



International Metalworkers' Federation 32nd World Congress May 2009

The International Metalworkers' Federation 32nd World Congress will bring together around 700 union leaders and representatives from around the world to debate how to secure jobs as the global financial crisis hits.

"Metal and manufacturing industries drive job creation and economies around the world, including Sweden," says IMF General Secretary Marcello Malentacchi.

"Governments and corporations must engage with unions to find just solutions to the crisis.

"In many parts of the world metal worker unions are leading the way by finding innovative solutions to protect jobs and strengthen employment.

"This is the best way to ensure a sustainable future world economy."

Why is the IMF World Congress important?

The Congress will endorse a four year action program that will guide metalworker unions' international work over the next four years, including responses to the global financial crisis.

The IMF facilitates contact and joint work between trade unions around the world in areas including organizing, collective bargaining and health and safety. Sharing information and strategies helps to develop better understanding between trade unions and enables more effective representation for workers.

Action and solidarity on an international scale are more important today than ever. The continually growing influence of transnational corporations and undemocratic nature of international institutions such as the World Bank mean unions must be able to coordinate responses across national boundaries.

The impact of international solidarity is demonstrated in successes like:

- International Framework Agreements – lay down the rules of conduct for transnational companies. Since they are negotiated on a global level and require the participation of trade unions, International Framework Agreements are an ideal instrument for dealing with the issues raised by globalization. The ArcelorMittal IFA has resulted in the signing of a groundbreaking international agreement on health and safety.
- Global precarious work campaign – More than 60 unions in over 40 nations took part in a global week of action against precarious work coordinated by the IMF.
- International solidarity against trade union and worker rights abuses – International solidarity actions can exert tremendous influence. For instance, most recently, IMF affiliates who have participated in international solidarity action have helped to launch a formal investigation into the attacks of Russian trade unionists, exposed corruption in Mexico, and helped to win the release of jailed unionists in Korea.

32nd IMF World Congress quick facts

Where: Gothenburg City Convention Centre, Gothenburg, Sweden

When: May 24th – May 28th, 2009

Who: Representatives of metalworker unions from nearly eighty different nations.

Other meetings: The Congress will be preceded by a range of other meetings including the IMF Women's Conference, Executive Committee and Action Programme Committee meetings.

Visit www.imfmetal.org/Congress2009



A media briefing will be held each day of Congress. Key issues and events that will be covered during Congress include:

Day 1:

The global financial crisis and the automotive industry

Metalworkers have been particularly hard hit by the global financial crisis. The automotive manufacturing industry in Gothenburg is an important example. Around 25% of IMF affiliate, IF Metall, members in Gothenburg have lost their jobs as a result of the crisis.

Globally the IMF is calling for:

- Prompt adoption of stimulus programs that benefit and protect workers economy-wide.
- Measures to prevent redundancies and save jobs through company and government financed benefits that secure worker incomes and their ability to support their families.
- Restoration of the flow and access to credit lines for automotive and metalworking companies.
- Acceleration of investment in research and development, particularly those that foster more sustainable metal and manufacturing industries.
- Rejection of employer and government attempts to exploit the crisis to undermine or attack trade unions and workers' rights.

Election of a new IMF General Secretary and IMF President

Current IMF General Secretary Marcello Malentacchi will retire at the upcoming World Congress, after 20 years in the position. Current IMF President Jurgen Peters will also step down at this Congress. The elections for the positions of General Secretary and President will be held on the first day of Congress, along with the election of Executive Committee and Auditing Committee members.

Organizing migrant ship-breaking workers

Ship-breaking is recognised as one of the world's most hazardous industries, but recently organised workers in India have started to make a difference. Congress delegates are invited to listen to a panel discussion focussing on ship-breakers' struggles to organise and collectively bargain in the worst conditions imaginable.

Day 2:

Keynote speech *Secure jobs for a secure future*: Heiner Flassbeck

Dr. Heiner Flassbeck is currently the Director of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He is the principal author and the leader of the team preparing UNCTAD's *Trade and Development Report*. The Trade and Development Report is the flagship annual publication of UNCTAD covering both recent and longer term issues in the world economy, with particular emphasis on the implications for developing countries.

Dr. Flassbeck is the Chairman of UNCTAD Task Force on Systemic Issues and Economic Cooperation, which examines the causes of the current financial and economic crises as well as the related solutions. The report of the Task Force, entitled "*The Global Economic Crisis: Systemic Failures and Multilateral Remedies*" has been published recently.

As former Finance Vice-Minister of Germany Mr. Flassbeck has a wide experience at country level and was providing advice to various Governments on their national development plans and strategies as well as on the interface between national dimension and the external environment.



Organizing in Export Processing Zones (EPZs)

Organizing workers in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) is a challenge for unions worldwide. But a new short film produced by the IMF shows how unions in Indonesia are successfully organizing EPZ workers and improving their pay and working conditions.

