

7 October – World Day for Decent Work 2016

Unions are at the core of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work! Decent wages, public services and equal rights for women NOW! Ahead of the UNCSW61, Public Services International (PSI) launches a campaign for women's economic empowerment during APRECON in Japan.

PSI and other trade unions take part in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) every year. The UNCSW provides a unique opportunity for coalition-building with other progressive organizations and to influence global policies on gender equality. The UNCSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 2017, the main theme of UNCSW61 will be women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. It will be an important platform for the trade union movement to raise its demands and put women's labour rights at the centre of the debate. Campaign activities aimed at influencing the outcome of UNCSW61 will be launched on 9 October and run until March 2017.

The "Fukuoka Statement" will be presented at 15:45 at ACROS Fukuoka Conference Centre by 70 women leaders from the region. With the slogan "Unions at the core of women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work", the statement will serve as a road map towards UNCSW61. On the same day, Sunday, 9 October, from 17:00 to 18:00, there will be a rally near ACROS Fukuoka.

The role of trade unions in defending women's rights at the workplace and in society is now clearer than ever. PSI and its allies will actively continue to work towards their goal of equality and social justice.

These are the main points the "Fukuoka Statement" will address:

- Inequality between and inside countries has grown significantly in the last twenty years, while the wage share in GDP has fallen in over 70% of countries. The changing world of work means more precarious and more informal labour relations. This affects everyone, but mostly the poor and especially women and vulnerable groups;
- Due to austerity and structural adjustment programmes, public services around the world are being rationalised, digitalised and commercialized in the name of new public management and efficiency. This has a negative impact on access and availability of public services for the population, and worsens working conditions for public service workers. Public employment in most countries profoundly reflects vertical and horizontal gender segregation. The majority of women, including young women workers, remain at the bottom of the labour pyramid;
- The sexual division of work isolates and burdens women and relegates them to the reproductive sphere. Women end up doing more unpaid care work, while primarily female professions suffer further marginalization. It perpetuates discrimination, social undervaluation of work and the subordinate role expected from women;
- Segregation and discrimination in public employment also has racial and ethnic foundations and applies to LGBTI and disabled workers as well;
- PSI and global unions will increase pressure on UN WOMEN by consolidating alliances with women's social movements that are campaigning against privatization and global corporate power and for

universal access to quality and gender responsive public services, challenging the promotion of public-private partnerships as an investment tool in public services;

- The four pillars of ILO Decent Work: job creation, workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue are the foundation of economic empowerment. SDG 8 concentrates on Decent Work and economic growth and has set several targets such as achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. We must protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment;
- Ending gender-based violence as a manifestation of unequal power relations between women and men is a priority of unions, who are currently campaigning for a new ILO Convention to address gender-based violence in the world of work.