and PSI. During the meeting, the PSI affiliates developed a trade union work plan to monitor policies and resolutions of the BRICS. Municipal sector affiliates from various Latin American countries also attended the event.

## **7) Public Sector Funding and Taxation**

Since public services will only be universally achieved with proper funding, which is established mainly through tax revenues, we need to promote the legitimacy of paying taxes, linking it closely to democracy and transparency in our governments.

All members of PSI must have the debate over public funding and taxes on the tip of their tongues. PSI can work with affiliates to popularize these issues and share "best practice" models. This might include, for example, highlighting affiliates who are opposing tax cuts that would require a shift to user fees in Canada's health system, or who are promoting tax reforms to raise money for public services in Ghana. We are also supporting the growing demand for an International Tax on Financial Transactions which would reduce excessive speculation and generate funds for development.

The campaign for an international Financial Transactions Tax - FTT (known as the Robin Hood tax in Canada and the USA) and for fair taxation continues. For example, after the IAMREC in Washington (March), there was a demonstration in support of an ITT. Also, at the ILO Conference in June, PSI along with ULATOC promoted a seminar and discussion about corruption and fair taxation in the public sector. PSI also organized an event on corruption in the public sector in December in Mexico, with the participation of Central Administration unions.

ULATOC proposes a great activity to be organized along with PSI in Buenos Aires in April 2014, addressing on tax justice and fighting corruption.

### **III HUMAN AND LABOR RIGHTS**

#### **8) Collective bargaining**

Discrimination against the public sector through regulations governing collective bargaining persists throughout the Americas. In virtually every country of the Americas, there is a vacuum in terms of bargaining guarantees in all areas of public services. Therefore one of our priorities is to launch a clear campaign to promote in each country legally regulated collective bargaining guarantees for all sectors. To this end, we should seek support from ACTRAV/ILO, the TUCA and ITUC, national trade union centrals and other progressive forces in the region. Capacity building and campaigning activities will strengthen the affiliates to effectively represent their membership, achieve improvements in their working conditions, influence governments to develop quality public services and achieve full trade union rights for all public service workers. One of our main slogans should be, "There are no quality public services without labor rights."

**Regional affiliates' participation in the 2013 ILO Conference was strong, from the participation in the initial preparations, including the questionnaire and discussions with governments, to the direct participation of dozens of representatives from the region at the conference. Also, there were accompanying demonstrations on June 12th, in such countries as Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Panama, and Mexico and in conjunction with the Road of Shame held in Geneva where participants visited various embassies to defend labor rights.**

During August 7-8th, ACTRAV promoted along with PSI a bipartite meeting to follow up on the ILO International Labor Conference (ILC) in Latin America with the participation of affiliates and governments throughout the region. This meeting promoted the Public Sector Collective Bargaining Manual, published by the ILO in 2012 and featuring ways of implementing the ILO's Conventions 151 and 154 in the region.

#### **9) Inter-American Court of Human Rights**

This is another opportunity that the labor movement has yet to fully exploit. Experience shows that cases before this court can be won when a complaint of a labor rights violation is prepared properly. Labor rights are human rights and therefore the Court must respond to our well founded requests. An important step for PSI would be to submit and win at least some cases before the Court over the next 5 years.

**The complaint over the violation of labor rights in Ecuador continues to be treated by the Inter-American Human Rights Court. Presently, PSI is seeking to address the issue of the citizens of Haitian descent in Dominican Republic in the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. The Commission has already positioned against the decision of the Constitutional Court of Dominican Republic. More details are included in the item 15 of this report.**

### **IV EQUITY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

## **10) Gender and Pay Equity**

Without detracting from other gender-focused campaigns in the region, the pay equity campaign should be a priority in the Americas during the next period. Gender-based pay discrimination is completely unacceptable and persists throughout the public sector. The countries in each sub-region should act to remove promotion ceilings in the administrative career and examine ways of eliminating gender bias in the workplace, especially by sharing experiences and victories. Sector-specific structures should promote equity by facilitating comparisons between comparable groups of workers across countries.

