

International Metalworkers' Federation Report of the Secretariat





International Metalworkers' Federation

Report of the Secretariat

32nd IMF World Congress

Gothenburg, Sweden, May 24-28, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

**By Marcello Malentacchi,
IMF General Secretary**

There is no doubt that the world is at a turning point in history. Workers across the globe are now feeling the impacts and in many cases bearing the brunt of an unprecedented financial crisis.

The International Metalworkers' Federation Action Programme 2005-2009 set an ambitious plan to improve metalworkers' labour rights and conditions against an increasingly deregulated world economy, growing unemployment and changing manufacturing processes and political climates. Our plan recognized the pre-conditions for the current crisis, undemocratic financial speculation and unfair trade practices. Unfortunately our calls for change fell on largely deaf ears, and the struggle for metalworkers today is as intense and desperate as ever before.

As we face new challenges, the issues that shaped our previous Action Programme continue to affect workers globally.

While we we have been successful in confronting some of these key issues much remains to be done. As well as our successes, we must acknowledge the failures and barriers that have prevented us from achieving the full extent of our mission statement.

Improving our abilities to organise the unorganised and promote solidarity among metalworkers is a fundamental task that will become even more important as companies and governments seek to use the financial crisis to undermine unions.

Strengthening and in some cases re-building trade union influence with a new generation of workers in the developed world must go hand in hand with fostering sustainable trade union movements in newly industrialised and developing nations.

In order to meet these challenges we will need to use all the lessons we have learned over the last four years.

The first area outlined in the IMF Action Programme 2005-2009 was establishing global structures to meet global challenges. In this area, we can claim that our work has been some of the most effective amongst Global Union Federations. Where there have been areas of mutual interest and gain for metalworkers we have worked hard to promote solidarity by leading joint actions on Zero Occupational Cancer and against precarious work. But where outcomes were not clear, for example on the Council of Global Unions, we have not been afraid to remain separate.

Global solidarity is fundamental to overcoming the challenges posed by the increasing power of transnational corporations (TNCs) and the impacts of globalization. Since our last congress in Vienna the metalworking industries have experienced an unprecedented period of restructuring driven by the desire of TNCs to expand their global footprint in some areas while retracting it in others. Unfortunately, rather than improving working conditions, we have often been forced to focus our main activities on trying to maintain conditions that already exist. The struggle to boost the purchasing power of workers, improve conditions and reverse the inequalities fostered by corporate-led globalisation remain as pressing as ever.

As TNCs have grown so has the challenge for trade unions to influence corporate decisions. The IMF has taken a pragmatic approach to this problem and tried to develop international solidarity amongst affiliates by using a number of mechanisms. Our success or failure in influencing TNCs has largely depended on the will and capacities of affiliates to become involved, and also the union density within a company and sector.

Continuing to develop union networks in major TNCs is one of the ways in which we can build solidarity amongst affiliates. Since our last congress we have established union networks within a number of companies, including Alcoa, ArcelorMittal, Tenaris, Gerdau, Hyundai and Ford. The global health and safety agreement in ArcelorMittal is one successful example of the outcomes of such networks. Such company-level approaches need to be further coordinated and balanced with effective sector-based strategies.

International Framework Agreements (IFAs) have been a priority area of the IMF's work in relation to TNCs. We have more agreements signed than any other Global Federation. The agreements themselves have not delivered all that we expected from them but have progressively improved each time we have signed a new one. The World Conference on IFAs held in Frankfurt in 2006, and the recommendations that were approved at the May 2007 Executive Committee meeting in Seville, Spain, helped to establish a clear and transparent process for us to follow, along with a clear set of minimum standards that must be met before the IMF agrees to be a party to any agreement. It should also be understood that IFAs are not in themselves the final objective, but rather a tool that we can use to engage with TNCs.

Our influence on these issues remains dependent on the strength of organisation within companies and across supply chains. We must not forget that approximately two thirds of metalworkers around the world remain unorganised. Progress has been made in areas where attention has been focussed. In cooperation with affiliates, our regional offices have had good success with organising projects in India, particularly in the ship-breaking industry and in Indonesia with export processing zone (EPZ) workers. Increasing women's participation in unions has been critical to the latter and is an area the IMF must develop further. In Mexico, the IMF has worked in cooperation with Finnish affiliates and the Mexican Miners Union to organise metal workers in maquilas to defend their labour rights; in Peru the focus has been on organising the subcontracted workers in the mining industry. Cooperation with the international network 'GoodElectronics' and meetings with our affiliates to identify organizing opportunities have also proved effective. On the other hand, successfully organizing metalworkers at newer factories in the automotive and steel sectors, among others, continues to be a pressing challenge that requires solidarity and assistance from home and host country union organisations alike.

In the midst of these challenges, trade unions and their members continue to be the target of attacks by governments and companies throughout the world. Over the last four years the IMF has spoken out on the abuse of trade union and workers' rights around the world, particularly at Toyota Philippines, in the shipbreaking industry in Turkey, in Belarus, Mexico and Korea. International solidarity campaigns have grown in complexity and depth of participation over the last four years. A good example of this work is the global campaign in support of the Mexican miners' union SNTMMSRM in their fight against Grupo Mexico and the Mexican government. Coordinated by the IMF with the miner's union, the ongoing integrated campaign has included mobilisation of numerous affiliates around the world, strategic political lobbying efforts and a complaint to the ILO. A second complaint regarding "protection contracts" in Mexico has also been lodged with the ILO. Under Mexican law the vast majority of collective agreements are so-called "protection contracts" which force workers to join unions nominated by company management rather than one of their own choosing.

The IMF is also continuing to highlight trade union rights abuses in Korea. A recent joint mission with other GUFs found labour conditions have grown worse, not better, since the OECD monitoring process was lifted in 2007. The mission made recommendations that the OECD should consider reinstating the monitoring process, and called on the ILO to take further steps to press the Korean Government to implement labour law reform, as recommended by the ILO Governing Body in reference to a complaint filed by the IMF, KMWU and KCTU.

We have also increased our issue based solidarity actions, including actions against precarious work. Following recommendations from the 2007 Central Committee meeting, 65 affiliates in 43 countries participated in the global week of action in October 2008. Confronting the threat of precarious work will continue to be a priority for the IMF, and another national day of action has been planned for October this year, focussing on the financial crisis and its impact on precarious workers and their families.

Our new challenges include managing affiliates' abilities to respond, given the tightening of resources and weakened position workers find themselves in during this period of financial crisis. Stopping the massive expansion of precarious work and fighting to ensure that those already in precarious work have access to equal wages and conditions must remain a priority. We must also fight to ensure that every worker has the right to join a union and collectively bargain, which remains at the heart of our work.

The next four years will see enormous change across world economies, metalworking industries and within the IMF. It is our responsibility to adapt to this change as we strive to achieve our fundamental mission - improving metalworkers' wages, working and living conditions.

ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED TO THE IMF

List of IMF Affiliates in December 2008

AFRICA

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
ANGOLA	National Federation of Workers in Metal, Energy, Chemical Industries in Angola
CAMEROON	FENASIMECAM - Fédération Nationale des Syndicats des Industries Métallurgiques et Mécaniques
CONGO DEMOCR., Rep. of	Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs de la Métallurgie – FNTM
EGYPT	Union of Workers in Engineering, Metal and Electrical Industries
GHANA	Industrial & Commercial Workers' Union - ICU
IVORY COAST	Syndicat National des Travailleurs des Industries Mécaniques Générales et du Bois de la Côte d'Ivoire
KENYA	Amalgamated Union of Kenya Metalworkers
	Kenya Engineering Workers' Union
LIBERIA	Metal, Mechanic, Electrical, Communications and Allied Workers' Union
	Artisans & General Workers' Union
MAURITIUS	Electrical and Mechanical Workers Union
	(Textiles Industries Staff & Workers Unions)
MOZAMBIQUE	Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Indústria Metalúrgica Metalomecânica e Energia - SINTIME
NAMIBIA	Metal and Allied Namibian Workers' Union - MANWU
NIGERIA	Steel and Engineering Workers' Union of Nigeria - SEWUN
SIERRA LEONE	Artisans, Public Works and Services Employees Union
SOUTH AFRICA, Rep. of	Metal & Electrical Workers Union of South Africa - MEWUSA
	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa - NUMSA
SWAZILAND	Swaziland Amalgamated Trade Unions - SATU
TANZANIA	Tanzania Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers - TUICO
TUNISIA	Fédération Générale de la Métallurgie et de l'Electronique - UGTT
UGANDA	National Union of Clerical, Commercial, Professional & Technical Employees
	Uganda Mines, Metal & Allied Workers' Union
ZAMBIA	National Union of Building, Engineering & General Workers - NUBEGW
ZIMBABWE	National Engineering Workers' Union - NEWU

ASIA AND PACIFIC

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
AUSTRALIA	Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union - AMWU
	Australian Workers' Union
	Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing & Allied Services Union of Australia - CEPU
BANGLADESH	Bangladesh Metalworkers' Federation - BMF
	Bangladesh Metalworkers' League - BML
CHINA, Rep of (TAIWAN)	IMF Republic of China Committee
FIJI	National Union of Factory & Commercial Workers
HONG KONG	Committee of Metal Industry Unions c/o Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labor Unions
	HKTUC Metalworkers' Coordinating Committee
INDIA	SKF Bearing India Employees' Union
	Atlas Copco Employees' Federation
	Indian National Metalworkers' Federation
	Indian National Mineworkers' Federation
	KSB Mazdoor Union
	Philips & B. C. Components Employees' Union Pune
	Sandvik Asia Employees Union c/o Sandvik Asia Ltd.
	Simpson Group Companies Workers' & Staff Union
	Steel, Metal & Engineering Workers' Federation of India
	Working People Trade Union Council
INDONESIA	Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia - FSPMI (Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers' Union)
	Lomenik-SBSI
JAPAN	Japan Council of Metalworkers' Unions - IMF-JC
KOREA, Rep. of	Federation of Korean Metalworkers' Trade Unions
	Korean Metal Workers' Union - KMWU

ASIA AND PACIFIC (Cont'd)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
MALAYSIA	Electrical Industry Workers' Union
	IMF Malaysian Council
	Metal Industry Employees' Union - MIEU
	National Union of Transport Equipment and Allied Industries Workers
	Union of Malayawata Steel Workers
NEPAL	Nepal Factory Labour Congress - NFLC
NEW CALEDONIA	Syndicat des Ouvriers et Employés de la Nouvelle-Calédonie
NEW ZEALAND	New Zealand Engineering, Printing & Manufacturing Union Incorporated
PAKISTAN	Pakistan Automobile, Engineering and Metalworkers' Federation
	Pakistan Metal Workers' Federation
PAKISTAN	Metal Section of Pakistan Workers Federation
PHILIPPINES	IMF Philippine Council
SINGAPORE	IMF Singapore Council c/o Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Employees' Union
	Keppel Employees Union
	Keppel FELS Employees Union
	Metal Industries Workers' Union
	Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Employees' Union - SMEEU
	Sembawang Shipyard Employees' Union
	United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries
SRI LANKA	Jathika Sewaka Sangamaya Metalworkers' Federation - JSS
	Sri Lanka Nidahas Sewaka Sangamaya
THAILAND	Confederation of Thai Electrical Appliances, Electronic Automobile & Metalworkers - TEAM

CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
ARMENIA, Rep. of	The Republican Branch Union of Machine and Instrument-Making Workers of Republic of Armenia - RBUMIWRA
BELARUS	REPAM
BOSNIA- HERZEGOVINA	Metalworkers' and Miners' Union of Republika Srpska - MMU
	Trade Union of Metalworkers
BULGARIA	Federation of Metallurgy - CL PODKREPA
	Fédération Nationale Syndicale - "METAL-ELECTRO"
	Trade Union - "METALICY"
	Syndical Federation of Machinebuilders and Metalworkers - CL PODKREPA
CROATIA	Metal Workers' Trade Union of Croatia
CZECH REPUBLIC	Metalworkers' Federation in the Czech Republic - OS KOVO
ESTONIA	Eesti Metallitöötajate Ametiühing (Estonian Metalworkers' Federation)
HUNGARY	Federation of Hungarian Metalworkers' Union (VASAS)
KOSOVO	Independent Trade Union of Metalworkers of Kosovo - SPMK
LATVIA	Latvian Metalworkers' Trade Union Republican Committee
LITHUANIA	Lithuanian Metalworkers' Trade Union Unification
MACEDONIA, Rep. of (FYROM)	Trade Union of Industry, Energy and Mining of Macedonia - SIER
MOLDAVIA	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats des Branches de Transformation du Métal de la République de Moldova
MONTENEGRO	Free Trade Union of Metalworkers of Montenegro
POLAND	Metalworkers Secretariat - NSZZ "Solidarnosc"
ROMANIA	Metalworkers' Federation "Henri Coanda - Fratia"
	Federatia Sindicala a Siderurgistilor METAROM - FSS-METAROM
	F.N.S. Solidaritatea Metal - SMETAL

CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE (Cont'd)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
RUSSIA	Automobile and Farm Machinery Workers' Union of Russia - AFW
	All Russian Defence Industry Workers' Union
	Engineering Workers' Union of Russia - EWU
	Russian Interregional Trade Union of Autoworkers - ITUA
	Miners' & Metallurgical Workers' Union of Russia
	Russian Aircraft Industry Workers' Union "Profavia"
	Russian Radio-Electronic Industry Workers' Union - REIWU
	Shipbuilding Workers' Union of Russia
SERBIA	Autonomous Metalworkers' Union of Serbia
	Granski Sindikat Metalaca - NEZAVISNOST (Metalworkers' Federation of Serbia -Independence)
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	Metalworkers' Federation Kovo in the Slovak Republic
SLOVENIA	Sindikat Kovinske in Elektroindustrije Slovenije - SKEI
UKRAINE	Automobile and Agricultural Machinery Workers' Union
	Ukrainian Machinebuilding and Metalworking Union "Mashmetall"
	Radio Electronics & Mechanical Engineering Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine - REMEWU
	Trade Union of Aircraft Builders of Ukraine
	Trade Unions of Defence Industry Workers
	Trade Union of Machine-Builders and Instrument-Makers of Ukraine

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
ARGENTINA	Asociación Obrera Minera Argentina - AOMA
	Asociación de Supervisores de la Industria Metalmeccánica de la Republica Argentina - ASIMRA
	Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor de la Republica Argentina - SMATA
	Unión Obrera Metalúrgica - UOM
BRAZIL	Confederação Nacional dos Metalúrgicos - CNM-CUT
	Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores Metalúrgicos - CNTM
CHILE	Federación y Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Electrometalúrgicos, Mineros y Automotrices - CONSFETEMA
	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos "CONSTRAMET"
	Federación de Trabajadores del Cobre - FTC
	Sindicato de Trabajadores del Establecimiento Huachipato de la Compañía de Acero del Pacífico, S.A.
	Sindicato Interempresa Nacional de Trabajadores Montaje Industrial - SINAMI
COLOMBIA	Federación de Trabajadores de las Industrias Metalúrgicas, Electricas y Mecánicas de Colombia - FETRAMECOL
	Unión de Trabajadores de Colombia - UTRAMMICOL
CURACAO N.A.	Union General Trahado di Korsou - UGTK / CADMU
	Curacao Federation of Workers - CFW
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos - FENATRAMIM
GUATEMALA	Federación de Trabajadores de la Metal-Mecánica de Guatemala - FETRAMEGUA
HONDURAS	Federación de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos de Honduras - FETRAMIMH
MEXICO	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Teleindustrias y Sistemas Digitales de la Republica Mexicana
	Sindicato Independiente de Trabajadores de la Industria Automotriz, Similares y Conexos "Volkswagen de Mexico."
	Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria Metal-Mecánica, Automotriz, Similares y Conexos de la República Mexicana - SITIMM
	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria Metal Electrónica, Mecánica y Similares de la República Mexicana

