



CUSTOMS GROUP REPORT

Mexico City, 20th and 21st April, 2015

The Inter-Americas sectorial Customs and Taxation Workshop was attended by 22 delegates from eight countries. The delegation noted that in Latin America the processes of state reform are presented in two ways, on the one hand as the continuation of the neoliberal reform and on the other hand as a reform that strengthens the State. Nevertheless, these two processes within the labor field give continuity to flexible working practices in the public sector, with the exception of Argentina, where workers have recovered their rights.

The group has decided that the two priority issues shall be:

1. The attack on Freedom of Association, which is another feature of the modernization process and led several organizations of the Customs and Taxation sector to lose their rights to freedom of association, with Uruguay and Ecuador as the most alarming cases.
2. Labor situation, which was dominated by the weakening of civil service, increased precarious work, overload and increased working hours, public forces interference in management which deepens workplace violence, labor unrest linked to evaluation processes that justify dismissal and the increasing wage gap between authorities and workers.

In this context, the Group recognizes that the effectiveness of tax collection services has a direct and significant impact on the existence of quality public services, where customs constitutes the first link in the chain of Public Treasury generation allowing advances in the long road to the Tax Justice.

Corruption aiming to conceal tax evasion and money laundering not only affects developing countries, but threatens all democracies in the world as their cost falls directly on the general population, creating inequalities that disrupt the social contract. The Group has condemned and categorically rejects "the corruption in all its forms, which is detrimental to the development of

peoples"¹ and this is why it will develop a Campaign for Customs Ethics and Tax Justice, on the basis of the Arusha Declaration² especially considering what has been described on the report entitled "The global corruption against the people and the working class"³.

To meet the priorities set, the group requires PSI to:

1. Support the sector in its consolidation and growth in the region, to increase the power of trade union organization and the full exercise of labor rights;
2. Bring the voice of Custom workers to international forums to demand the tools to help us achieve the Tax Justice demanded by our people.
3. Follow closely our colleagues of ASPAE from Ecuador in national and international scenarios, given the situation of rights violation and the imminent risk of loss of freedom of association in the public sector.
4. Make efforts towards the effective implementation of the 2014 collective agreement between SINEDIAN, of Colombia, and the country's authorities.

Additionally, we would like to suggest that, considering the success of the work developed within the group and in the context of the policies and priorities set out at the Durban Congress, the organizational structure of PSI Inter-Americas should readjust as to recognize, as an organization, the new forms of sector work that now exist.

Meanwhile, the sector commits to:

1. Work with PSI affiliates to strengthen action unity at national and regional levels, developing actions to support union struggle;
2. Strengthen the International Centre for Advanced Research and Customs (CIPIA), making it available to the trade union movement for the development of research and formulation of proposals to facilitate the generation of quality public services;
3. Demand States the effective training and development of public policies to combat organized crime;
4. Continue strengthening the communication channels between the organizations that compose the Group and the community as a whole, using traditional means, as well as social media.

Signed by the Group

Jorge Andres Thibaut

¹ Act of Quito, June 2014, FRASUR

² WCO - World Customs Organizations, Revised June 2003, <http://tinyurl.com/ljqbukf>

³ Alfredo Yoma and Federico Dávila, published in April 2015, <http://tinyurl.com/o8qsd92>