**Regional representatives were very active as participants at the United Nations Conference on Women's Rights as well as the ILO Conference. The Southern Cone and Brazil are seeking to adopt a new project on gender, including Pay Equity, to be launched in 2014. The region has also successfully placed its representative, Juneia Batista, as the President of the PSI Women's Committee.**

## **11) Young Workers**

The priorities for young workers fall under five broad headings:

- Building and strengthening sub/regional networks and structures: the Regional Committee; young workers' structures/networks in all sub-regions; expand opportunities for young workers to participate in PSI's structures and networks, promoting a 30% participation rate;
- Using modern communication methods and media to educate, involve and integrate young workers in trade unions;
- Developing programs and activities that build the capacity of young workers to more effectively participate in union decision-making;
- Recruiting and organizing young workers;
- Intensifying the struggle against precarious jobs and strengthening our campaigns for decent job opportunities including entry level positions.

The Regional Committee will continue to meet annually to review the implementation of the action plan, monitor the participation and activities of young men and young women in each sub-region.

**The committee is slated to meet in 2014 in order to follow up on the last meeting held in Durban.**

## **12) Struggle against Racism and Xenophobia**

We should finalize the Regional Committee and ensure that all sub-regions are represented. Over the coming years, we should support the organization of sub-regional and/or national committees as appropriate. These committees should focus mainly on the Convention against all Forms of

Discrimination currently under discussion at the OAS. PSI's certification as a regional representative of civil society before the OAS will clearly bolster our campaign.

**The PSI regional committee met in November in Bogota with the support of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center. Representatives from Southern Cone, Brasil, Andean Countries, Caribbean, Central America and USA attended the meeting. Important issues were discussed, such as the adoption of the OAS Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance defended by PSI in the last years, the interchange of best practices and the situation of the citizens of Haitian descent in Dominican Republic, including the proposal of a campaign to boycott tourism in Dominican Republic.**

### **13) LGBT**

It is time that PSI intensified its support for the struggle for equal opportunity for men and women workers from the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community who have been subject to varying degrees of discrimination throughout the Americas. Affiliates from Canada, the United States, Brazil and Costa Rica are already working on this issue and are now proposing the establishment of a Regional Committee with representation from each sub-region as a first step in this direction. This would facilitate experience-sharing among affiliates and planning of joint actions to demand their rights in different countries.

**The committee was formed at the meeting held in São Paulo in June with representatives from Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean countries, and Central America. The meeting resolutions are available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish at the PSI website. This meeting counted on the support of FNV/ABVAKABO and through its project with the Brazilian affiliates. The main issues were the defense of equality of rights, the participation in the Out Games and the joint work with ILGA. A delegation from our region attended the Out Games in Antwerp in July-August and a cooperation agreement between PSI and ILGA will be signed in 2014.**

### **14) Migrants**

The proposal for this group is mainly to continue working with migrant health workers who travel from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America and Europe. Solid ties should be established among the trade unions in the migrant health workers' destination and home countries. At the same time, we must advocate for good working conditions in those countries so that migration is an option rather than the product of a lack of decent job opportunities.

**PSI has supported the participation of affiliates, especially those in the U.S., in the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development carried out in September in New York City.**

## **V INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

### **15) Haiti**

Historically the most impoverished country in the Americas, it is now also the most devastated. PSI's priorities for the region in terms of international solidarity should be to contribute to reconstruction in Haiti by strengthening trade unions, particularly in the public sector. Reconstruction should include support for our members and allies in defending the State's role in the provision of quality public services and policy-making to reduce the poverty that has engulfed the population for so many years.