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN (Cont'd)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
MEXICO	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros Metalúrgicos y Similares de la República Mexicana - SNTMMSRM
	Sind.Progresista de Obreros y Empleados de la Ind. de Extracción, Fundición y Fabricación de Metales Hierro, Autopartes, sus Similares y Derivados,R.M.
	Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Electricistas de la R.M. - SUTERM
NICARAGUA	Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria Metal Mecanica - FESITRAMM
PANAMA	Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos y Afines de Panama - FENATRAMET
PARAGUAY	Federación de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos del Paraguay - FETRAMPAR
PERU	Central Nacional de Trabajadores Industriales del Metal & Electro Mecánica del Perú - CEMETAL
	Federación Nacional de las Actividades Mineras, Energéticas, Petroleras, Siderurgicas y Complementarias del Perú - FENAMEPSICOP
SURINAM	Suriname Bauxite Mine and Metal Workers Federation
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	Steel Workers Union of Trinidad & Tobago
	Seamen & Waterfront Workers' Trade Union
URUGUAY	Unión Nacional de Trabajadores del Metal y Ramas Afines
VENEZUELA	Federación de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos, Mineros, Mecánicos y sus Similares de Venezuela - FETRAMETAL

NORTH AMERICA

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
CANADA	National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW-Canada) Syndicat National de l'Automobile, de l'Aérospatiale, du Transport et des Autres Travailleurs et Travailleuses - TCA-Canada
	International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
	United Steelworkers - USW / Syndicat des Métallos - METALLOS
USA	Communications Workers of America - CWA
	International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers - IAMAW
	International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers
	International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers - IFPTE
	International Union of Elevator Constructors - IUEC
	IUE-CWA
	Sheet Metal Workers' International Association
	International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America - UAW
United Steelworkers - USW	

WESTERN EUROPE AND NEAR EAST

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
AUSTRIA	Gewerkschaft Metall - Textil - Nahrung
BELGIUM	Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond - ABVV-Metaal
	CSC-Métal - Centrale Chrétienne des Métallurgistes de Belgique (ACV-Metaal)
	Centrale Nationale des Employés - CNE
	Landelijke Bedienden Centrale Nationaal Verbond voor Kaderpersoneel - LBC-NVK
	Métallurgistes Wallonie Bruxelles - MWB-FGTB
	SETCA-BBTK Syndicat des Employés, Techniciens et Cadres de Belgique
CYPRUS	Cyprus Industrial Workers' Federation - OVIEK-SEK
DENMARK	Centralorganisationen af Industriansatte i Danmark - CO-industri
FINLAND	Metallityöväen Liitto r.y. (Finnish Metalworkers' Union)
	Sähköalojen ammattiliitto r.y. (Finnish Electrical Workers' Union)
	Tekniikan Akateemisten Liitto - TEK
	TOIMIHENKILÖUNIONI - TU (Union of Salaried Employees)
	Uusi Insinööriliitto UIL ry (Union of Professional Engineers of Finland)
FRANCE	Fédération de la Métallurgie - CFE-CGC
	Fédération Nationale CFTC des Syndicats de la Métallurgie et Parties Similaires
	Fédération Générale des Mines et de la Métallurgie - FGMM-CFDT
	Fédération Confédérée "Force Ouvrière" de la Métallurgie - FO
	Fédération des Travailleurs de la Métallurgie - FTM-CGT
GERMANY	Industriegewerkschaft Metall - IG METALL
GREECE	Fédération des Electrotechniciens Grecs
	Panhellenic Metalworkers Federation
ICELAND	Samidn, Samband Idnfelega
IRELAND	Services Industrial Professional Technical Union – SIPTU
ISRAEL	National Union of Metal, Electric & Electronic Workers
ITALY	Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici - FLM
LUXEMBURG	Onofhängege Gewerkschaftsbond Lëtzebuerg - OGB-L

WESTERN EUROPE AND NEAR EAST (Cont'd)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Organisations</i>
MALTA	General Workers' Union
NETHERLANDS	CNV BedrijvenBond
	FNV-Bondgenoten
	De Unie - Vakbond voor Industrie en Dienstverlening
NORWAY	Fellesforbundet
	Handel og Kontor i Norge
PALESTINE	General Union of Mechanical Engineering & Electrical Workers
PORTUGAL	Sindicato das Industrias Metalúrgicas e Afins - SIMA
SPAIN	Federación del Metal de ELA-STV Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos
	Federación Minerometalúrgica de Comisiones Obreras - FM/CC.OO.
	Federación del Metal, Construcción y Afines de UGT - MCA-UGT
SWEDEN	Industrifacket Metall - IF Metall
	Sveriges Ingenjörer (Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers)
	Unionen
SWITZERLAND	SYNA Syndicat interprofessionnel
	UNIA
TURKEY	Birlesik Metal-Is
	Celik-Is
	Iron, Steel, Metal and Metallic Products Workers' Union
	Türkiye Dok, Gemi-Is
UNITED KINGDOM	British Section of the IMF c/o Community

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES
BASED ON THE
IMF ACTION PROGRAMME**

List of Abbreviations

BWI	Building and Wood Workers' International
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
EI	Education International
EMF	European Metalworkers' Federation
EPZs	Export processing zones
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
GUFs	Global Union Federations
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
IFAs	International Framework Agreements
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
IWIS	IBM Workers International Solidarity
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSI	Public Services International
SEZs	Special economic zones
TILS	Network on Trade and International Labour Standards
TNCs	Transnational corporations
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
TUCA	Trade Union Confederation of the Americas
UNI	Union Network International
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

Global structures to meet global challenges

All the challenges we face today have a global dimension. As the IMF's 2005–2009 Action Programme states: 'Even the day-to-day work of trade unions needs to be globalised so that every action at all stages links the local and international levels'.

In everything we do, we need to remember that every single action can influence working conditions elsewhere. Therefore, in order to strengthen our support to unions around the world the IMF has taken a number of steps to improve our structures during this Congress period, as described below.

International trade union organisations

At the 31st Congress, the IMF adopted the resolution 'Uniting the forces of the Global Union Federations in industry'. As a result of this, the IMF has looked into the possibility of restructuring the Global Union Federations (GUFs) to help respond to the challenges facing workers and trade unions today. In May 2008, after long and intense discussions, the IMF Executive Committee adopted a paper entitled 'Global Union Federations and the future of the international trade union movement', which seeks to provide background information on the question of cooperation and mergers with other GUFs, and sets out the views of the IMF on this issue.

In the period under review, we have multiplied our efforts to strengthen cooperation with all the GUFs that represent workers in manufacturing industry. Several collaboration projects have been initiated in different areas. For example, on 'health and safety at work', there has been a global campaign on work-related cancer, and in 2007 we produced a union guide to its prevention. On 'organising in electronics', we are working closely with the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) to explore possibilities for joint organising strategies where textiles and electronics factories are co-located, often in export processing zones (EPZs). 'Precarious work' is also an area where we have taken a range of initiatives in the framework of cooperation with other GUFs and the ITUC. Several of these organisations actively supported and participated in a global day of action against precarious work on 7 October 2008. We are also working with UNI and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) on the issue of private equity funds, and with Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) to develop a joint database for administration purposes.

In addition, we are cooperating with non-manufacturing internationals such as the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) regarding a project on shipbreaking workers and to address and resolve issues facing workers at several companies involved in automotive-related logistics, with Public Services International (PSI) on globalisation, particularly trade-related issues and also, on a smaller scale, with Education International (EI) after the tsunami tragedy in South East Asia in 2004. The IMF is also one of the most active GUFs within the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) of the OECD. It is worth mentioning, in

particular, the work on trade and investment policies of OECD countries. The outcome of IMF involvement in this area over the past four years is better visibility of metal workers among both OECD government and employer counterparts, and increased IMF input into OECD sectoral activities. (For further information on this work, see below 'A new international architecture'.)

Cooperation with the ITUC has become more systematic, particularly on issues of strategic priority such as the promotion of fundamental rights and of quality employment, and on trade union policies on globalisation. Collaboration has intensified at regional level as well, particularly with Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) in Latin America, and with representatives of other GUFs in the various regions.

The same applies to our work with the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF). The booklet *Precarious work affects us all* has been produced with the support of the EMF. In the same way, IMF and EMF have joined forces to help improve health and safety at work. Both organisations have worked together on promoting the *Global Agreement on Occupational Health and Safety* signed with ArcelorMittal management in June 2008.

The reorganisation of ILO sectoral activities has been jointly dealt with by GUFs, with active participation of the IMF in the definition of new focus and priorities, particularly with regard to industrial sectors. However, this area of ILO work will need to be monitored and its outcome evaluated in a near future. Experiences in recent years have not proved particularly useful for metalworkers.

IMF country councils

Country councils have been established in a number of countries where the IMF has several affiliates. The aim of these country councils is to encourage cooperation between unions and to build unity in the areas of education, collective bargaining and organising.

There are also 'region structures', first established in 1995, to deal with matters of importance to regions and sub-regions, and to enhance solidarity and cooperation at regional and international levels.

The IMF India Committee (IMF-IC)

Seven meetings have been held during the period under review. Much focus was given to organising the unorganised workers in the five states of India. The work of the India Organising Project is commendable, and the donors have put their appreciation on record.

Of particular note was the pioneering work of organising the shipbreaking workers in Mumbai and Alang. Subsequent meetings have stressed the importance of organising precarious workers, especially in the auto sector, in private steel plants, and in special economic zones (SEZs).

For the first time a Women's Committee was formed and efforts are being made to encourage women's participation in all activities of the IMF South Asia Regional Office.

A detailed study has been carried out to identify the potential for organising non-manual workers in the metal sector, and the conclusion was that organising activities of non-manual workers could be initiated, beginning with the public sector establishments where there are representative bodies of non-manual workers.

A training workshop was conducted and material disseminated about integrating Indian multinational companies into International Framework Agreements (IFAs). Moreover, the IMF affiliates – and especially the IMF Regional Office – played a significant role in the India Social Forum.

The members of the IMF-IC thoroughly discussed the formation of an umbrella organisation of metalworkers in India, based on the pattern of the IMF-JC. Given the political, regional, linguistic and cultural diversity in the Indian context, IMF-IC could establish a working understanding among its affiliates, which would be a major step in the direction of unifying metalworkers under one umbrella organisation. Because the federations are part of national trade union centres, the willingness and cooperation of these national centres is essential for forming the umbrella organisation. Consultations on this issue with the national centres have begun. Efforts are also being made to improve the payment and distribution of dues, and to strengthen the federations' financial capacity and sustainability.

All the IMF affiliates resolved to work together and to cooperate with each other in organising unions and precarious workers in private steel plants, secondary steel units and auto TNCs. This will be a big step forward in uniting metalworkers.

To take the message of unity into the rank and file, it was agreed that an extended meeting of the IMF-IC, consisting of the Executive Committee/Working Committee Members of the affiliates, will be held before the next meeting of the IMF-IC.

An IMF-IC sub-committee was formed and met twice. The main objectives of the sub-committee are to revise the IMF-IC rules with regards to structures, discuss solidarity actions and guidelines for dealing with abuses of workers' rights, examine financial contributions to IMF-IC (with a view to creating a self-sustained organisation), and working out long-term organising plans in the sectors identified in the 21st IMF-IC meeting, as well as organising precarious workers as resolved at the IMF Central Committee meeting of November 2007.

The IMF-Singapore Council (IMF-SC)

Since its inception in the 1970s, this council – which comprises seven IMF affiliates – has operated independently. The IMF-SC holds annual national conventions to discuss issues confronting workers. All the affiliates of the IMF-SC are members of the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC), which is the only national centre in Singapore. Because of this, the council carries out some of its activities in cooperation with the NTUC. The IMF-SC also participates in all IMF activities, and the IMF Sub-regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia–Pacific is from the Singapore. In addition, one member of the IMF Executive Committee is from the IMF-SC. This illustrates the IMF-SC's active participation in the work of the IMF in the region.

The IMF-SC affiliates are also actively involved in some national issues affecting workers, such as re-training of displaced workers so that they could become employable.

The IMF-Malaysian Council (IMF-MC)

There are four affiliates in this country council, which was formed almost 40 years ago. Out of the four, only one affiliate is an in-house union; the rest are sector-based industrial unions. The IMF-MC coordinates the work of the IMF within Malaysia, and members of the council participate in all IMF activities in the region. The IMF-MC affiliates are also members of the sole national centre, the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC). National issues faced by workers are taken up through the MTUC. Where international solidarity assistance is needed, they liaise with the IMF. In this regard the IMF has helped the IMF-MC affiliates in several disputes with transnational corporations (TNCs) operating in Malaysia.

IMF in CIS countries

There are two councils in the CIS countries – one in Ukraine and the other in Russia. Since 2006, the councils have been meeting more regularly. Affiliates use these councils to share information about IMF activities and decide on joint action. At its meeting in December 2006, for example, the Russian council focussed on the international solidarity campaign to support the Mexican workers, and affiliates decided to picket the Mexican embassy in Moscow. In April 2008 they agreed to support the global IMF campaign against precarious work by picketing the government building and appealing to the national centre, FNPR, to make this action wider. In February 2008, officers in charge of communication and information discussed ways and means to make information activities of the IMF's office more efficient.

In Ukraine the council's activities focus on education and training, and coordination work related to these issues. In June 2008, participants in training seminars from five Ukrainian affiliates proposed to the presidents of their respective organisations that they should sign a charter in which the unions confirmed their commitment to work together in implementing training projects. This proposal was submitted to the Council.

IMF in Latin America

There are councils in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru. Some of these councils are more active than others. Generally, activities focus on: developing joint educational activities (Colombia); pressuring governments for legislative changes (for example, with regard to pension and labour laws, in Chile); and solidarity issues (Argentina). The councils in Mexico and Peru have been facing some problems and measures should be taken to improve their functioning, which would help strengthen trade unions in these countries.

There is no council in Brazil, but both IMF affiliates work together on issues such as a national collective agreement, the reduction of working time without loss of wages, and establishing a wage floor at national level that would eliminate the major discrepancies that currently exist between states.

IMF regional structures

IMF regional structures were first established, in 1995, for Africa and Asia–Pacific to implement IMF Action Programme priorities. Shortly after, the structure for Latin America and the Caribbean was established, followed by the one for Central and Eastern Europe in 2001. There is no regional structure for Western Europe and North America.

A regional structure consists of the Regional Conference involving all affiliates in the region concerned, the Coordinating Committee with sub-regional coordinators, and Sub-Regional Committees with all affiliates in the given sub-region. Normally, the Regional Conference convenes every four years and the Coordinating Committee and Sub-Region meet once a year.

Africa

The African region is divided into four sub-regions, i.e. Southern, East, West and North Africa. The total number of affiliates in the region is 22 and they are all national unions. Many organisations are very small, except those unions which operate as a general union (Tanzania, for example). Total IMF membership in the region is around 300,000.

