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PSI INTER-AMERICAS
REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
San Juan, Puerto Rico – 29th March, 2016
Verdanza Hotel

REPORT

With the participation of PSI's women leaders from the sub regions of Canada and the US; Caribbean, Central America, Andean Countries, Southern Cone and Brazil; as well as Rosa Pavanelli, PSI's General Secretary, the Interamericas Women's Committee met in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the 29th of March, and agreed:

- **UN Commission on the Status of Women.**

Every year, PSI and the other global union federations ITUC, EI, ITF – take a joint approach to the United Nations Commission on the Legal and Social Status of Women (UNCSW). The main focus of the 60th session in 2016 was economic empowerment of women. Our major objectives for this year were that we wanted to see greater recognition of the trade unions' role as defenders of women's rights, both at the workplace and in society. Along with the women's movement and NGOs that share the same principles, we also wanted to increase our influence on the decisions made by governments.

The final Agreed Conclusions had some positive issues that reaffirm:

- Beijing declaration and Platform for Action
- Full and equal enjoyment of all human rights for all women and girls
- Recognition of trade unions as stakeholders
- Decent work and ILO Standards
- Financing strategies that will include progressive tax systems
- Ensuring the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health, reproductive rights and sexuality

Some other issues that we have to be aware of are:

- No recognition of sexual options and identity
- No recognition of different types of families
- No mention to public education, public health services, public water and sanitation services
- Economic empowerment will need of tailoring a range of approaches and instruments which facilitate access to universal public services
- Reaffirm the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda-AAAA that facilitates Public-Private Partnerships-PPs, that pushes public services privatization

Decisions:

- Follow up with governments in the implementation of the Agreed Conclusions and defend public services
- Considering that the theme of UNCSW61 will be “Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work”. Take the opportunity of the World Day for Decent Work (October 7th) as a launching point for trade unions.

- **Sustainable Development Goals-SDG 2030. Our focus in Gender Responsive Public Services-GRPS and Alternatives to Privatization.**

PSI is a member of a range of social coalitions that challenge the dominant financial power of groups operating within global government bodies. In 2015, the process of setting Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) until 2030 and taking decisions on Financing for Development in international forums showed that transnational capital uses its immense corporate power to promote a privatization agenda. PSI has argued that development is impossible without universal quality public services that impact directly in the achievement of gender equality. In our region the role of public services and the need of a gender responsive approach is a key issue to address for example the Zika virus, that we all know have a specific impact on women.

In this way we as trade unions have to take the opportunity of SDGs as a mean of expanding public services, we have to argue that there is enough wealth in the world, but the problem is its concentration in a few hands, we have to stand for wealth redistribution, public investment, decent work and strength our force building unity and coalitions that can resist and combat corporate power.

Decisions:

- Strengthen our work with civil society, women, feminist and grass roots organizations in the fight against privatization.
- Further develop the concept of Gender Responsive Public Services as a mean of addressing specific needs of women in the provision of public services.

- **Gender mainstreaming: Sectorial work and its gender focus. Gender profile of sectors. 8th-22th March Campaign (Pay Equity and Water).**

PSI has approved a Gender Mainstreaming policy since 2002. We recognize that mainstreaming is not about adding a "woman's component" or even a "gender equality component" into an existing activity. It goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to the agenda. The goal of mainstreaming gender equality is thus the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women.

PSI sectorial work has strengthened over the years to have a gender approach and we need to know sectors better in terms of the gender composition of the workforce, unionization rates and leadership; as well as, be aware of the specific thematic gender issues that are key for each sector. Also our region has developed concrete ways of mainstreaming especially in the water sector.

Decisions:

- Produce training materials about gender mainstreaming and how to implement it
- Promote the development of gender profiles of sectors in Interamericas using the model of the Southern Cone
- Strength Pay Equity and Water campaign, using the examples of what was done in Colombia and Peru.

- **Campaign To End Violence Against Women: reports, proposals of continuity and process to the new ILO Convention in 2018.**

In 2015, the Governing Body of the ILO agreed to discuss a new convention on violence at the workplace that will also cover gender-based violence, at the 2018 International Labour Conference (ILC). It is essential that trade unions get involved, consult their members and formulate proposals on the content of the new convention.

In our region we have important expertise in this issue in Canada with the impact of domestic violence at the workplace, and in other countries of the Caribbean, Southern Cone and Brazil, addressing gender violence at work. These experiences can be an important contribution for the content of the new convention. ILO will organize an Expert Meeting in October this year, in which PSI should participate and collaborate on the Law and Practice Report that will be completed in early 2017 before the national consultation with ILO constituencies.

Decisions:

- Have a seat as PSI at the ILO Expert Meeting in October
- Prepare a PSI concept document about gender violence at the work place to be submitted to the ILO
- Participate in the national consultation process

- **TURs and women workers. Follow up to the implementation of related ILO Conventions. Constrains in Collective Bargaining.**

The attack on labour and trade union rights in the public sector shows no sign of abating and is increasing in many countries. Collective bargaining has lost ground in some places and women have consequently seen significant victories reversed; for example, equal pay. The ILO's International Labour Standards (ILSs) are an essential reference for the defence of labour and trade union rights. Continuous monitoring of their implementation by the ILO's supervisory bodies, such as the Committee on Freedom of Association (CLS) and the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), is strategically important. The unions themselves have done very little to monitor and manage implementation of ILSs from a gender perspective.

Decisions:

- Take Peru as a pilot case for this year, in the implementation of Convention 156
- The Caribbean sub region will complete consultations with affiliates and will identify strategically important countries with which to work on the reports to ILO

- **PSI World Congress 2017. A gender approach to the priority themes and action plan**

In preparation for PSI's next Congress, there have been until now some consultations that have produced an initial proposal in the direction of working in four key areas:

- Defending democracy
- Redistribution of wealth
- Strengthen of the power of unions
- The human right to peace

These areas will not replace, but will add value to PSI's current work on: Defending universal access to Quality Public Services, Tax Justice, Anticorruption, Building alternatives to Privatization, Gender Equality, Integrating Young Workers, Defending Trade Union Rights at the Public Sector, Strengthening sectors, and Combating Racism and Xenophobia.

The Congress also will be a good opportunity to deepen the role of the World Women's Committee as a specialized body for gender mainstreaming; as well as, discuss the way in which Young Workers could better participate in PSI's decision making structures and organise themselves.

Decisions:

- Address the four key issues as pertinent for women and their unions in the region
- Continue the discussion about the role of PSI's WOC in promoting gender mainstreaming
- Support the initiative of the Regional Young Workers Network, looking for the best way of organizing with financial sustainability