**In this period, the main issue has been the decision of the Constitutional Court of Dominican Republic to deny the citizenship to thousands of people of Haitian descent, that is, Haitians' children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren born in Dominican Republic who now suffer total discrimination in this country. The international community, OAS and other organizations have condemned the decision. PSI has protested promptly, as well as TUCA and our Dominican affiliates, but the problem has not been solved so far. The Regional Anti-Racism and Anti-Xenophobia Committee suggests that PSI supports along with ITUC a world campaign to boycott tourism in Dominican Republic.**

**PSI also participated in the ITUC evaluation meeting in December in Port au Prince, which discussed the follow up of the international trade union support to Haiti. The contact with CTSP in this issue continues through the PSI office in the Caribbean.**

### **16) Colombia**

Violence against trade unionists is on the rise in many countries, but the situation in Colombia continues to be unique in the labor world. Without neglecting any country that requires PSI's defense against arbitrary acts against trade unions, we should pay particular attention to Colombia. Death threats, displacement, and lockdowns are not to be tolerated. PSI will remain alert and closely monitor the situation in that country, taking action as needed.

**Collective bargaining has been established with the national government and PSI played a key role in the unification of our affiliates and the labor centrals in the country. Though, the Colombian government has not provided a final response with real advances so far. On the other hand, union repression continues against labor union leaders in this country, including the threats made to Margarita Lopez, leader of Sintracuavalle, who has opposed water privatization. According to the Escuela Nacional Sindical (trade union research institute in Colombia), more than 20 union leaders were assassinated in Colombia in 2013.**

### **17) Guatemala**

This country is experiencing growing violence against trade unionists and other grassroots militants and now ranks second in the region in terms of trade union murders and violence. Death threats against unionists and their families have become commonplace. This situation will certainly deteriorate even further unless there is a clear response from the international

community. PSI will closely monitor this critical situation, denounce it in all international venues, and take action in defense of labor rights and democracy in this country whenever necessary.

**PSI and Rosa Pavanelli led a very important mission to Guatemala from August 12 to the 15th and met with the country's President, ministers, United Nations and ILO offices and other organizations. All constant international pressure, campaigns, missions, and other actions, such as those carried out at the ILO International Labor Conference (ILC), have succeeded in lowering the numbers of labor unionist assassinations in recent months, though the danger atmosphere and frequent threats continue. In this sense, PSI's support for the participation of Luis Lara, at the ILC was critical. Luis Lara and Dora Regina Ruano, leaders of SNTSG (health workers union affiliated to PSI in Guatemala) also addressed to the European Parliament on the situation in Honduras.**

#### **18) Honduras**

It has been over a year since the coup d'état in Honduras. The repression in Honduras has continued and perhaps worsened since the November election and dozens of opposition activists, including trade unionists, have been murdered. There is impunity for those who carried out the coup and the repression and the government has established a 'Truth Commission' that appears set to sweep these crimes under the rug. Many states in Latin America question the legitimacy of the current government and have not agreed to readmit Honduras to the OAS until specific means have been established for ensuring re-democratization and respect for fundamental rights. The National Front of Popular Resistance is engaged in a campaign that demands an in-depth reform of the national institutions through a popular and democratic constituent assembly. Trade unions are actively engaged in the Resistance and should be supported for their efforts. PSI should continue to monitor the situation and to speak out against continued repression.

**PSI integrated the trade union observation mission to the presidential election in Honduras in November. Unfortunately, the electoral process has strong indications of fraud, and the Electoral Committee promptly declared the victory of the right-wing candidate supported by the groups that overthrew the previous government that was democratically elected. The contact continues through the PSI Office for Central America and it will be important to support local affiliates to continue in the struggle for democracy in Honduras.**

#### **19) Ecuador**

**PSI along with ACTRAV/ILO carried out a follow-up meeting regarding the PSI actions towards ILO referring to the complaints on the violation of trade union rights in Ecuador. Unfortunately, the national government continues with the lack of dialogue with workers and the persecution to independent leaders.**

#### **20) Paraguay**

The non-elected government that replaced ousted President Lugo proposed that the parliament draft a new regulatory framework for the electricity sector in order to eliminate the state's monopoly and open the way toward privatization. Led by our affiliate SITRANDE, we have supported mass mobilizations to oppose privatization and delay the final vote on the new regulations. The new government, elected in May 2013 proposes to continue the privatization of the electricity sector. Electricity is the main export product of Paraguay, which increases the national budget in more than 750 million dollars per year. PSI is supporting the local affiliates in the struggle against privatization.

Also, together with our affiliates, we are drafting a national project to defend labor rights and quality public services in Paraguay to be launched in 2014.