Sub-Regional Committees - In 2006, sub-regional committee meetings took place in Southern Africa, East Africa, and West Africa. The objectives of the meetings were to build solidarity among affiliates and to share experiences on the challenges facing the sub-regions and the region. Those meetings were also used to develop a common strategy and to coordinate the implementation of the IMF Action Programme.

The outcome of the meetings in West and Southern Africa has been positive. The sub-regional leadership agreed to continue developing common platforms and strategies.

The South African experience shows that the implementation of activities requires a lot of resources. However, the Southern Africa sub-regional meeting is beginning to have an impact in the sub-region and many affiliates have started to include some of the agreed sub-regional activities into their union's plans. The East Africa sub-region remains very weak in areas of both strategic planning and teamwork and more work needs to be done in this field. In West Africa unions are also still very small and weak, which makes implementation very difficult.

African Regional Conference (AFREC) - In 2007 all affiliates and a core group of women participated in the African Regional Conference (AFREC). The meeting developed clear resolutions on areas such as precarious work and Chinese investment in Africa, as well as a work programme for the region. Another positive outcome was the high level of participation of women delegates. The major challenge was the different levels of development and experience among the delegation. Those delegates with more experience tended to dominate meetings at the expense of those who were still learning. The positive impact of the AFREC was that affiliates began to know each other and understand the challenges they each face in their different countries. The meeting also built the spirit of solidarity among affiliates.

Asia-Pacific

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference (APREC) - The APREC was held in December 2008 in Jakarta. Six affiliates in the region did not participate for various reasons. The level of discussion has been improved significantly with the active involvement of participants, including many women. The meeting focused on issues including the IMF campaign against precarious work, participation of women in decision-making bodies at national level, solidarity actions taken in the region, organising the unorganised and strengthening national trade union structures.

In preparing active and effective participation in the 2009 World Congress, the APREC also looked into the draft Action Programme and other Congress related matters. All levels of the Conference also discussed an initiative by the IMF-JC to set up a forum called Asian Metalworkers' Liaison Conference (AMLC). A clear understanding was formed that the AMLC and the APREC would complement each other and that with the involvement of the IMF, the AMLC would fill the gaps between the IMF APRECs.

Coordinating Committee - The Coordinating Committee for Asia-Pacific is made up of four IMF Executive Committee members and a sub-regional Coordinator for the Southeast Asia – Pacific sub-region. The meeting held in 2006 took up IMF priority issues for discussion and for action. For the first time, discussion on the future of IMF Sub-Regional Committees in Asia-Pacific was held. The meeting identified the priority of issues for actions between 2006-2009 in all the three sub-regions as follows: organising atypical workers and workers in EPZs; strengthening union structures; occupational health and safety; education and training; increasing participation of women in leadership positions; and how unions should respond to labour policies that remove unions' power to protect workers and their job security.

The meeting held in 2007 mainly focused on actions taken by each of the three sub-regions on the issues prioritised by the meeting held in 2006 and made assessment for future activities and actions. A serious discussion took place regarding the split in the trade union movement in the auto sector initiated by Toyota Thailand Workers' Union which resulted in its expulsion by the TAW and thus by TEAM. While there have been subsequent developments in the TMPCWA-TMPC labour dispute, there is so far no sign of a resolution.

A discussion on the repression of labour and human rights in the Philippines was also organised.

The issue of restructuring the sub-regional structure was discussed and it has been recommended that the merger between EA and SEAP take place, pending the approval by both Sub-Regional Committees.

Sub-Regional Committees - Two sub-regions are currently operational in Asia-Pacific as a result of the merger between East Asia and Southeast Asia – Pacific in April 2008.

East Asia Sub-Region - Trade union structures in this sub-region differ from one affiliate to another and the trade union strength also differs greatly. Consequently, policies and actions taken by the affiliates are different. The Taiwanese IMF-ROCC has made almost no progress in restructuring its organisation and the Hong Kong

TUC – Metalworkers’ Coordinating Committee has lost a momentum to restructure its organisation.

A women’s meeting in which some men also participated took place prior to each of the sub-regional committee meetings in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

A special discussion on 10-year activities and the future operation of the sub-regional committee was held during the 11th meeting in 2006. Five participating organisations in the region agreed that the forum and discussion were very useful. The meeting confirmed a 5-point action plan by affiliates in the sub-region: strengthening of organisation and organising the unorganised; actions taken on IFAs; activities for organising atypical workers; promotion of bi-lateral exchanges; and communication and exchanges between women participants in the sub-region.

The 12th meeting held in 2007 assessed the actions taken by the affiliates over the 5-point action plan and agreed to refer the question of a merger with the Southeast Asia – Pacific sub-region to the Coordinating Committee.

The 13th meeting held in April 2008 unanimously approved the dissolution of the Sub-Regional Committee for East Asia. At the same time it approved the establishment of a new sub-region, i.e. East and Southeast Asia – Pacific Sub-Region.

Southeast Asia - Pacific Sub-Region - The 12th meeting held in 2006 deliberated the Toyota Philippines dispute at length. The meeting also discussed the need to strengthen national and international solidarity through networking and closer cooperation among the regional affiliates. The meeting decided on the following conclusions: endorsement of the decision taken by the IMF Toyota Unions to coordinate a strong and sustained campaign against Toyota and endorsement of the proposal for improved networks between affiliates in multinational companies. It further noted a report on the new anti-union/anti-worker legislation in Australia and the proposed legislation in Indonesia, and committed to support solidarity activity coordinated by the IMF office.

The 13th meeting held in 2007 debated the IMF-JC initiative to convene the Asian Metalworkers Liaison Conference. The meeting also received reports from the affiliates focusing on organising and industrial relations issues and debated the effects of precarious employment. A resolution concerning Toyota Company was passed. Overall the meeting resulted in greater solidarity among the participants and affiliates.

The 14th meeting held in parallel to the one for East Asia in April 2008 unanimously approved the dissolution of the Sub-Regional Committee for Southeast Asia – Pacific, and it approved the setting up of the East and Southeast Asia – Pacific Sub-Region.

Preceding the 12th Sub-regional Committee meeting held in 2006 a women’s meeting was held. Though the meeting decided on an action plan, due to the weak participation of women in the sub-regional committee, no women’s meeting was held in 2007 and 2008.

East and Southeast Asia – Pacific Sub-Region - The first meeting of this new sub-region held in April 2008 focused on IMF Action Programme priorities as well as such matters including the ongoing struggle at Toyota Motor Philippines, human and trade union rights in the Philippines.

South Asia Sub-Region – The 11th Meeting of the IMF Sub Regional Committee for South Asia was held in 2006 in Sri Lanka. It was attended by the representatives of all the affiliates in the region. A discussion on the sub-regional structure for South Asia was held. The discussion concluded that the structure is very useful, but it should be made more functional. The member organisations unanimously agreed to promote activities for women for their participation at all levels.

The 12th meeting held in 2007 in Nepal organised a brief discussion on precarious work and its challenges. The decision was made to establish a pool of specially trained organizers focused on precarious workers. The meeting also decided that national centres should influence their governments to enact legislation to protect precarious workers and their social security and identified key hurdles to organizing EPZ workers. The meeting discussed the report on the IMF mission to Pakistan and observed that the situation in Pakistan should be closely monitored due to its complicated nature.

The 13th meeting held in 2008 in India followed up the discussion on precarious work held at the 2007 IMF Central Committee meeting and debated activities for the global action day. The meeting also debated issues including strengthening metal trade unions at the national level and greater integration between affiliates in the sub-region in the light of emerging regional trade agreements. In following up the situation in Pakistan, the meeting welcomed some positive developments within the two Pakistani affiliates.

Central and Eastern Europe

Four sub-regions, namely CIS, Baltic States, Central Europe and Southeast Europe, were established in 2001. With the integration of the Central European countries and the Baltic States into the European Union, these two IMF Sub-Regions ceased their activities. Currently two sub-regions, i.e. South East Europe and CIS, are operational.

South-East Europe Sub-Region - The sub-regional structure for South-East Europe brings together IMF affiliates from Bulgaria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia - sixteen unions in total. The economic and social situation in the region at large continues to be difficult: high unemployment, downsizing due to restructuring and privatisation, too little investment, weak purchasing power, a huge informal sector, non-compliance with the law and corruption. Many governments have reduced welfare provisions and labour rights in line with the recommendations of international financial institutions.

Three sub-regional meetings were held during the period under review – in Belgrade, Serbia in 2006; Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina in 2007 and Skopje, Macedonia in 2008. Issues addressed include implementation of international framework agreements with a special emphasis on suppliers, occupational health and safety, women's activities, collective bargaining and union-building, and precarious work. Nearly all unions in the region actively participated in the day of action and contributed to the world campaign against precarious work, making wide use of the materials produced by the IMF, in particular the IMF booklet that has been translated into Serbian. Moreover, representatives of IMF Romanian and Macedonian affiliates took an active part in the ArcelorMittal World meeting in

Canada - Arcelor Mittal is an important employer in this sub-region with production sites in Romania, Macedonia and Bosnia - and a Romanian delegate attended the Tenaris meeting also held in Canada (see below heading “Steel and non-ferrous metals”). In 2008, in cooperation with its Spanish affiliate MCA-UGT and the Trade Union Institute of Cooperation for Development (ISCOD), the IMF started implementation of a two-year project on health and safety for affiliates in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The project targets the steel and non-ferrous sectors and aims at strengthening the unions' capacity to deal with occupational health and safety by training shop stewards in this field. As part of this project, written material and videos on occupational health and safety will be produced in the national language.

Positive results have been achieved in exchanging information, collective bargaining and strengthening regional links and cooperation, but problems remain – notably a weak financial situation for most unions and tensions/conflicts in a few countries with the confederations.

CIS Sub-Region - The meeting in 2007 was held in Chisinau, Moldova. The meeting focused on the issue of precarious work. Experts from the Centre on Labour and Social Rights and IUF (which runs projects on precarious employment) were invited to give presentations on precarious work. The main objective was to raise awareness of national trade union leaders about threats of precarious work. The IMF Russian affiliate MMWU reported on changes in its structure, which served as a base for further discussion.

The meeting held in 2008 focused on the preparations for the World Congress 2009, including discussion on a draft Action Programme and Rules. It also debated planned activities in view of the Global Action Day against precarious work. As the meeting was held in Belarus, special emphasis was put on the situation of the independent trade union movement in that country.

Latin America

In 2007, the Regional Office moved to Montevideo, Uruguay. The Uruguayan authorities agreed to recognise the office as an international trade union organisation in June 2008.

The Regional Office began to work on the issue of ‘trade, employment and development’, with an initial seminar in 2006, and various follow-up activities. The Doha Round of negotiations and bilateral agreements in the region were monitored, analysed and discussed in recent workshops for the Southern Cone sub-region in Buenos Aires, Argentina and for the Andean Community of Nations in Caracas, Venezuela, in July 2008.

During this period, closer cooperation with other GUFs was developed, and the IMF participated in meetings of GUFs and TUCA and joined actions against violence in Colombia and protection contracts in Mexico. The IMF also participated at regional level meetings organised by the ICEM, and invited the ICEM to attend IMF meetings, including the last Regional Conference in August 2008. A conference on mining took place in December 2008, at which experiences were shared with the ICEM.

Two new affiliates joined: SINAMI in Chile (and organisation of subcontracted workers in manufacturing); and CEMETAL in Peru.

Although the solidarity project with Columbian exiles had been completed, we asked affiliates in Chile for help in providing work for the only colleague who remains in exile. We also worked in solidarity with the families of the miners who died at Pastas de Conchos and whose bodies remain buried in the mine.

Information network

Strengthening international solidarity among rank-and-file members and ensuring the exchange of information are key areas of communications work as described by the IMF Action Programme.

During the Congress period, the IMF substantially redesigned its *Metal World* magazine. Sixteen editions were published in English, Russian and Japanese between the congresses. The IMF published an average of 18 editions per year of IMF *NewsBriefs* in English and Spanish. In 2008 the IMF also began publishing *NewsBriefs* in French and Russian.

The IMF produced regional journals, *Mundo Metal* in Latin America and *Umoja* in Africa, and continues with the *Media Reflections* publication for South Asia. The IMF CIS Regional Office began publishing electronic weekly bulletins in January 2008, circulating these among the IMF affiliates in CIS countries. In 2008, the Russian version of the IMF's *Metal World* included an insert covering events in CIS countries; the first insert was dedicated to the IMF global campaign against precarious work and the impact of precarious work in CIS countries.

In 2007, the IMF published and distributed a record number of posters and booklets for the Zero Occupational Cancer campaign to affiliates and other GUFs. In addition, the IMF published: *The Purchasing Power of Working Time – An international comparison, in 2006 and 2008*; *Organising the Unorganised: Career development and lifelong learning, A key issue for non-manual workers*; *IMF Auto Report 2006/2007*; *Background report on IFAs*; *Report on Mexican Labour Law*, and *AMRC Report on Industrial Relations & Working Conditions in IMF-related TNCs in China*.

As part of the preparation for the Central Committee discussion on precarious work in 2007, the IMF published a *Survey on Changing Employment Practices and Precarious Work*. A booklet, *Precarious work affects us all*, and posters were then produced in support of the global day of action on 7 October 2008.

The IMF website remains a very important platform for the exchange of information and promotion of international solidarity with affiliates. On average, IMF publishes 180 news reports per year on the IMF website, in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

Special sections of the website were developed in support of IMF work on China, Toyota Philippines, Mexico, shipbreaking, precarious work and sectors. In 2007, a major upgrade of the website's operating system was undertaken, which enabled further work on renewing the site. A new section for regional offices was developed,

as was a new area for solidarity information, news and campaigns. Work to revise and update the overall look and structure of the site was also started in 2008.

The IMF communications system

The voice of the IMF and its affiliates needs to be heard, whether lobbying for social and economic reforms or supporting workers whose rights are violated.

Effective communication with the press remains a weakness. A media contacts database has been established, but there is still some work to go to integrate this into our work and re-orientate IMF activities with an awareness of external communication/media opportunities.

With this in mind, in 2007 the IMF hosted a Communicators' Forum, where communications professionals from IMF affiliates came together to share their experience and discuss international trade union issues. The Forum served as an opportunity to connect with affiliates' press representatives and communications officers from the EMF, ICEM and ITUC to broaden the IMF's reach within affiliates' publications and news outlets. IMF regional staff dealing with communications were also involved in this event, providing an opportunity for greater coordination and skills development in IMF communications work. This was continued through a meeting of head office and regional communications people in 2008.

Examples of successful media campaigns include IMF action on the abuse of trade union and workers' rights at Toyota Philippines and in Mexico, and on the appalling conditions in the shipbreaking industry, particularly in India and Turkey. In each instance, particular actions and media opportunities were developed and implemented, including global days of action and, in the case of shipbreaking, the production and distribution of a video news release to coincide with a meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The use of the video news release and the presence of Indian shipbreaking workers at press events in London in October 2007 greatly enhanced the media coverage gained on this issue.

Affiliates participated in the global days of action on Toyota Philippines and Mexico, generating press coverage, including TV interviews and footage broadcast in various parts of the world, and print articles around the world in local papers and on international labour news websites.

In 2007 the IMF launched the Zero Occupational Cancer campaign, which attracted a great deal of interest among trade unions and other health and safety specialists around the world. It promoted the commitment by ArcelorMittal to improve health and safety and gave a number of interviews to mainstream media on the Global Agreement on Occupational Health and Safety signed by ArcelorMittal management, the IMF, EMF and USW in June 2008.