Ensuring women take leading roles in organizing; brokering collective agreements that protect contract workers and specifically targeting precarious workers in EPZs have led to the combined membership of Indonesian unions FSPMI and Lomenik-SBSI jumping by nearly 50,000.

The film will be premiered at a special event on the second day of Congress, followed by a discussion with the Indonesian unions. A shorter film on the same topic will be screened during the Congress plenary.

For more information please contact jholdcroft@imfmetal.org.

Precarious work campaign

Precarious work undermines wages and conditions for all workers, in all countries. The IMF is fighting to stop the massive expansion of precarious work and regain power and justice for working people.

Unions are challenging precarious employment by pushing for better legislation and collective agreements that ensure equal treatment of all workers. Those in precarious jobs were the first and hardest hit by the global financial crisis.

As economies recover, permanent and direct employment must be the primary means of employing people.

A new short film on the global precarious work campaign will be shown during Congress.

www.imfmetal.org/precariouswork

Day 3:

IMF international solidarity campaigns against labour and human rights abuses

The IMF maintains international solidarity campaigns on trade union right abuses occurring around the world, including:

Korea

Trade unions in Korea remain among the most persecuted in the world. A recent global union mission to Korea jointly sponsored by the International Metalworkers' Federation found that labour conditions have grown worse, not better, since the OECD monitoring process was lifted in 2007 and despite repeated ILO recommendations calling for urgent labour law reform.

Unions are calling on the OECD to consider reinstating the monitoring process and are calling on the ILO to take further steps to press the Korean Government to implement key labour law reform in an effort to stop the growing number of labour rights abuses, including mass arrests of labour leaders and the denial of collective bargaining rights for a growing number of precariously employed workers.

For more information see: www.imfmetal.org/korea



Turkey

Trade union and worker rights violations continue unchecked in Turkey, where IMF affiliate Birlesik-is Metal continues to fight against Government oppression and extreme health and safety risks for workers across the metal sectors. In recent months workers at the transnational company Sinter Metal have endured ongoing harassment for exercising their trade union rights. Nearly 40 workers were sacked under false pretexts and following worker protests over 300 more were sacked.

For more information see: www.imfmetal.org/turkey

Mexico

Mexican unions continue to battle ongoing intimidation, harassment and threats in their work representing workers. The country's largest mining company, Grupo México, and the Mexican government, first under President Vicente Fox, and now under President Felipe Calderón, have systematically and repeatedly violated Mexican law and international standards to crush the National Miners' and Metalworkers' Union of Mexico (SNTMMSRM).

A new five minute film to be screened during Congress plenary will report back on the global solidarity campaign in support of the miners' union coordinated by the IMF with affiliates.

For more information see: www.imfmetal.org/mexico

Climate change and metalworkers

An international approach to tackling climate change is essential. The IMF and affiliated steel unions have called for an international response that avoids unfair trade conditions and guarantees a level playing field. The argument that the world faces a serious threat from environmental degradation is no longer open to serious challenge.

The most widely known global agreement trying to cut global emissions, Kyoto is approaching the end of its life and in Copenhagen, Denmark, governments will try to make a new deal on emission cuts between 2012 and 2020.

Following recommendations from a recent meeting with steel unions from five regions, the IMF Steel Department will present a resolution on climate change to the World Congress.

A panel discussion will also take place including representatives from European Metalworkers Federation, the US Blue Green Alliance and IMF affiliates.

For more information please contact rjohnston@imfmetal.org.

Other issues and events

IMF Women's Conference

The IMF Women's Conference will be held on Friday 22nd of May at the Gothenburg City Convention Centre. After over century without the representation of women at executive level, the 2005 IMF World Congress endorsed for the first time the mandatory inclusion of women on the IMF Executive Committee. The Conference will consider how effective this rule change has been at giving women a greater say in the IMF.

The Conference will also discuss women's overrepresentation in precarious work and its impacts on families and communities.

For more information please contact jholdcroft@imfmetal.org.



Resolutions for Congress

A range of resolutions will be put to delegates during the IMF World Congress. Expected issues for debate include:

- Asbestos
- Climate change
- A global response to precarious work
- United States Employee Free Choice Act
- Resolutions from the women's conference

New IMF materials:

A range of new communications materials produced by the IMF will be available during Congress including:

- Daily newsletters and web stories on Congress happenings and outcomes
- Four new short (5 minute) films focusing on precarious work, the Mexican international solidarity campaign, organizing in Indonesian EPZs and union building in Africa
- A Congress 2009 highlights DVD which will include key speeches and be distributed to delegates on the third day
- 2 new transportable pull-up displays on the precarious work campaign and the IMF's work in general. These displays will be available for use by affiliates following Congress for your own national events if desired.

For further information, images or interviews please contact:

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