## **21) Peru**

Peru is a country that needs greater attention by PSI. The government sought and obtained parliamentary approval of a new labor code that impedes public sector unions from negotiating wages and determines how the labor unions of this sector must organize themselves. PSI organized an international workshop, with the assistance of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center and the ILO, to demonstrate that the new labor code violates ILO conventions. Our affiliates are organizing mass mobilizations and demonstrations, with up to 30,000 participants, to oppose the roll back of labor rights. The debate on how to implement the new code continues and our affiliates are working to recover their rights.

Right after the Regional Secretary's report presentation, a space for participation was opened.

**Roberto Pagan (United States)** says they agree upon prioritizing sector work, but requests information on which transverse elements could be applied to affiliates in general, in the first place.

## **5. The new dynamics of PSI projects approval; a global perspective and proposals.**

**Jasper Goos, global head of projects**, presents the state of cooperation between 2006 and 2010 and the current situation in the projects department. Similarly, he presents the document containing the proposal for new projects approval, which is being analyzed by different PSI instances. (See Annex 1)

Questions coming from Canada and United States and comments made by the Andean countries are incorporated on conflict resolution in projects presentation and the need for a team of experts in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects.

After these considerations the document under consultation was adopted.

## **6. Regional Conference.**

Jocelio presents the proposed structure to IAMRECON. Right after listening to the whole proposal, it was decided that each of the Conference's topic should be considered before approval, one by one, which was done.

**LOCATION:** Mexico City. **Adopted**

**DATE:** From 20 to 24 April 2015. **Adopted**

**PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES:**

- 1.5 days of sector meetings to plan actions over the next five years and submit the conclusions to IAMRECON; Water/CONTAGUAS, State Control/ULATOC, Energy, Universities/CONTUA and Administrative Education, Judicial/CTLPJ, Municipal/CONTRAMA, Health, Customs and Fiscal Control, Central Administration, Legislative.
- Thematic half-day seminars to exchange experiences and, if necessary, plan actions on; pension funds/retirement, trade agreements, migration and health, precarious work, security, etc.
- A concern about the simultaneity of the meetings of women and youth is raised. **Adopted after the incorporation of this contribution**

**IAMREC 2015:** to be held at the end of the first and second day and, if necessary, at the end of the third day. **Adopted**

**IAMRECON:** two days, where the findings of the pre-conference meetings are presented, PSI actions are evaluated and the Regional Work Plan for the next five years is adopted, in line with the Global Fight Plan. **Adopted**

**SPONSORSHIP:** PSI will provide hotel sponsorship for at least 150 delegates, 30 of each sub-region (Andean, Southern Cone, Brazil, the Caribbean and Central America) and trade unions shall sponsor flights and local expenses. PSI will be responsible for all Conference costs; translation, equipment, materials and a dinner for all participants. Mexico is responsible for ensuring sponsorship for lunches and others. **Adopted**

**FLIGHT SPONSORSHIP:** Will be provided to young members of the Regional Committee and other members of the Youth Committee, if available; for IAMREC members; for representatives of the sectors gathered by projects (water and municipal) and for some SUBRAC participants already in Mexico. **Adopted**

**SUBRACs in Mexico: Adopted** (Southern Cone must respond to the request made by the Paraguay affiliates of increasing the number of people from this country at the meeting)

**MAIN THEME:** Push trade union rights forward in the fight for quality public services. **Adopted**

**GENDER BALANCE AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION:** Gender balance is required at all levels of participation in each constituency. If there are more than two participants, youth must be represented among those who are going to Mexico. **Adopted** (what to do when primary delegates are women)