The IMF also responded to a range of media enquiries and wrote and placed articles and photographs on IMF issues in labour- or industry-related publications during this Congress period. International Framework Agreements (IFAs) are another area

where some press work occurred, both around the World Conference in Frankfurt, Germany, in September 2006 and on the issue in general.

For two years now the IMF has hosted a 'Night of Labour Film Shorts' to promote trade union and worker stories to a broader audience in Geneva. All the GUFs, in addition to the ITUC, fully support the event and actively participate. In 2008, the IMF film on Mexico was shown, along with a selection of other labour films. This event has attracted considerable interest and has also seen IMF's film and the broader programme picked up for other film festivals around the world.

Strategies to engage transnational corporations

Globalisation of the world economy is having an unprecedented impact on the industrial sectors that the IMF represents. Solidarity is, therefore, fundamental to overcoming the challenges posed by the globalisation process, which is already pitting workers and communities against each other.

Despite the rhetoric of corporate social responsibility from some transnational corporations (TNCs), the situation for many workers has not improved since the last congress; in fact in many cases it has worsened, triggering a decline in trade union membership and weakening trade union structures.

Our objective is to create legally binding international regulations which ensure that multinational corporations recognise and act upon their social, ecological and human rights responsibilities and obligations.

Building and strengthening links across TNC production chains

The IMF continues to strengthen links between unions representing workers across TNC production chains, through the IMF World Company Councils and action groups, with sector-based coordination through activities of the IMF Industrial Departments.

Building solidarity among affiliates has proved difficult. In some instances this is because of national laws; in others it has been caused by lack of resources or strength. It is essential that IMF works to enhance understanding among affiliates and seeks way to build our influence.

Auto sector

The 12th IMF World Auto Council, which met in São Paulo in June 2008, included IMF delegates from 27 countries. There were also participants from some ICEM affiliates. Preparations for the World Auto Council were supported by the work of the Auto Industry Working Group, which met in Frankfurt in early 2008, and involved the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF).

The Council's main objective was to address the fundamental challenges posed by the industrial and enterprise restructuring process that is sweeping the auto sector. Proceedings in São Paulo therefore focussed on three main areas issues: employment practices, precarious work and quality jobs; 'competitive sourcing' in a neoliberal world (that is, attempts to pit workers and communities against each other); and ensuring a greener environment, good jobs and safe work.

Precarious work is a serious problem in this industry. Delegates urged a range of industrial, legal/political and international actions to confront the challenges of precarious work, including: extending existing collective agreements and full union membership to precarious workers; negotiating with principal employers; and

negotiating provisions limiting temporary work to legitimate uses only, such as peak production and product launches (bearing in mind that shorter product cycles and more frequent new model launches necessitate enhanced trade union monitoring and enforcement).

Delegates stressed that 'green' work should be unionised work, providing stable jobs with good salaries and safe working conditions, and that the development, production and use of new and innovative clean vehicle and fuel technologies are integral to the industry's evolution. Recommendations called for the Auto Industry Working Group to contribute to sector-level work and coordination in between World Auto Council meetings; that Regional Auto Meetings combining plenary and company-level meetings should broaden, when possible, to include trade union representation from major suppliers; and building on the experience of the 12th World Auto Council, the next Council should aim to provide expanded time on the programme for company and/or sub-sector networks to meet.

The Council highlighted the importance of organising the unorganised (include company-level, multi-plant campaigns) as a way of responding to competitive sourcing challenges. Building the means for stronger cross-border coordination of collective bargaining and the expanded use of networks to support these activities were among the Council's recommendations, especially in light of the prevalence of vehicle platform strategies used by auto companies.

Company-level IMF activities for the automotive sector since the last Congress concentrated on building cross-border links among trade unions at a number of leading automakers.

At meetings of the IMF Working Group on **Ford** and the Ford Network (London 2007, São Paulo 2008) delegates provided updates on restructuring activities facing workers across the company, and collective bargaining outcomes. Management made a presentation to the working group and heard the trade unions' concerns about the impact that ongoing restructuring is having on workers. Delegates stressed the obligation and responsibility of Ford to negotiate, inform and consult with trade union representatives on terms, conditions and impacts – in advance of any decisions that may impact workers and their livelihoods – and to ensure that any restructuring process first considers alternatives, and if restructuring does occur, that it is done in a socially acceptable manner. Worker and trade union rights at a Ford supplier in Thailand (which led the affiliated union to submit a complaint to the ILO) were presented to management. Further steps on advancing an IFA were also sought, and the means to strengthen the network were put in place. The network continued these efforts through meetings in conjunction with the World Auto Council meeting, with additional follow-up to take place in 2009.

The IMF **Toyota** Working Group (Bangkok, 2007) centred attention on the impacts that the company's rapid growth is having on workers, particularly the challenges for irregular workers, and health and safety. A number of countries voiced concerns about corporate conduct. Delegates from North America highlighted challenges for organising workers. A continued commitment to seek an IFA was confirmed, and affiliates reaffirmed the *Principles of Cooperation and Common Goals* adopted by the Toyota World Council. Information on wages, hours and conditions were compiled and exchanged and the Toyota Working Group pledged to strive to engage management on matters of irregular work, organising and corporate conduct at both the company and its supply chain.

The **General Motors** Action Group and associated regional GM network meetings (Detroit 2005, Antwerp 2007; São Paulo 2005, Bangkok 2006, Central Europe 2005–07) focussed heavily on the challenges posed by the company's development and use of global common practices, particularly global vehicle platforms and related strategies. Management has attempted to use these strategies to put plants into competition with one another. This is among the toughest challenges facing workers and trade unions at GM, and indeed across the automotive sector. To help respond, a global GM network has been created through the combined efforts of the GM European Works Council, the EMF GM trade union coordinating group and the GM Action Group. The network has been instrumental in exchanging and disseminating information with calls for action in defence of workers' and trade union rights at GM and its suppliers, and to support mobilisation of and resistance by workers and unions in response to the company's restructuring.

Joint meetings of the **Volvo** EWC and IMF Non-European Affiliates (Lyon 2006, Shanghai 2008) initiated the establishment of a network, discussed the need to advance efforts on negotiating an IFA with the company, and looked at steps towards further development of a global structure for trade unions representing AB Volvo workers. Information on terms and conditions of work and on restructuring was exchanged among unions involved, and management made presentations at the respective meetings.

For **Hyundai-Kia**, the Korean Metalworkers Union (KMWU) worked with the IMF in 2005 to organise an international group of affiliate representatives to evaluate the company's strategies, to consider how to advance efforts to organise Hyundai-Kia facilities in several countries, and to look at ways to negotiate an IFA. A Hyundai-Kia network meeting also took place (in conjunction with the 12th World Auto Council) with plans to solidify and build upon these avenues for cross-border trade union links.

With regard to **Fiat**, the IMF participated in a meeting organised by the Italian affiliates (Turin 2008) with trade union representatives from six countries within and outside Europe. The challenge of defending and promoting worker and trade union rights topped the agenda. Participants addressed steps involved in the negotiation of an IFA. Another meeting for the Fiat Group is expected to take place in 2009.

At **Volkswagen**, there have been four meetings per year – two European (one meeting of the EWC and one of the Steering Committee) and two at the global level. There has also been one meeting of the Global Works Council and one of the Steering Committee. As well as the Global Works Council and EWC bodies, there is a network of national trade unions that meets regularly to exchange information. The network met in April 2007 in Martorell, Spain. Since the 2005 IMF World Congress, Volkswagen has started to build up plants in Kaluga (Russia), and Pune (India), and just a few months ago the decision was made to open a plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA). The Global Works Council has already instigated contact with unions in Russia and India. In 2006, the head of the Volkswagen brand (who is no longer with the company) leaked information to the press that the facility in Brussels might be closed. A spontaneous strike of the workforce supported by the Belgium unions took place. After intensive negotiations, during which the Global and European Works Councils intervened, the decision was made to keep the facility open and to build the newly developed Audi A1 there. The decision was made in favour of the Brussels plant even though giving this product to one of the German Audi sites could have solved some employment problems in these sites. In the

second half of 2008 activities to keep up a special ‘VW law’ challenged by the EU commission were launched as well as the fight to counter an agreement negotiated and signed by the Porsche Works Council for Porsche SA, which will also become the holding company for Volkswagen, after the majority of its shares are taken over by Porsche. This agreement – negotiated without the participation of the existing VW EWC – disadvantages the workers representatives’ from the Volkswagen company by giving them the same number of members in the Porsche SA EWC as the Porsche Works Council will have, even though Volkswagen has a workforce of about 280,000 employees in Europe and Porsche has only 11,500.

Regional level auto activities

Regional automotive meetings in Latin America (São Paulo 2005) and the Asia–Pacific region (Jakarta 2005) have strived to integrate company-level interaction as part of regional sector initiatives. The aim is to coordinate sector- and company-based approaches more effectively and to improve utilisation of resources. This has been more successful in some regions than others, and balancing company- and sector-level approaches remains a challenge.

Plenary sessions have focussed on sharing information on industry and country trends for the sector, restructuring and industrial policy challenges, and how to strengthen trade union responses called for in the Action Programme. Company-level working groups at the Latin America meeting (which also included trade union representatives from South Africa and Europe) aimed to build and strengthen networks to facilitate information exchange: on collective bargaining, transfer of work, plants closing, industrial action, management behaviour, and occupational health and safety; on IFA implementation; and on developing common strategies against outsourcing. The Asia–Pacific meeting focussed on the use of irregular workers and subcontracting, calling for responses based on assembly-supplier worker links, collective bargaining and legislation to increase permanent jobs and protect all workers.

Also at the regional level, the IMF participated in the EMF Auto Conference (Elewijt 2006) which addressed a number of restructuring challenges facing the European auto industry. In addition, the IMF joins the EMF Sector Committee Automotive meetings which has discussed, among a broad range of issues, proposed approaches to EU regulation of vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide, with the aim of balancing protection of the environmental and protection of jobs across European auto manufacturers.

The list of automotive companies where affiliates have provided solidarity with one another to defend and protect worker and trade union rights since the last IMF Congress is extensive. The TNCs include: AvtoVAZ, Bosch, Bosal, DaimlerChrysler, Delphi, Denso, Dräxlmaier, Fiat, Ford and GM. Others were Grammer, Grob, Honda, Hyundai, Kiryung, and Leoni. There were also cases involving Mitsubishi, PSA, TagAZ, Toyota, Volkswagen, Yazaki, and ZF. Other cases in the sector, which remain unresolved and where unions continue to pursue remedies, include the ILO complaint in the Philippines involving Toyota, and an ILO complaint filed in relation to Thai Summit Eastern Seaboard, a supplier to Ford.

Training workshops for organisers in auto sector TNCs were held at Pune, Chennai and New Delhi in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. The participants

learned about the TNCs' strategies of diversifying production bases and expanding supply chains, thereby reduce the role of the unions and collective bargaining, and how to counter such policies.

Aerospace sector

Based on the decision of the 2002 World Aerospace Conference in Toulouse, a Steering Committee for the aerospace industry was formed, made up of the US, Canada, Germany, France and the UK. This committee met in 2005/06 and 2007 to discuss the developments in the industry and to try to define common strategies for defending the interests of members.

A working group for Airbus and Boeing was established during the 2002 Conference. Due to personnel overlap with the Steering Committee, this working group usually holds its meetings together with the Aerospace Steering Committee.

During the 2005 meeting the Committee passed the resolution 'Safety in the Skies Must Begin With Safety on the Ground: Safety and Security in the Aerospace Related Industries'. The resolution was sent by the EMF to all European authorities within the field of air safety, and the resolution was publicised to members of the French and German affiliates, via articles in their newspapers and membership journals as well as on their webpages.

Mechanical engineering sector

Mechanical engineering has grown in importance during the Congress period. Three countries have the lead in worldwide manufacturing and trading – USA, Japan and Germany. The sector is of fundamental importance, because its products are indispensable for nearly all other sectors. Without the machinery and tools of mechanical engineering, manufacturing in other sectors would simply not be possible. In the US and in Germany this sector employs more workers than the 'classical' industries, auto and electrical.

Based on the recommendations of the Mechanical Engineering Conference 2005 in Seattle, a small working group developed proposals for this sector. At a seminar in 2007 in Tokyo and in 2008 at Boppard, Germany, discussions within the working group made it clear that this sector will become ever more important, because most of the machinery and products that are needed to meet the challenges of the climate change and finding new concepts for the energy consumption are developed and manufactured in mechanical engineering. A report of the previous activities was given to the Executive Committee at its meeting in 2008 in Kyoto, Japan. Further broader activities are planned for 2009.

The World Union Committee (WUC) in **SKF** meets once a year – together with the European Works Council. The WUC has been active for at least three decades, and it is financed almost to 100% by the company, which pays all the bills, while IMF controls the programme and the agenda. The Council has done a great job of building up links between workers in different SKF plants around the globe. However, IMF believes the time has come to discuss how to develop its work from a mere exchange of information – in particular, to update the IFA signed several years ago, bringing it level with more recent IFAs, such as Umicore. The meetings of the SKF WUC took place in 2005 in Schweinfurt, Germany, Shanghai (2006),

Gothenburg (2007), and in Steyr, Austria (2008) where, in 1995 the agreement on the WUC was signed between IMF and the company. At the 2008 meeting in Steyr, participants decided to conduct a study on the use of precarious work in the different plants of SKF worldwide, the policy of the national unions and possible regulations for this group of workers on a legal or collective bargaining basis. At the 2007 and 2008 meetings, the presidents of the Swedish union IF Metall and of GMTN (Austria) gave a report on their unions and their policies at the European and international level. Since the 2007 meeting, an observer from one of the Chinese plants now takes part in the meeting as well. In 2008, attempts to convince people to start activities for installing a union in the Malaysian plant bore fruit. A works committee was founded in the plant, and the committee contacted one of the Malaysian IMF affiliates to organise and represent the plant. A representative of the works committee joined the 2008 meeting in Steyr as an observer. On the second day, the CEO and the Human Resources Director for the SKF group reported on the actual economic situation, investment and manufacturing activities and human resources projects. One item the WUC has still to work on is the exchange of information between meetings. This often only takes place in connection with specific problems in plants. The normal information on collective bargaining and so on is not shared regularly. This point has to be discussed and improved on for the next meeting.

In 2006 the IMF organised a World Conference for **Bosch**, which is highly active in the electrical/electronics sector as well as mechanical components for the auto industry, but which also has activities in other industrial areas. The World Conference which took place in Stuttgart was combined with the meeting of the EWC Bosch. As well as the EWC members, many unions from outside the EU were represented including a representative from one of the Chinese Bosch plants. (The implementation of the Bosch IFA is discussed in the Section on IFAs).

Information and Communications Technology sector

A task force was created to develop proposals for activities linked to the Flextronics meeting in Budapest, Hungary (see below), and for the revival of activities in IBM. The problem the task force faces is that there is a high level of interest in developed countries, but most of the manufacturing activities of ICT companies are no longer situated in developed countries. In countries where most of the ICT activities are located – Mexico, South-East-Asia and China – the unionisation rate is low or unions, for various reasons, are not affiliated to the IMF.

Another task force meeting is scheduled for 2009, with the intention of developing more firm proposals for activities.

Although efforts to revive the **General Electric** World Company Council failed, at least we were able to organise a smaller working group to develop strategies on how to deal with this multinational company.

