



For immediate release – 18 October 2013

Mobilizing for action – public service workers aim for social and economic justice in Asia Pacific

More than 100 leaders of unions affiliated to the global union federation Public Services International concluded meetings in Bangkok, Thailand this week by committing to take joint action to build the power and influence of public service workers in the Asia Pacific region.

The unions identified strategies to address a number of important issues, including fighting harmful free trade agreements, stopping privatization and related corruption in public services, ending violence against women, and advancing positive solutions through tax justice, stronger trade union rights, and supporting young workers and migrant workers in public services.

PSI and affiliates were alerted to the need to take action to avert privatization plans for public water and electrical services in Thailand. Privatization in other countries has resulted in lower quality services at higher cost to users. Unions from the Philippines shared their experience with campaigns to block the privatization of electrical utilities.

Yiam Khongruangrat, a committee member of the Nursing Union of Thailand, drew attention to the troubling shortage of 40,000 nurses in the national healthcare system. She further proposes that her union begin a campaign to end violence against women and girls. “As nurses, this issue has a lot of impact for us.”

Kao Poeun, President of the Cambodian Independent Civil Servants Association, welcomes the support offered by PSI and affiliate unions to defend trade union rights and to combat corruption in his country: “We are severely affected by corruption as public service workers and community members in Cambodia. We must raise awareness of how corruption hurts the delivery of quality public services.”

Tatsuya Nakamura, General Secretary of the National Council of Japanese Firefighters and Ambulance Workers (ZENSHOKYO) says his union will intensify its national campaign for trade union rights, and commit to working across borders in solidarity with firefighters’ unions and associations in other countries, especially in Korea in 2014.

PSI affiliates commit to opposing free trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which threaten labour standards, social protection and public services, including through joining actions around the World Trade Organization meetings in Bali in December.

In a region where 60% of the population is denied basic public services because of misdirected funding, PSI and affiliates commit to working with civil society allies to build the regional network of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice. Further, the unions will expand the financial transactions tax campaign initiated by Japanese union JICHIRO.

Katie Rowsell, Organizer with Community and Public Sector Union of Australia, adds, “We look forward to showing how young workers can contribute to moving the Public Services International programme for action and growth forward in the Asia Pacific region.”

END

media release... communiqué de presse... comunicado de prensa...