**SCHEDULE:**

- MAY 2014 - First information circular letter containing date and local, participation criteria and other announcements.
- JUNE 2014 - Second circular letter with the first draft of the Plan of Action.
- JULY/AUGUST 2014 - Contributions to the Plan and Proposed Motions are received.
- SEPTEMBER 2014 - The third circular letter with a new version of the Plan of Action as well as all motions were already received. Registration opens for Delegates and observers.
- OCTOBER 2014: New contributions to the Plan of Action and possible contradictions in the Motions are received. Registration of participants is still on.
- NOVEMBER 2014 - Fourth circular letter with the Plan of Action to be submitted to the Conference and the report on the activities of the 2010 Conference. Registration of participants is still being held.
- DECEMBER 2014 - Fifth Circular letter with all received applications and other information on the Conference.
- JANUARY 2015 - Decision making on who will receive hotel sponsorship by sub-region (done with each one of the PSI sub-region responsible people, after consulting the National Coordination Committees)
- FEBRUARY 2015: Final circular letter and end of registration.
- APRIL 2015: CONFERENCE AND PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

**Adopted**

## **7. ILO Conference.**

Sandra Vermuyten gave a presentation on Trade Union Rights with emphasis on: collective bargaining, the ILO Conference and the Route of Shame.

### **Trade Union Rights**

- The protection of trade union and labor rights is a priority activity at PSI.
- The rights of the public sector workers are under severe attack through austerity and privatization programs, but also because of the labor reforms that lower and cut back protection mechanisms.

- Violations of trade union and labor rights, encompassing Algeria, Botswana, South Korea, Guatemala, Turkey, Peru, Colombia, Paraguay, Tunisia, UN unions
- Multi-level / multi-partner
- Increasing affiliates participation/Missions/Local and regional projects
- Rights and Trade: Guatemala, South Korea
- Global and regional events

#### **Collective bargaining in public services**

- ILO Conventions 151 and 154: PSI will continue to campaign to ensure the trade union rights of all public sector workers, including the full implementation of ILO Conventions 151 and 154.
- By August 2014, 53 countries have to report on the implementation of C151 and C154
- Ratification campaigns

#### **ILO International Conference**

In 2013, PSI had a strong presence at the International Labor Conference. In 2014, we must build on that experience and improve our delegation's coordination so that the priorities of public service workers are heard in all committees, taking into account the 103rd ILO International Conference's agenda:

- I. Statement by the Chair of the Administration Council and report by the General Director
- II. Program and Budget and other financial matters
- III. Information and reports on the application of conventions and recommendations
- IV. To complement the Forced Labor Convention, 1930 (No.. 29) to address gaps in the application in order to reinforce prevention and protection measures and compensation of victims, with a view to the elimination of forced labor - standards setting, simple discussion procedure.
- V. To enable the transition from an informal to a formal economy - standard setting, double discussion procedure.
- VI. A recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment.

#### **Route of Shame**

The event will be held on June 4, 2014, with the same format and proposal of the one held in 2013, but this time, involving simultaneous actions in a larger number of countries.

**Right after Sandra Vermuyten's presentation, the participants of IAMREC are invited to share their opinions.**

Concerning the Route of Shame, Canada proposes that, whenever possible, actions should be performed during summer. These activities would complement those to be carried out on June 4.

The conclusions of the Andean SUBRAC are handed and adopted as complements.

- At the national level it is essential to improve and strengthen the coordination and relations with trade union confederations to better address the situation of workers in the public sector.

- It is necessary to keep and strengthen the campaign for the ratification and/or implementation of ILO conventions 151 and 154. We were not successful in directing countries that haven't yet ratified the convention to take steps towards it.
- It is necessary to keep as priority the focus on the violation of rights in all countries and most specifically in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.
- The Andean SUBRAC adopts the participation in the "Path of Shame" global event on June 4 and suggests that simultaneous actions are promoted on June 23, "International Public Service Day".
- On the ILO Regional Conference; it is necessary to assign a representative from each country so that, after agreeing on the number of PSI delegates, we can count on the presence of countries with major complications.
- 

Questions about the actions in support to countries which haven't yet ratified ILO conventions 151 and 154 arise. The answer is lobbying the government and developing a specific campaign focusing on those countries in order to place this issue as a priority for trade unions, as well as promoting the Internet as a tool for the development of trade union rights campaigns.