The series of regional meetings for **Siemens** continued, with a meeting for Latin America taking place in October 2006 in São Paulo, Brazil. The participants mainly belonged to the Brazilian and Argentinian IMF affiliates, while other plants on the continent turned out to be highly non-unionised. Because of the high probability of the existence of so-called ‘contratos de protección’ Mexican plants were not included

in the meeting. At the World Company Council for **Siemens**, participants agreed on coordinators as a communication channel to the **Siemens** EWC.

For quite some time that has been no contact between workers' representatives from outside Europe at **IBM**, the computer multinational. Only EWC meetings were held regularly, and for some unionised members these were not very satisfactorily because of the high non-unionisation rate of EWC-members. IBM Workers International Solidarity (IWIS) – an initiative of IBM activists (partly unionised, partly non-unionised) – organised a meeting in Paris in 2006 which was supported by the French unions. IMF and UNI participated in this meeting. Some activities that were started by IWIS members after the Paris meeting – to fight the company's policy of outsourcing jobs and downsizing the workforce worldwide – convinced IMF and UNI to begin another attempt to bring active union members in IBM back into a world level union structure. These initiative will continue in 2009, and might lay the ground to start similar activities in other computer companies, including the supply chains of these companies.

In September 2005 **Flextronics**, a 'contract manufacturer (CM)' producing most of the hardware of the major computer companies, was targeted in a meeting in Budapest, Hungary, coordinated with the EMF. Flextronics is one of the leading companies in this field and probably the CM-company which shows the highest (but nevertheless unsatisfactory) unionisation rate. Unfortunately it transpired that, outside Europe, unionisation of Flextronics is lower than expected. Therefore, the meeting was mainly attended by European representatives. One concrete outcome was that the participants decided to launch a demand for opening negotiations for a European Works Council for Flextronics.

Some other activities in this sector are reported under the heading 'Equal rights' (below).

Steel and non-ferrous metals

Since the last congress the strategy in the sector has been to engage and create union networks in a number of targeted TNCs. In delivering this strategy we have had to recognise the challenges we face from increased consolidation activities in the sector and as a result the need to develop global structures to discuss issues such as: preventing significant job losses for metalworkers as a result of mergers; and developing global structures that provide for information and consultation on issues such as future investment strategies, transparency of the companies' intentions, restructuring plans, health and safety issues, and training and education programs.

The success or failure of this approach has been heavily influenced by the companies' willingness to engage with trade unions at the international level. Despite this, the international trade union movement has remained united in its ultimate goal of advancing workers' rights and building the union movement, but the speed of progress has varied from company to company.

The successful hostile bid by Mittal for Arcelor led to the creation of the world's largest steel producer **Arcelor Mittal**, and affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers. Since the merger, the IMF held a World Conference (Montreal 2007) and over 27 countries took part. The outcome of the Conference was a strategic action plan titled *Arcelor Mittal Global Agreement*. The agreement set out three objectives for the IMF, including 'establishing a global approach to

occupational health and safety'; and this has now been completed. In June 2008 the IMF signed the world's first ever global agreement in the metal sector with the company. The agreement guarantees certain conditions in every plant and mine where the company operates and also the establishment of a global union-management steering committee. The second step is to create a Global Works Council, which would meet at least twice a year and have representatives from the unions in every region. Initial discussions on how to achieve this have already taken place. The third step is to develop an IFA with the company in the near future.

Since the last Congress **Gerdau** has continued to grow its overseas operations, and is now a major player in the world steel market. Relationships in the company vary from country to country, but despite this the IMF has been able to develop a coordinated approach at the international level. The main trigger for this was an industrial dispute in Beaumont, Texas, USA. The IMF facilitated a number of global meetings, and now has a functioning network of activists within the company. Our strategy is to use a coordinated approach in building solidarity among unions so that we can get the company to agree to a formal structure for world meetings.

In 2007, the IMF held a meeting on **Tenaris** in Argentina, when the Tenaris workers' network was launched. In 2008 the second meeting was held in Canada with the participation of unions from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Italy and Romania.

Alcoa has been hostile towards meeting with unions at the global level. Following a strategic plan agreed at the Alcoa-Alcan World Conference in 2005, a small action group was established. This group has met twice and some progress has been made. The decision to hold these meetings prior to the annual shareholders' meeting in Pittsburgh, USA, means that the company has now agreed to meet with unions at international level. Issues such as the conditions facing workers in Mexico and Honduras had been previously used to publicly embarrass the company during these meetings. Continuation of the same approach should develop into a more formal structure.

Following the Montreal conference mentioned above, the IMF approached **Alcan** about signing an IFA, and also establishing a World Works Council. However, the sale of the company to Rio Tinto has meant that we have had to start this process again.

The IMF held a joint World Meeting with ICEM to develop its strategy in **BHP Billiton**. The union density in the company means that we have a fairly weak position; also the company remains deeply hostile to its unions. During the World Meeting the company refused to meet with unions at international level, so short-term and long-term programmes were agreed. The cooperation with ICEM proved beneficial because both federations have a fairly weak position in the company and many of the issues raised are common, such as occupational health and safety. In the short term, a joint protest was arranged at the next shareholders meeting which successfully raised the issue of meeting with unions at global level. The second step is the development of a report which details all the instances when the company breaks its own corporate standards. Once finished, the report will be publicly launched as a way to further raise awareness of the company's activities.

Regional programme

The rapid development of the Indian steel industry and the challenges faced by unions within it means there is a need to develop a strategic programme for the future. To begin with, there was not enough information available, so IMF produced its *Indian Steel* report to fill in this gap. A report was also produced about *Secondary Steel*. As a second step, an Indian steel meeting was held in 2008 in order that affiliates could develop a strategic programme based on the questions raised in the report.

Subsequent to the Indian Steel Meeting held in March 2008 in Kolkata, a preparatory Planning Workshop for the India Steel Project was held in Mumbai, and the details of the affiliates' organising strategies were agreed. As a result, it was agreed that an organising project should be developed in India in the steel industry and that our affiliates there would not compete for members within the industry. Also the project would be sustainable and that the IMF-India committee was fully involved in the political discussions. It was also agreed that a joint letter would be sent to Corus-Tata management requesting that discussions commence on forming a World Council and also negotiations begin on an IFA.

Shipbuilding

The Shipbuilding Action Group held its first meeting, in Tokyo, in 2005 and has since developed a coordinated approach to the IMF activities in the OECD High Level Shipbuilding Committee. The Action Group has developed global positions on subsidies, workers' rights, overcapacity, and precarious work, and presented these to the OECD.

The IMF signed its first IFA in the shipbuilding sector with **Aker**. The agreement is very progressive and is a role model for future agreements. The sale of Aker Yards to STX (Korean company) will mean that the IMF needs to continue to develop a strategic approach in the sector.

Shipbreaking

The IMF continues to act as the leading voice for shipbreaking workers globally. We have played a major role in the discussions between the ILO-IMO-Basel Convention, as well as arranging many activities to ensure that the IMO International Instrument reflects the concerns of shipbreaking workers. In addition, the IMF has contributed to the EU Green Paper on Ship recycling and also the UK Government's white paper.

For the first time in the South Asia region, a union for shipbreaking workers was formed in Alang, Gujarat. During the global controversy on the French ship, *Le Clemenceau*, and the hazards of dismantling it on the Indian shores, the Supreme Court of the country wanted to know the social-economic and working conditions of the shipbreaking workers. The survey report submitted by our affiliate was taken as the benchmark by the Apex Court, and guidelines were issued for safe working conditions.

The project in India continues and goes from strength to strength, with 4,500 workers now organised in Alang. In addition, the shipbreaking workers held their first industrial dispute over pay and won.

International Framework Agreements (IFAs)

The first International Framework Agreement (IFA) was signed in 2002, with the Italian company Merloni. By the last Congress, in 2005, the IMF had been involved in negotiating and signing agreements with Volkswagen, DaimlerChrysler, Bosch, GEA, Leoni, Prym, Rheinmetall and SKF.

The IMF sees IFAs as a possible way to help realise basic workers' rights. These agreements provide a tool to advance worker and trade union rights and to strengthen unions at operations of the signatory company and suppliers, and the IMF continues to work with affiliates, calling on the signatory companies to take a constructive and positive attitude towards union organising in operations in the TNC's production chain. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that as an instrument to address restructuring challenges, the IFA has had limited success. This was apparent when, one month after signing a framework agreement with PSA Peugeot Citroen, the company announced the closure of the Ryton (UK) assembly operation, contrary to promises management had made to the plant's workers. Other examples include Avtoframos, Renault plant in Moscow, and Leoni in Ukraine (discussed below).

In September 2006 the IMF organised a world conference on IFAs in Frankfurt at the IG Metall head office. One hundred and sixty participants attended. This conference made a series of recommendations on IFAs, which were approved as IMF's policy on IFAs at the Executive Committee in May 2007 (Seville, Spain).

In October 2007, the IMF also organised an IFA meeting for representatives of the 12 transnational companies that operate in Brazil and have signed IFAs. This meeting discussed how these IFAs are being implemented by the companies. In addition, the IMF-affiliated metalworkers' confederations - CNM/CUT and CNTM/FS - signed a cooperation agreement to monitor conditions at the suppliers of companies with IFAs. The two Brazilian affiliates also agreed to work together in approaching six Brazilian multinational companies about signing an IFA with the IMF.

Existing IFAs

Where IFAs are already in place, the IMF continues to ensure that these agreements are implemented correctly.

For example, at **Volkswagen**, suppliers applying for contracts with Volkswagen have to use a special Internet portal, which explains the existence of the Social Charter and the overall corporate social responsibility policy of VW. Suppliers have to sign that they took notice of this material, and if they do not sign they will be contacted by the VW purchasing department directly to find out why this did not happen. A special task force has been established to identify possible conflicts or violations of the Social Charter. The task force is headed by the company's purchasing department. The Central Works Council of Volkswagen is represented on this task force and keeps in contact with the IMF.

There have been numerous changes at the company with which IMF signed its first IFA - **Merloni**. Although the Italian electrical company Merloni acquired Indesit in 1987, it was not until 2005 that Merloni Elettrodomestici became known as **Indesit**

Company. In May 2006 shop-stewards and trade union representatives from the UK, Russia and Italy came together to exchange information and plan coordinated action on the IFA. They decided, among other things, to: establish systematic coordination for the exchange of information; initiate a discussion with IMF affiliates in Poland and Turkey about the organising and collective bargaining situation at Indesit/Merloni in these two countries; and interact with the IMF working group on China to consider how the IFA could be implemented there. In October 2006, representatives from Indesit Company management, the IMF and Italian metalworker unions met for the first time to discuss the implementation of the IFA, and the company described what management had done in order to make the agreement known by its employees and its suppliers in all countries where it operates. In 2007, the company reported that it had rescinded a contract with a supplier for non-fulfilment of its obligations towards its employees, as set out in the core labour standards. The company agreed to include trade unions in the joint monitoring of the agreement from countries where Indesit has more recently established a presence, including the UK and Russia. IMF is now working to make use of the Indesit IFA – especially to target companies in the supply chain, and in countries with poor respect of fundamental rights such as Turkey. Improved organising, particularly in Poland, is a key priority.

A significant part of the **Bosch** World Conference (February 2006), organised by the IMF, addressed the implementation and monitoring of the IFA, with trade union representatives from several countries raising concerns over management actions affecting workers and unions. The World Conference was combined with the meeting of the Bosch EWC. The experiences of this Conference inspired the Bosch management to offer to take over the expenses for plant-based union representatives, including the necessary interpretation for another world conference to be organised in 2009. Initial steps agreed upon included: intensifying the exchange of information on developments in labour relations; consistent expansion of a network to cover as many Bosch locations as possible; comprehensive education of employees on the IFA; and a review of known Bosch suppliers regarding their compliance with the IFA.

In 2006, the management at a **Leoni** plant in Arad, Romania, was putting pressure on union members to leave the union and refused to recognise the collective agreement, breaching both of Romanian law and the Leoni IFA. On 2 November, the president of the local union was dismissed by the company. IMF called on the German management, which signed the IFA, to resolve the situation in Arad and to reinstate the union president. There were also problems at Leoni in Ukraine, where management prevented trade unions from contacting and organising workers, saying that workers had already set up a ‘council of labour collective’ and therefore did not want a trade union. In fact, the council had been set up on the initiative of management to show to the Leoni headquarters and to Ukrainian authorities that it follows principles of social responsibility. This behaviour demonstrates that an IFA can be misused by management, who may use it as a formal decoration to show that the company is socially responsible, when in fact it is not.

In June 2007, union representatives from **Rheinmetall** facilities and union officials from Austria, Brazil, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland met in Neckarsulm, Germany, to discuss implementation of the Principles of Social Responsibility (IFA) agreed between Rheinmetall, the IMF and the European Works Council. In spite of endeavours by both the IMF and IG Metall to open a dialogue in

good faith with the company on the implementation of the IFA, management refused to support the IMF and IG Metall in organising this meeting and addressing the participants. However, the meeting provided an opportunity for an exchange of information on the current situation at several locations of the corporation and for establishing an international network and a global communication platform for workers and unions within Rheinmetall. The Brazilian representatives reported, in particular, serious breaches concerning health and safety standards at the Rheinmetall plant in Nova Odessa, São Paulo, and urged the IMF to intervene with management. It was agreed that the IMF, jointly with IG Metall, and the EWC would seek to approach management again, in an effort to initiate a constructive dialogue on implementation of the Agreement at the company's facilities and its supply chain throughout the world. This issue was discussed again at the Rheinmetall EWC's meeting in Usti, Czech Republic, in June 2008. The IMF was invited to participate and gave a progress report, particularly concerning developments in Brazil, but also on the situation at the company's facility in Mexico and in South Africa following the acquisition by Rheinmetall of a majority equity holding (51%) in Denel Munitions that same year.

Since the last Congress, several IFAs have been negotiated and signed with companies in the automotive sector, including PSA Peugeot Citroen, Renault and BMW. Efforts continued to further negotiations for an IFA with Mahle, which is a major supplier to several IFA signatory companies including Daimler, VW and BMW. Trade union initiatives have also taken place at several US-based companies, at Hyundai and have begun at Fiat.

The IMF has participated in meetings of the Daimler World Employee Committee at which IFA-related cases are raised and addressed. At Renault, a jointly developed and initiated process for IFA evaluation was carried out in accordance with agreement's provisions. The IMF was also represented during evaluations of the PSA Peugeot Citroen IFA, where observance of the provisions of the respective agreements was reviewed and areas needing follow-up identified. BMW IFA implementation-related activities involving the IMF (Munich 2005, Oxford 2006, Frankfurt 2006) focussed on actions needed to effectively promote and implement the agreement at company facilities and suppliers, as well as exchanging and sharing information on BMW and its facilities through a network.

Other new IFAs

During 2005, the IMF signed new IFAs with **EADS**, **Gebrüder Röchling**, and **Arcelor**.

In 2007 the IMF signed its first IFA with a Belgian company – the transnational corporation, **Umicore**, which operates in the non-ferrous metal sector with both mining and refining in many countries. This IFA is the first one to be negotiated and signed by the ICEM and IMF, with considerable effort from the Belgian union, CCMB. Since the IFA was signed, Zinifex Australia and the zinc and lead assets of Umicore Belgium have decided to create Nyrstar, the world's largest zinc group. Nyrstar, the name of the combined entity, will have 4,500 employees.