## **8. Video presentation on the Mission to Guatemala in 2013 and the situation of rights violation and of public services.**

José Paulino Martinez, Secretary of Coordinator of PSI Affiliates National Coordinating Committee in Guatemala, reads a summary of the situation in Guatemala to date (See Appendix 2 - only in Spanish) with the participation of José Paulino.

### **Right after reading the document, a space for participants' interventions is opened**

Candice Owley considers that the Regional Women's Committee's decisions must be evinced to ensure a gender perspective in all initiatives implemented in Guatemala, including in the project to be developed with affiliates in that country and expresses that the United States and Canada, which won't be sponsored, must decide by themselves how many people can participate in the initiatives to be held in Guatemala.

## **9. Report on the meeting with the President of Guatemala**

Candice Owley reports on the meeting with the president of Guatemala, who promised to create a number of formal jobs and incorporate the ILO Convention 151 and to solve the massive layoff in the public sector. With regard to impunity and the ability to solve crimes against trade unionists, the President said that the issue around an adequate budget for research is a theme which belongs to the Congress, and not to the President.

Sandra Vermuyten reports on the meeting with the Minister of Labor, who also pledged to continue the discussion on the Labor Code, which is presently in the Congress. About impunity, nothing new was said at the Ministry of Labor.

## **10. Regional Women's Committees report**

Candice Owley reports:

- ✓ The Regional Women's Committee will focus on priority issues that PSI has set for the gender equality agenda.
- ✓ On the UN Commission and the need to follow up on national level decisions, alongside other organizations working on trade issues, to better direct our messages.  
A video on women leaders' intervention and of Juneia at United Nations is presented.
- ✓ An acknowledgment is made to Sandra Vermuyten for the way she prepared and followed PSI's participation in the United Nations arena. It is also expected that future United States affiliates take this work as a step in the way of strengthening women's and PSI's power in this arena.
- ✓ A campaign to end violence against women. It is important to state that this issue won't move forward without the commitment of the affiliates in each country. Best practices such as the Caribbean ones and community involvement, as well as the experience of Chile will be posted on the web. It is necessary that this kind of work becomes a matter of men and women. Thus, we can use the campaign that calls men to speak about violence against women. There is an initiative in support to the creation of an ILO convention on how violence against women looks like at the workplace. This campaign could be incorporated in the IAMRECON.
- ✓ It was agreed that, in October, a meeting with the women of Inter-Americas will be held in Chile to strengthen women's capacity to address these issues in the IAMRECON.
- ✓ An analysis of the Guatemala situation was made and it was agreed that a mission to Venezuela will be organized by PSI, due to the country's delicate situation.
- ✓ Sandra informs that a way to enable greater women's participation in the United Nations Commission will be studied as well as a good support plan for greater incidence.

The Regional Women's Committee report was adopted by PSI's Inter-American Regional Committee, IAMREC.

## **11. Regional Youth Committee's report.**

Elicneth Guevara, presents last Youth Committee's meeting report with the following words "*As we all know, the youth issue remains a priority for PSI World, which is why one of the concerns of young workers in the region is that, in view of the fact that this is a subject PSI has been ostensively acting upon since 2006, there is no specific project for us, there is no budget that would allow us to*

*"develop campaigns with topics such as precarious employment, outsourcing, to cause greater impact in our countries, and although we are aware of the financial crisis, we are also aware that we must strengthen the work of young people in the region and sub regions, and from this instance we should make a difference, so from our perspective, it is essential to concentrate efforts to achieve good operation conditions and coordinated work among youth in the region"*

A PPT presentation was made on the Youth Committee's conclusions. The introduction calls attention to the crisis of youth representation.

### **Regional Youth Committee.**

Attendance list: The Andean Countries, Brazil, Caribbean, Southern Cone, Central America (the participation of Guatemala Youth is emphasized), which arrived to the following conclusions.

#### **Communications;**

- Organizing monthly virtual meetings (João, from Brazil)
- Preparing by the end of 2014 a video on the work done by the Youth in the region (Shamir, from the Caribbean). Everybody sent material such as interviews, activities, etc.
- Creating a PSI Youth quarterly online newsletter (Marlón, from Guatemala) with a country report.
- Setting up, at IAMRECON, a booth with trade union communication material addressing youth and reward the best material.