Also in 2007, the IMF and the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) signed an IFA with **Brunel**, a Netherlands-based international recruitment and service provider, specialised in deploying skilled workers in the fields of engineering,

ICT, legal, finance and insurance and banking. The agreement initially applies to Brunel's operations that fall within the scope of the IMF. The agreement came in response to the Howard Government's abuse of temporary migrant labour to undercut wages and conditions in Australia. The agreement with Brunel ensures that temporary migrant workers are only used where absolutely necessary and that they receive training, equal wages and conditions, and union and collective agreement protection.

An IFA was signed by the European Works Council and the IMF in April 2008, with the French seamless steel piping company **Vallourec**. And most recently – at the end of October 2008 – the IMF signed a new IFA with **Aker**, the renowned Norwegian shipbuilding company. The agreement includes provisions on all fundamental workers' rights and covers all the company's operations.

During 2006, there were negotiations with Thyssen Krupp, but the content of the proposed agreement did not comply with IMF requirements and therefore was not signed.

Other mechanisms to engage TNCs

Nearly all leading global automotive TNCs have either established operations in India and Russia, have launched investments expected to start production in the near term, and/or are working in partnership with existing companies based in these countries. These enterprises are mostly concentrated in select and identified clusters of auto manufacturing and/or metalworking in the respective countries. IMF affiliates are striving to develop and gain training and experience in organising TNCs in the auto sector, in some cases having already set up organising teams; in others, linking with unions representing workers in the home countries of TNCs. One of the aims of the training is to provide trade union activists with knowledge and skills in organising in the sector.

In India, increased targeting of training that began in 2008 has drawn upon ongoing input from the IMF India Council, together with outcomes from a workshop on organising precarious work in the India auto industry (Chennai 2007) and a meeting of India Motor Vehicle Unions (Pune 2006).

Two training seminars in Russia during 2008 were enhanced by drawing on a prior auto trade union coordinating meeting (St Petersburg 2007) and a fact-finding mission conducted the year before.

IMF Regional Office in the CIS helped to arrange a meeting of the leadership of two Russian trade unions (AFW and ITUA) with VW EWC (Moscow 2008) to start a social dialog between parties. IMF also helped the newly established union in Avtoframos to contact FO Metaux and to start cooperation with French colleagues.

Solidarity and organising

Over the past ten years, employers have tried to weaken the trade union movement by attacking the collective bargaining process. In particular, employers have tried to eradicate national, sectoral and even enterprise-wide collective bargaining. At the same time, they threaten to outsource production, and push for ever greater flexibility, all of which increases stress and insecurity among workers.

The IMF helps affiliates to combat these threats by improving and encouraging the exchange of information, by organising international solidarity campaigns, and by running seminars and workshops on specific collective bargaining issues.

Collective bargaining

The IMF is determined to increase its efforts to support affiliates' bargaining on wages and working conditions, and to coordinate pressure on employers through collective bargaining, to ensure that worker skills are upgraded to prevent skills shortages and layoffs.

During the Congress period there have been some notable collective bargaining successes. These are reported in detail in the companion document *Reports of the Affiliates 2005–2009*.

As well as 'traditional' bargaining issues, such as wages and working times, the IMF has been actively promoting the inclusion of other issues that are appropriate to working life in the 21st Century. Lifelong learning, for example, is an issue that takes on special dimension among white-collar workers who see it as a key element of their professional career. Trade unions have always emphasized the value of education and training in the past and fought hard for quality education and training systems, but the quickening pace of technological and economic change has added a new dimension to this topic and made it a priority for many unions throughout the world. The right to lifelong learning must be reinforced through statutory means and/or collective bargaining, and pressure must be put on employers and lawmakers to build in these guarantees. Provisions on lifelong learning should also be incorporated into the international framework agreements negotiated by the IMF.

A seminar was held on this subject in Paris in October 2006 on the initiative of the Non-Manual Workers' Department. Some fifty participants from affiliated organisations in Europe, Asia and North America looked at the situation in various countries, discussed how they had been advancing lifelong learning on the bargaining agenda at the branch and company levels, the challenges to be met and the results that had been achieved.

The contributions and discussions provided valuable insights into current trends in lifelong learning and helped identify some of the more innovative developments. In a number of countries unions have broken new ground and designed tools to assist their members in mapping out their own career path. The experiences shared by IMF affiliates presented useful examples of how lifelong learning programmes can help engage members in union work and recruit new ones.

It was felt that lifelong learning and career development were areas for new union strategies, and they were particularly attractive subjects for non-manual workers and should continue to be a focus of IMF work in future. A report, including all the presentations given at the seminar, is available on the IMF website.

Union-building and education

In order to promote the growth of strong unions, the IMF coordinates and supports a wide range of projects that train members of IMF affiliates on issues such as organising strategies, union structures, equal rights and strategic planning. These activities are reported below.

Africa

In **Tanzania**, IMF brought together our affiliates TUICO and NUMSA to build TUICO's capacity to produce its own education and union materials. The project also providing training for the union educators and branch leaders to use the new materials to organise and to train their membership, in particular on the new labour laws. This new legislation requires most issues to be dealt with at plant level, by shop-stewards or workers' representatives. The project therefore produced a simplified version of the new labour law (in operation from 2008) for both shop-floor workers and leadership, and carried out extensive training in the workplaces. During the project period TUICO increased membership and enhanced its profile at national level. Membership in June 2008 is reported to be 50,000 compared with 30,000 when the project started. For 2009 an exit strategy is planned which will finalise the training of key branch officials and production of union materials.

In **Zambia**, with support from IF Metall, IMF has carried out several workshops per year with NUBEGW to build the union's capacity to organise and recruit more workers, especially women workers because of the existing potential. Other aims of the workshops included: educating workers about their role in the union (especially during collective bargaining); strengthen branches to service workers more effectively; and developing shop-stewards' capacities to handle disputes in the workplace. There is a need to train the leadership on how to run the union efficiently and effectively. Currently the union does not have a real presence or profile at national level, local structures are not functioning properly and the union needs to be empowered in order to be well received by workers. IMF is meeting with Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), to which this union is also affiliated, to discuss how to jointly build the capacity of this union.

The IMF has been working in **Nigeria** for several years. After the merger of five unions in 2000 to create SEWUN, and its affiliation to the IMF in 2005, a pilot union-building project supported by the Finnish Metalworkers Union started in 2006. This project aimed to strengthen the union's structures at national level and help the union to recruit more members. Unfortunately, it became clear during 2007 and 2008 that the merger exists mainly on paper; SEWUN has not yet been able to integrate staff members or to consolidate the union structures at national level. Presently, there are 45 staff members servicing 28,000 members. This ratio imbalance is problematic for the union in terms of the needs of workers. SEWUN still has to devise an effective way of functioning as one national union, in order to more easily gain a profile at national level and thus to influence the industry in the labour

movement. IMF regional office will continue to engage with SEWUN and provide support to build the union's capacity.

IMF has been involved for many years in **Mozambique**, assisting SINTIME to build democratic structures at national level. In 2007–2008, in conjunction with an FIM CISL programme on HIV/AIDS aimed at union and management levels, the IMF carried out a union-building and training programme to consolidate sustainable union structures. The workshops were carried out in workplaces and in workers' communities, seeking to create awareness and actively involve women and young workers. A new leadership representing the major industrial sectors was elected in SINTIME's Congress in October 2007 and a youth section was created. Project activities continued in 2008, with financial support from IMF.

In an extremely difficult political situation in **Swaziland**, the IMF has been working with SATU for several years with support from the Finnish union, TU (Union of Salaried Employees) / SASK. Project evaluation in 2008 found that the union has gained popularity and exposure through industrial actions which have achieved concrete gains for workers such as increases in wages. SATU still faces huge challenges – one of them being that the companies consistently refuse to recognise the union in the workplaces. Thus the project is currently training union officers in para-legal issues to be able to fight this situation in court and set a legal precedent. Discussions with the national centre are on the agenda, with a view to creating solidarity among workers and developing one unifying structure for workers, because there are still too many unions for such a small country. The ongoing project also seeks to address the need to build financial sustainability and to train and build the capacity of the union leadership.

Chile and Colombia

With support from the Swedish IF Metall, IMF has started a new project in 2008 in Chile and Colombia, to encourage the formation of national unions in both countries. In Colombia the situation is straightforward with two affiliates in the country council, whereas in Chile at least five affiliates are involved. IMF has designed a four-year programme which combines capacity-building at local and regional level on priority issues such as solidarity, occupational health and safety, and collective bargaining, with internal IMF financial support for yearly national level workshops with all the affiliates, in order to build communality and devise the appropriate strategies at national level. One of the activities planned is the mapping out of the union presence in strategic transnational corporations (TNCs) in both countries and a common training programme leading to action-oriented campaigns at national level and in both countries.

India

The project on organising metalworkers in the **shipbreaking** industry in India is ongoing. This project, which has been supported by FNV Mondiaal/Bondgenoten since 2003, has proved successful: in 2007 the first union ever in shipbreaking was registered – the Alang Soshiya Shipbreaking and Recycling Workers Union. This union, formed by migrant and temporary workers, affiliated to SMEFI. In October 2008 the new union reported a total of 5000 members in Alang shipyards and some 1500 members in Mumbai, where the shipbreaking activities slowed down during 2006–2007. Project implementation addresses the situation of the workers at local,

national and international levels. IMF head office has taken up the issues of shipbreaking workers in all international fora and meetings with ILO, IMO and Basel Convention, seeking to guarantee an agreement on minimum standards world wide for workers in this industry. The organising project has been extended until 2010, focusing on strengthening the union in Alang, where the workforce varies between 25,000 and 60,000 workers at a time. In 2007–2008, the IMF also facilitated and supported a new project proposal presented by our UK affiliate GMB to the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), to organise the workers in the downstream industries, which recycle the steel around the shipbreaking yards in Mumbai and Alang. Hopefully this project will materialise in 2009.

In March 2008, the IMF held a **steel** meeting in India, involving all major affiliates from the steel sector and producing the first *Indian Steel Report*. This report outlines the new challenges faced by workers and unions in the industry, and in the local communities, brought about by the rapid expansion and huge investments currently taking place in India. In the Orissa region, there are 50 investments alone, three of which are the largest ever in India. All are new steel plants and part of TNCs. The Indian trade union movement is very fragmented and has very limited experience in dealing with TNCs in the steel industry (or metals sector). A large proportion of the workforce is employed in the peripheral and support services; while in the core activities there are mainly precarious workers, largely unorganised. By rough estimate, precarious workers make up at least one third of the workforce in the bargainable category. Furthermore, at the moment, there are no trade unions in the steel TNCs (except for Tata) and no unions in other private sector plants such as Jindal, Essar, Bhushan, because the management of the new and upcoming steel units are anti-labour and do not allow unions to be organised. The *Indian Steel Report* also recommended that IMF should launch an organising project for the steel sector in India, with full support from the India Committee. In 2008, IMF head office met with the main unions in India to advance planning, define the relevant regions and companies to target, and reaffirm the union's commitment to working together. This commitment included an agreement between the major industrial IMF affiliates not to compete for members during future organising drives in all the selected regions. Unfortunately, the Project Planning Workshop scheduled for January 2009 had to be postponed, due to the terrorist attack on Mumbai. The next meeting will be organised as soon as possible.

Peru

In Perú, the Finnish Metalworkers Union have been supporting a project in the mining sector with our affiliate (now called FENA) and the Central Nacional de la Mujer Minera to improve working and living conditions of subcontracted and migrant workers, who make up 70% of the current workforce in the mining TNCs. The project has addressed changes needed in the union's structures to include subcontracted workers as full members. The project partners have submitted observations and proposals to the Peruvian government on the new law on subcontracted workers in Perú. The intolerable working conditions of the subcontracted and temporary miners, and the need to ensure genuine union representation to defend their rights, remains a high priority for IMF in the struggle against precarious work. A new proposal to address this issue is in the pipeline, in cooperation with the Peruvian National Centre (CUT), and will be discussed at the next Latin American meeting on mining in 2009.

Russia

From 2004 to 2006, the IMF implemented a project in Russia with SWU (the shipbuilding union) with financial support from Bongenoten and the FNV Mondiaal and educational support from Dansk Metal. The main objectives of the project were to build the professional skills of the Russian trade union officials, modernise the union's structures and training skills, and to enhance the union's capacity to attract and organise new members, particularly young members. A three-year programme was designed, with two workshops per year covering topics such as analysing the needs of the Russian trade union movement to update education contents and methods at local union level, occupational health and safety training, training in collective bargaining skills and developing stronger negotiation strategies. Participants were invited to Denmark to gain an insight into the daily work of modern trade unions, and to review and compare the strong and weak points of the union in the course of collective bargaining.

Ukraine

From 2004 to 2007, the IMF carried out training projects for six Ukrainian affiliates with the support of IG Metall (Germany), UNIA (Switzerland), FO Metaux (France) and MWB-FGTB (Belgium). The main objective of these projects was to build the professional skills of the Ukrainian trade union officials and upgrade the unions' training skills. An evaluation meeting was held in Kiev in October 2006 and it was decided to pursue these efforts and consolidate the work undertaken. To this end, the Ukrainian colleagues selected three trainers from each of the unions concerned to carry on training, and set up a team of trainers who would be able to run educational activities by themselves. Another seminar took place in Kiev in October 2008, in which the trainers presented the programmes they had prepared. The next steps in this process are the certificate seminars to be run by the Ukrainian trainers, that is, seminars organised and financed by the Ukrainian side, with the participation of the team of IMF trainers giving marks and certificates to the trainers Ukrainians. Trainers from the Defence Union and from the Aviation Industry Union have already conducted such seminars. At their meeting with the IMF, FO Metaux, IG Metall and UNIA, in October 2008, the Ukrainian unions confirmed their commitment to the idea of participating in the joint international project on trade union education under the IMF umbrella.

Thailand

Between 2002 and June 2007, the IMF implemented an organising project for metalworkers in Thailand, with support from the Finnish Metalworkers' Union and SASK. In addition IMF also funded several training and education activities targeted towards developing self sufficiency and empowerment. The recruitment and organising drives carried out by TEAM (the Trade Union for Electrical Appliances, Automobile, and Metal workers, Thailand) had proved very successful, leading to a total membership of 65,000 workers in early 2007 (compared to 30,000 before the project). Unfortunately, the structure building efforts were not as successful, due to a lack of internal political unity regarding the national structure needed to effectively represent workers in Thailand. Despite IMF assistance TEAM's political structure remains weak. Moreover, in 2007 employers' tactics led to a split in TEAM by facilitating the creation of a separate automotive federation, thus weakening the automobile industrial federation which is the main affiliate of TEAM. After careful

assessment of the situation in TEAM the IMF–Finnish Metall–SASK project was suspended in mid-2007, until TEAM can develop a viable plan of action to address the issue of building a strong national union. In 2008, TEAM reported that its membership stands at 50,000, and the decline in membership was due to the breakaway of plant unions affiliated to TEAM through the automobile federation. IMF should continue to work with TEAM and assist in developing it into a national union. TEAM has also organised all the auto plants in Thailand. Some of these plants are located in the Eastern Seaboard export processing zone (EPZ). This is another success story of EPZ organising.

Vietnam

In the past five years, the IMF has been conducting some basic trade union education for the Vietnam Union of Industry and Trade (VUIT). Vietnam is a socialist country and the trade union structure differs from that of the Western model. However, IMF felt it important to establish contacts with this industrial union and explore areas of cooperation. Following initial efforts, several workshops and training were conducted. The IMF Action Programme was used as a training tool to create awareness of the negative impact of neo-liberal globalisation, workers and trade union rights in free society, collective bargaining and privatisation. Despite structural differences, the VUIT has responded favourably towards educating its membership and leadership. Though socialism is the ideological core of Vietnam, the market economy it embraced has opened the country to new challenges. Workers, especially in the private manufacturing sector, are facing the same challenges and problems faced by workers elsewhere. Export processing zones (EPZs) have sprung up like mushrooms and TNCs have moved in in droves. Therefore, it is pertinent that the IMF continues with its efforts to educate and inculcate free trade union values so that workers, especially those employed by TNCs, are not exploited.

Changing work

Important changes are taking place in the occupational structure of employment worldwide. As manufacturing becomes more knowledge- and technology-intensive, many traditional metal jobs are eliminated, while there is growth in higher-skilled occupations. This means that there is a shift from blue-collar to white-collar employment, not only in industrialised countries but also, increasingly, in emerging economies. On the other hand, in general, non-manual workers (especially professionals) are weakly organised or not organised at all, and they often lack the union traditions found in manufacturing. As a result, strengthening the presence of the IMF and its affiliates in non-manual occupations is critical for the future and requires appropriate action.

Along these lines the IMF Working Group on Non-Manual Workers met four times during the Congress period and provided valuable support and guidance to the IMF's Non-Manual Workers' Department. The Working Group helped to identify issues of special relevance to these workers and raise awareness of affiliates about the need to bring them into mainstream union work. The neo-liberal offensive against labour has hit all workers, both manual and non-manual, and this is an important point of convergence from which joint positions and actions should be developed.

A case in point is ‘precarious work’, which was on the agenda of the Working Group meeting in February 2007. Introducing the Central Committee’s theme ‘Global Action against Precarious Work’, the head of the Non-Manual Workers’ Department spoke about the challenges of organising the growing number of non-manual workers in the private sector, many of whom increasingly work under precarious conditions. Employers make extensive use of contract employees, including in the professional ranks. At the Working Group’s meeting in Copenhagen in April 2008, the representative of the IMF South Asia regional office gave a presentation on the status of non-manual workers in India and organising prospects.

At regional level, a seminar was held in the Czech Republic in the second half of 2005 for affiliates in Central Europe. The purpose was to review membership development in the region, discuss organising policies and examine future prospects. Representatives from IMF affiliates in Europe and North America also participated and shared their experiences of recruiting non-manual workers. A report was produced and posted on the IMF website.

Building on the work undertaken by affiliates in Latin America under the previous congress period, the IMF organised a workshop in Argentina in 2006 to take stock of the situation, evaluate progress made and discuss further steps. Delegates from the Chilean federation of engineers and professionals (FESUC) – not yet affiliated to IMF but interested in the IMF’s work – had been invited and actively participated in the discussion. It was agreed to set up a contact network to promote information exchange on organising in the region, and to establish links with the federation of engineers in Brazil.

Given the changes in employment patterns and the composition of the workforce worldwide, IMF activities for non-manual workers should be developed further and have a wider coverage. While some progress has been made in Latin America, so far very little has been undertaken in Asia, for instance, where R&D investment is developing fast and an important part of white collar work is being outsourced. As international organisation, the IMF should get more active in this region in particular and come up with new initiatives and projects.

Equal rights

Activities have focussed on two main aims which are linked: increasing women’s unionisation in the metals sector; and increasing women’s participation and leadership in unions.

At a meeting in July 2005, women members of the IMF Executive Committee identified priority areas of action for the Congress period as: export processing zones (EPZs); and the electronics sector. The General Secretary also confirmed that women, especially those working in EPZs, are one of the key priorities for the IMF.

Export processing zones (EPZs)

Conditions for women workers in EPZs are among the worst to be found in IMF industries. These women workers are largely unorganised, so activities were focussed on raising awareness among affiliated unions of their situation, and encouraging organising efforts.

In 2006, EPZ organising was raised as a topic at all sub-regional and regional meetings. These discussions helped the IMF to identify the kinds of activities we need to run and where efforts should best be focussed. A number of countries were selected for follow-up action. Workshops were held in 2006 in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Manaus, Brazil, to discuss with affiliates how IMF can help them to increase unionisation of workers in EPZs.

In Indonesia, an EPZ organising project supported by Swedish affiliates has assisted IMF's two affiliates to make outstanding progress in organising the unorganised companies, which are mainly TNCs, and increasing union membership in Indonesian EPZs. On the island of Batam alone, 45,000 EPZ workers are now organised, about 80% of them women. Given the extreme difficulties inherent in EPZ organising worldwide, it is crucially important that IMF helps generate positive examples of where and how unions can successfully organise EPZ workers, and this is part of the rationale behind this project.

In 2008 IMF commenced assistance to its affiliate, JSS, in Sri Lanka to improve awareness of their rights among EPZ workers (of whom more than 80% are women) and to fight the anti-union practices of employers. The union's actions so far have resulted in more than 3,000 new paying members.

Wherever possible, EPZ organising activities are conducted in close cooperation with textile unions. In many EPZs, textiles plants are located alongside metal-sector factories, and the industry has a similar gender profile and working conditions to electronics manufacturing. IMF has been working closely with the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF) to share strategies on EPZ organising and results of mapping efforts.

Electronics sector

Electronics is the most significant IMF industry present in EPZs. The worst labour abuses are endemic in electronics manufacturing, where hundreds of thousands of workers, mainly women, are employed under sweatshop conditions without the protection of a union. In many ways it is similar to the situation in the textiles industry before the abuses in the supply chains of major brand names such as Nike were brought to the attention of the public.

In October 2006, IMF held a meeting in Singapore to discuss the situation of women working in global electronics manufacturing supply chains. Affiliates from countries with significant electronics manufacturing were brought together with affiliates from the home countries of the companies that own the major brand names. The objective was to explore possibilities for organising and exposing these employment abuses to the general public. The meeting determined that the development of networks, both within contract manufacturing companies and along the supply chain, is critical. Consumers must also be informed about the conditions under which their electronic devices are produced and this can be done by IMF working together with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are already active in the field.

In September 2007 a similar meeting was held in Budapest, in response to the rapid growth of employment in electronics contract manufacturing in Eastern Europe. The aim was to encourage and support organising efforts to improve the unionisation of women electronics workers in the region. The meeting resulted in a better understanding of the electronics industry in the region and a renewed commitment

to organising. Work in this region is being performed in cooperation with the European Metalworkers Federation (EMF).

Thanks largely to the efforts of a number of NGOs, multinational companies in the electronics industry are starting to be exposed to public scrutiny. IMF has joined with these NGOs in an international network called 'GoodElectronics', to improve human rights in the electronics industry. In recognition of the key role of this network, IMF has contributed to funding for the GoodElectronics coordinator position. As a result of its participation in GoodElectronics, IMF was able to participate for the first time in stakeholder dialogues with key brand owners in the sector and directly put concerns about barriers to freedom of association in their supply chains.

In May 2007, the GoodElectronics network hosted a roundtable meeting in Bangkok. IMF and its Thai affiliate TEAM both played a leading role in the roundtable. Participants emphasised the primary role of unionisation in improving workers' rights and the need to move from informal models of organising to incorporating workers into registered trade unions. The meeting also resulted in stronger relationships between IMF and key NGOs in the field, particularly CAFOD, SOMO, CEREAL, AMRC and SVTC.

Precarious work

Precarious work has a disproportionate impact on women workers, and women are over-represented as precarious workers worldwide. The problem of precarious work is particularly prevalent in Asia. Affiliates from the region had the opportunity to discuss the profile of precarious workers in Asia, as well as barriers and strategies for organising, at a regional workshop on women and atypical work in 2007. The workshop resulted in a list of recommendations that were subsequently submitted for consideration by the IMF Central Committee. Prior to the Central Committee itself, a women's caucus was held to enable the particular impacts of precarious work on women to be fully discussed and to ensure that this focus would be continued at the Central Committee. This meeting also produced a set of recommendations which were subsequently adopted by the Central Committee and now ensure that IMF's work in this area maintains an emphasis on women workers. Regional meetings on women and precarious work have also been held in Africa and the CIS region.

Women's representation

Additional activities have focussed on better equipping IMF affiliates to organise women workers, by reforming their structures and cultures to allow women a more prominent role. A good example of a union that has been able to do this is FSPMI Indonesia.

In 2003, the IMF started working with FSPMI to improve women's representation in the leadership and as members. The ultimate aim was to develop a union structure capable of fighting for and defending the rights of women workers and thereby improve its capacity to organise women electronics workers. Eighty-three per cent of the union's female membership works in electronics (compared with 35% of male members).

FSPMI has made considerable progress: where once there was no form of women's organisation and women had no access to training, now there is a fully functioning Women's Directorate operating at all levels of the union, able to plan, conduct and evaluate its own activities. At its most recent Congress in December 2006, FSPMI elected women to its Central Board for the first time. Members also voted to change the union's rules to guarantee 30% representation of women at all levels.

These changes have reaped benefits: in the period 2003–2006, the union's largest membership growth was in electronics. Overall, women's membership of FSPMI has increased by 42%.

In Africa, the IMF Africa Region Gender Strategy Workshop held in June 2007 identified a need to address a huge gap in the development of trade unions with respect to women and gender. The metal sector in Africa is predominantly male and this creates much resistance to addressing women and gender issues in the workplace. Indeed, gender issues are seen as being separate and are not integrated into the overall development of the union. This means that women and gender issues are generally not included in the strategic planning of unions, resulting in a loss of potential members. Women are the dominant workers in precarious work environments, and therefore the problems of gender and women are ever-present and need urgent attention.

With this in mind, a best practice approach has been adopted, where gender and women's issues within the union is a core concern, pairing up strong and weaker countries in order to learn from each other and develop beneficial strategies for all the countries concerned. At the women's meeting it was decided that the affiliates in two key countries (Kenya and Mozambique) would be the main base countries from which the others would learn and develop, because both countries have the capacity to grow and develop women's membership and leadership and to carry out women's programmes. Meetings were held in both countries in 2008 to finalise an action plan for the following years.

Progress has also been made within the IMF itself. The IMF Women's Conference has now become established as an integral part of each IMF Congress. Childcare facilities are also routinely offered to affiliates. Women's representation at the Executive Committee of the IMF is now assured, thanks to the rule change agreed at the 2005 Congress. However, there is still work to be done to improve women's representation at other levels of the organisation. A particular problem remains IMF industrial meetings, where representation of women remains at 11%. More efforts need to be made to integrate improved consideration of women's rights across the entire organisation.

The right to safe working conditions

Globalisation poses a constant threat to workers' wellbeing. Health and safety is being undermined by precarious work, outsourcing, and the use of agency workers. Lives are at stake. If information on safety doesn't reach the workers conducting the work, then all our efforts over recent years will have been in vain and workers will face great difficulties.

All this is the result of a chase for ever higher profit for the companies; companies which, in some cases, are so powerful that they are able to influence governments'

politics. The effect is deregulation of responsibilities, from the company to the individual worker. This results in a dangerous combination – of trade unions lacking the ability to reach out to workers affected, and workers lacking vital information on health and safety.

In addition, there are new technologies being introduced without sufficient research done, such as nanotechnology. We need to raise awareness of this potentially dangerous technology. Yet, at the same time we are still struggling with well-known industrial killers, such as asbestos.

In 2003, the IMF started a project targeting the shipbreaking workers situation in India. This project is planned to finish in 2010. Many workers do not have even the most basic protection, such as gloves or shoes. The shipbreaking industry is largely unregulated, leaving workers vulnerable to employers who repeatedly put profits before workers' health and dignity. The workers and their families live under very poor and socially unacceptable conditions. The IMF, in cooperation with other organisations, has been carrying out organising activities attempting to organise metalworkers in the shipbreaking industry.

In 2008, the IMF in cooperation with EMF managed to get a global agreement on health and safety with Arcelor Mittal, a company in the steel sector. This agreement, the first of its kind in the steel industry, recognises the vital role played by trade unions in improving health and safety. It sets out minimum standards in every site the company operates, in order to achieve world class performance. These standards include the commitment to form joint management/union health and safety committees, as well as training and education programmes in order to make a meaningful impact on overall health and safety across the company. Also included in the agreement is the creation of a joint management/union global health and safety committee that will target plants in the group, to help them to further improve their health and safety performance. The first meetings have now been held.

Asbestos

The IMF has written letters to governments of the countries still importing this dangerous mineral, asking them to join us in the struggle for a world-wide ban. On the international Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers (28 April 2008), the IMF sent a letter and a copy of a report called *Killing the future* to the countries in Asia still importing asbestos. The report paints a dark picture of the situation in those countries, where workers are among the most exposed in the world, building up a gigantic debt in human lives to the future.

During the Congress period, the IMF has been working with other Global Union Federations (GUFs) in drafting a resolution calling for a global ban on asbestos and we have repeatedly raised the issue at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conference in Geneva. The resolution was adopted at the ILO Conference in Geneva on 14 June 2006.

While the resolution does not bind ILO Member States to stop production of asbestos, it does carry moral weight. The resolution is now part of formal ILO policy encouraging Member States to develop national policy and internal programmes to ban the use of asbestos in their countries.

Cancer

The IMF has played an instrumental role in developing the global union campaign to prevent occupational cancer – the most common work-related cause of death. The ILO estimates the human toll at over 600,000 deaths a year – one death every 52 seconds.

The Zero Cancer campaign was supported by the ITUC and all the other GUFs. A central element in the campaign was the production of *Occupational Cancer/Zero Cancer: A Union Guide to Prevention*, which has been widely distributed to trade unions all over the world, and is available on the IMF website.

International solidarity

During the Congress period, the IMF spoke out on the abuse of trade union and workers' rights at Toyota Philippines and in Mexico, on the appalling conditions in the shipbreaking industry, particularly in India and Turkey, and on numerous other abuses around the world, as reported below.

In each instance, particular actions and media opportunities were developed and implemented, including global days of action. For example, in the case of shipbreaking, the IMF produced and distributed a video news release to coincide with a meeting of the International Maritime Organisation. The use of this video news release and the presence of Indian shipbreaking workers at press events in London in October 2007 greatly enhanced the media coverage gained on this issue.

Another example is the considerable effort the IMF has invested in support of the Mexican miners' union, SNTMMSRM, in their fight against Grupo México and the Mexican government. Actions (described in full below) include the release of an independent audit exonerating the union's leadership of all allegations of theft, the creation of a documentary film (on DVD), and the drafting of a white paper providing an inside look at the struggle, as well as affiliate outreach and mobilisation to influence key policy makers in countries that are trading partners with Mexico.

Mexico - miners' struggle

The largest mining company in Mexico, Grupo México, and the Mexican government have systematically and repeatedly violated Mexican law and international standards to crush the National Miners' and Metalworkers' Union of Mexico (SNTMMSRM).

In February 2006, the government illegally removed the union's General Secretary, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, and replaced him with a government appointee, Elías Morales Hernández. Next, the government perverted the Mexican legal system and levelled charges of corruption and embezzlement against Gómez. An independent audit of the union's accounts, commissioned by the IMF, proved that all funds were accounted for and exonerated Gómez of any wrong doing, yet the government still refuses to rescind the charges.