#### **Structure;**

- Strengthening and further organizing the Regional Youth Network with a mailing list (Yvonne-April) to be integrated to the Global Network.
- Supporting the global mapping to be made by the Ferney Office on Youth issues, ensuring responses from unions in each sub-region.
- Actively participate in the PSI World Youth Meeting, in 2015.
- Proposing to UDIS a youth project in the global, regional and sub-regional levels.
- Integrating the CSA Youth Committee (João)

#### **Youth employment;**

- Unemployment and precarious work remains central issues for the Youth.
- PSI Americas should promote in 2015 a specific workshop on Youth Work gathering best practices in job related public policies for the Youth. Inviting ILO, FES and others to join this workshop.

#### **IAMRECON;**

- In those unions participating with more than 3 people, at least 1 of them must be from the Youth and if there are a high number of participants, the ratio must be respected.
- Ensuring accommodation to all young participants, without affecting the regular quota (30 hotel sponsorships)

- Creating an award for those unions with best youth practices - those which meet the 30% quota. Producing banners, posting on the PSI Internet site, etc.
- Campaigning to stimulate those unions with greater financial resources to sponsor young participants from countries with fewer resources.

**Situation in Guatemala;**

- Youth network and social networks are to be used for immediate reports of rights violations in Guatemala using with virtual banners, cell phone videos, letters to authorities, etc.
- Videos can be made by the Youth in different countries in defense of trade unionists in Guatemala, so as to promote confidence among young workers.
- Finding refuge in countries whenever necessary. Foster Youth participation in the Route of Shame on June 04, with special attention to Guatemala.

**Right after the presentation, the conclusions of the Regional Youth Committee was called into question.**

Reacting to it, Candice indicates that there was no representation from Canada and United States, a situation that will have to change in the future.

**Jocelio requests that the Youth proposals on IAMRECON are adopted and they are.**

## **12. Guatemala Project**

Get information on the need to create a solidarity program for Guatemala, by means of a project or campaign. Sandra Vermuyten presents PSI initiatives for the country. Candice proposes that IAMREC adopts the plan

Jasper says that more than a project we must think of an integrated campaign, involving the different projects which involve Guatemala and we must review this subject and consequently IAMREC must generate a review mechanism for the theme.

Juneia, commits to seeking support from the Brazilian Cooperation Fund. **After these considerations, the plan for Guatemala is adopted.**

## **13. Membership situations**

**Candice requests clarifications on the list (see Annex 3)**

Luis Isarra (the Andean countries) clarifies the Aruba request from TOPA, which doesn't count on the approval of the presently affiliated union, SEPPA, and requests that TOPA's affiliation is postponed until a consensus is reached with SEPPA. **With this clarification membership issues are adopted.**

## **14. Presentation on the work done in international financial institutions, including IDB.**

**Mark Langevin (Washington office)** reports that PSI has been participating in IDB discussions, accompanied by official delegates from Brazil and the United States. It was agreed with Victor Baez that CSA will send a letter to IDB on the perspective of the union movement, which must be copied and sent to IDB President, Moreno, in order to open a new space for workers participation. We must take over the discussion with governments regarding the safeguard for the loans granted by the bank. We must strategically engage in the bank's decisions for specific countries.

## **15. Next meeting**

Mexico City is adopted as the location for next meeting, which should be held before the Inter-American Regional Conference, IAMRECON.

## **16. Final closure**

**Comments made by Rosa Pavanelli.** She celebrates IAMREC's commitment in contributing to the discussion on the future of the organization. Discussions were made and formal decisions were taken, but there aren't many opportunities for us to meet, so we must think about how the Regional Executive Committee meeting could be changed, as we are frozen in a very formal meeting format. Discussions on the concrete problems we face in the region must be held, which could change the outlook and agenda of the regional meeting.

**Several interventions were made to support Rosa's exposition.**

### **Attachments:**

1. Document: "The new dynamics of PSI projects approval"
2. Document about the situation in Guatemala, prepared by PSI affiliates.
3. Membership Affairs.