When a number of enquiries into these actions revealed that the government had used falsified documents, concealed evidence, and coerced officials to issue baseless arrest warrants against the union leader, Grupo México and the government moved

to divide the union, granting overnight recognition to a pro-company union and holding 'elections' in which workers were forced and coerced to join its ranks.

Meanwhile, Grupo México used its relationship with the Mexican government to call in the national army and federal police to break strikes, kill workers and arrest union leaders who were fighting for safer working conditions in Grupo México-owned mines.

Gómez was officially reinstated as General Secretary on 11 April 2007, after a federal court ruled that the Labour Secretariat had overstepped its authority and failed to comply with established procedures. In 2008, the government reversed the court's decision, claiming that Gómez could not hold office as General Secretary despite a unanimous vote in his favour at the union's 35th Ordinary General Assembly in 2008. The IMF lodged a complaint against Mexico with the International Labour Organisation in March 2006, citing government interference in union affairs as a breach of Convention 87, to which Mexico is a signatory. The case is still pending with the ILO.

Gómez continues to lead the miners' union, although he does so from outside Mexico, where he remains in exile due to unfounded pending charges and intense safety and security threats against him and his family.

In January 2009, a delegation of international labour leaders, led by the IMF, urged the Organisation of American States (OAS) Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to act immediately on labour and human rights abuses, urging the Commission to take immediate measures regarding the Mexican government's actions against Gómez and SNTMMSRM.

When the situation is finally remedied, this will be an important victory for the entire trade union movement and the IMF would like to express its gratitude to the many IMF affiliates that have shown their solidarity with the miners in Mexico through political action, mass mobilisation efforts, financial assistance, information exchange, legal aid and moral support.

Meanwhile, significant improvements are needed in workers' organising in Mexico. This requires a strong and democratic trade union movement to encourage workers to get organised and mobilise for their rights.

An important campaign in this direction has been launched by the IMF, with support from other GUFs and the ITUC. The campaign aims to eliminate the 'contratos de protección', which dramatically undermine the right of Mexican workers to freely join the union of their choice. The IMF participated, along with then-ORIT (Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores), FSI (International Solidarity Fund), FES (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung) and some Mexican labour federations, in launching a campaign to abolish *contratos de protección* in March 2007 in Mexico City. In addition, the IMF and the Mexican affiliates organised a National Workshop on the Abolition of Collective *Contratos de Protección* at the Enterprise Level (CCPE) in Mexico City in July 2007. On February 5, 2009, the IMF lodged a complaint with the ILO, calling for an end to protection contracts in Mexico as it violates Freedom of Association and Convention 87.

The aims of the workshop were to: identify those enterprises that have management-imposed trade unions and *contratos de protección*; define existing *contratos de*

protección in Mexico; set up norms or agreements that trade unions should abide by in dealing with supply chains; identify unionised supply chains, and those under CCPE; set up a CCPE follow-up union team to turn those management-imposed unions and *contratos de protección* into real unions and genuine collective bargaining agreements; and conduct a poll.

For the past two years, the IMF has hosted a Night of Labour Film Shorts to promote trade union and worker stories to a broader audience in Geneva. All the GUFs, in addition to the ITUC, fully support the event and actively participate. In 2008, the IMF film on Mexico was shown, along with a selection of other labour films. This event attracted interest and resulted in the films being picked up for other film festivals around the world.

Korea - irregular workers complaint to ILO and subsequent arrests of trade union leaders

In August 2006, the Korean Metal Workers' Federation, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and the IMF jointly lodged a complaint with the ILO against the Korean government for failing to protect workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, in breach of Conventions 87 and 98.

The complaint documents certain rights violations at Hyundai Motors plants, as well as at Hynix Magnachip and Kiryung Electronics. In particular, precarious workers in disguised employment relationships who try to form and join a union were being dismissed.

In conjunction with lodging this complaint, the IMF participated in an international trade union fact-finding mission in South Korea with the ICFTU, TUAC, Public Services International and the Building Workers' International. The mission examined what progress had been made in bringing Korean legislation in line with ILO standards. The mission reported on its deep concern over the worsening labour situation in Korea.

On 15 November 2006 – as part of the KCTU's International Day of Action – thousands of workers in Korea participated in a four-hour warning strike. Solidarity actions also took place in over 30 countries to highlight deterioration of workers' rights in South Korea.

Despite the increased trade union repression, enterprise-based metalworker unions affiliated to the Korean Metal Workers' Federation (KMWF) voted to increase their leverage in negotiations with government and management by forming a national industrial union.

In a simultaneous ballot, 13 out of 20 enterprise-level unions voted to dissolve the existing enterprise-level union and join the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU).

In July 2008 the ILO published its findings on the IMF/KMWU/KCTU complaint against the Korean government, calling on the Korean government to investigate and remedy alleged anti-union acts against falsely subcontracted workers at Hyundai Motors, Hynix/Magnachip, Kiryung Electronics and KM&I, and to take all necessary measures to promote collective bargaining for subcontracted workers.

Significantly, the ILO requested that the Korean government ‘take all necessary measures without delay’ to bring ‘obstruction of business’ laws into line with freedom of association principles. The IMF took the opportunity of this announcement to call on the Korean government to restore the rights of the Kiryung women workers who were over 20 days into a collective hunger strike in protest of their unfair dismissal.

These and other recommendations to the Korean government are included in an interim report issued by the Committee on Freedom of Association in June 2008.

However, the situation in Korea worsened towards the end of 2008. Following a wave of strikes, the South Korean government unleashed a massive attack against the KMWU, targeting more than 75 of the union’s key leaders for arrest or investigation.

At the time of writing, KMWU President Gab-deuk Jung is facing criminal charges of ‘obstruction of business’, a widely used abusive provision in Korea’s criminal code that allows employers to seek the incarceration of union leaders and bankrupt unions through lawsuits. In addition to President Jung, Hyundai Motor Branch First Vice-President Kim Tae-gon and KCTU leadership have also been arrested. Police forces have surrounded the building that houses the KMWU and KCTU headquarters and the government has launched audits of the two legal centres used by the union federations.

The IMF sent a representative to monitor the trial of President Jung and to meet with union leaders arrested and in hiding. The IMF is working closely with the KMWU to push their case with the ILO forward and to mobilise IMF affiliates in support of our Korean brothers and sisters.

Colombia

The IMF participated in an ILO high-level tripartite mission to Colombia in 2005.

Reports from the Colombian National Centers had said that there was no consultation with unions about the programme and that the mission was essentially concentrated on government agencies and employers. However, last minute changes were made to the agenda and IMF later received a report from CUT Colombia mentioning that they met with the high-level ILO mission for six hours to denounce violations to Conventions 87 and 98. Over 25 national unions reported on the situation of their members, ORIT/ICFTU and several Global Union Federation representatives took part in the process (PSI, ITF, IUF).

Belarus - GSP trade rules in Europe and ongoing problems

In February 2004, the IMF affiliate Radio and Electronics Industry Workers’ Union (REI) held its Congress and formed REPAM – the Trade Union of Workers of Radio & Electronics Industry, Automobile Machinery, Metalworking Industry and Other Branches of the National Economy – in order to let the workers from different industry sectors join the union.

Having registered the new union in April 2004, just three months later in July 2004 the Ministry of Justice came to an unprecedented decision: it revoked the registration. The officer of the Ministry of Justice who had issued the registration of REPAM was dismissed. Thus, in order to safeguard its legal existence, the union had to go back to

the previous name, which it has kept so far. However, this does not prevent the international trade union movement from keeping records of the organisation as REPAM.

Since the last IMF World Congress in Vienna in 2005, where one of the two IMF affiliated organisations in Belarus (Automobile and Agricultural Machinery Workers' Union) was expelled, following its violation of IMF principles on democracy, autonomy and independence of trade unions there have not been any significant improvements in Belarus.

The only remaining IMF affiliate, REPAM, disagreed with the official politics of Lukashenko's dictatorship. The union's complaint with the ILO (submitted in 2000) about violation of freedom of association finally brought concrete consequences for Lukashenko's regime in December 2006, when the European Commission took the decision to withdraw trade preferences from Belarus within the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) because of continuous violations of trade union rights by the Belarusian government.

In the history of the European Union, this is the first time the EU Commission has cut trade preferences based on violations of labour rights.

Unfortunately, this decision did not bring immediate relief to the independent trade union movement in Belarus, and the unions still have their rights infringed by the regime, through bureaucratic restrictions and limits, including denial of recognition of union primary level organisations, and the intimidation and dismissal of trade union activists.

In 2006, a report received from the IMF Project Office in Moscow indicated that the regime was trying to make all new and free trade unions illegal before the end of the year, through adoption of a new repressive bill.

This was thought to be a response to a visit (in January 2006) of a special ILO delegation for monitoring the implementation of the Recommendations of the ILO Governing Body. The IMF, together with the ITUC, protested against the repressive bill on trade unions. Following the ILO visit, the government decided not to consider adoption of the new bill.

In 2007, another Belarusian independent trade union applied for affiliation – SPM, Free Trade Union of Metalworkers of Belarus. Due to the complicated situation, it was decided to send a fact-finding mission to Belarus. This mission took place in September 2008 and reported that closer cooperation with SPM should continue, with the goal of affiliating SPM to IMF in due course. The IMF has therefore planned a number of seminars in 2009 aimed at increasing cooperation between two organisations. The mission also recommended that the IMF should continue its support to REPAM, which remains very active.

In 2008, the ILO planned two tripartite seminars with participation of independent trade unions (including REPAM) in June 2008 and in January 2009. The seminars aim to move out of the deadlocked situation, with fulfilment of the ILO's recommendations on freedom of association which have, so far, been ignored by the government of Belarus. The situation, however, remains very grave and as long as Lukashenko remains in power the people of Belarus are being denied democracy and freedom.

Australia - anti-union laws

During the Congress period, there have been on-going problems caused by the conservative Howard Government, whose changes to labour laws (which came into effect on 27 March 2000) resulted in a radical reduction of workers' rights, wages and conditions.

Results were quickly seen, with a number of people being fired from small businesses, who previously would have been protected by unfair dismissal laws. There were also been a couple of high-profile cases where companies attempted to use the laws to reduce workers' rights. Further restrictions were introduced during 2005–06; this time giving employers more control of occupational health and safety in workplaces covered by federal laws.

The anti-union laws in Australia have been used by some employers against working people, most notably in the manufacturing sector by Cochlear, a company that produces hearing-aid implants.

Workers at a Cochlear plant in Sydney campaigned for the right to have their pay and conditions protected by a collective union agreement, but the company refused to recognise the results of democratic votes in favour of a union agreement and instead relied on the anti-union laws to force individual contracts onto the workforce. The IMF and Public Services International (PSI) asked affiliates around the world to make contact with clinics in their countries where Cochlear products are distributed and express their concern about the situation in Australia.

Philippines - Toyota

The Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation Workers' Association (TMPCWA) first sought certification as the bargaining agent at a Toyota plant in the Philippines in February 1999.

Since then the union has been in a constant struggle to be recognised by the company, despite both the Philippines Supreme Court and ILO rulings in its favour.

In an effort to try to resolve this matter, the IMF held a meeting with the TMPCWA, the IMF-JC and the Japanese Auto Workers union (JAW) in August 2005. The IMF also met with the President of the Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation, urging him to recognise the union and reinstate 233 fired workers.

The TMPCWA and the Toyota Philippines management held talks for the first time on 12 October 2005, which were observed by the IMF and IMF-JC and JAW.

The TMPCWA and IMF demanded that the Philippines Labour Department suspend certification elections demanded by the rival union with the support of the company, pending the outcome of discussions to resolve the dispute.

Despite all efforts, management vehemently opposed the right of the TMPCWA as the sole representative of the workers. The company also refused to reinstate the 233 dismissed workers.

The IMF global campaign highlighted the plight of the dismissed workers and the TMPCWA, and the anti-union practices of the company. Toyota, being a leading auto manufacturer, should respect workers' and trade union rights irrespective of

which country it is operating in and should not hide behind obsolete local labour laws and corrupt administrations. The company quickly recognised a rival union which, without doubt, is under their control. Toyota Philippines does not have any respect for the ILO decisions on this dispute and neither does it respect decisions of the country's highest courts.

Turkey

In Turkey, members of Birlesik Metal-IS went on strike at an air filter supplier company in March 2006. The strike was in response to the management's failure to negotiate in good faith at its operations in Mersin, Turkey. In turn management locked the workers out.

The IMF worked with a range of affiliates in solidarity with the locked-out Turkish workers to resolve the situation.

Another important solidarity campaign, conducted in coordination with the EMF, was in support of Turkish metalworkers who were fighting under the leadership of our affiliate Birlesik Metal-IS against undemocratic laws, which severely limit the workers' organising and collective bargaining rights while granting a quasi-monopoly condition to undemocratic trade unions.

The IMF, together with the EMF and IG Metall, joined leaders of Birlesik Metal-IS and of Disk in Ankara in 2007, to lobby the Turkish Minister of Labour, Vice Prime Minister and opposition leaders.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the political situation is not improving and the international community is not doing enough to force an end to Mugabe's dictatorship or to bring the country back to what it was before: a prosperous and wealthy country on its way to improving the living conditions of its population.

The trade unions in Zimbabwe need our support to face the situation and challenge the repressive and undemocratic regime. The IMF is closely following the situation and working to support our affiliate in Zimbabwe, including its leaders, who have been the subject of brutal attacks and imprisonment.

Paraguay

After the resolution on Paraguay at Congress in 2005, the IMF sent a circular letter to affiliates seeking letters of solidarity in support of the union. We had an excellent response to this circular, with many affiliates offering their support.

The union has been fighting for the reinstatement of 35 members who were fired because of their trade union activities at the largest steel mill in Paraguay – SITRAC. After the IMF campaign, which started immediately after Congress, 13 workers were reinstated.

Uruguay

The IMF extended solidarity support to the Uruguayan Metalworkers' Union (UNTMRA) after receiving reports of an attack on the union's office.

Reactionaries attacked and set fire to the union office early one morning, after the union had organised a massive national demonstration to protest recent actions taken by right-wing political forces in Uruguay.

Since March 2005, Uruguay has seen steady democratic development. In October 2005, after six months of negotiations, unions reached agreement on national collective agreements in all sectors of the economy. Unions did not achieve all their goals, but the negotiations created a framework for continuing to deal with outstanding issues.

In addition, the government has put on trial some of those responsible for human rights violations during the dictatorship. Some of the bodies of fellow workers who disappeared were recovered. The first was a former member of the UNTMRA National Executive Council, who had been tortured to death.

Burma (Myanmar)

Events in Burma occupied the headlines in 2007. The mobilisation of the Buddhist monks that involved a large part of the population in the country was destroyed by the military regime, with violence. This is particularly tragic because Burma was the country that gave the UN its first Asian Secretary-General, more than 40 years ago, U Thant. At that time Burma was a country in transition after the colonial time when it was occupied by the British. Although very poor, it was enjoying some degree of democracy and freedom.

Today, Burma is a country with one of the worst records of violations of human rights. International trade unions under the leadership of the ITUC have been targeting TNCs operating in Burma asking them to stop investing there, according to the sanctions voted by the UN. The IMF has contributed to this campaign on a small scale due to the fact that very few TNCs in our sectors are operating in Burma.

Trade unions in Burma are, of course, very weak after decades of terrible repression and need to be rebuilt and supported by the international community. The IMF will continue to monitor the situation in Burma through the ITUC and its regional organisation.

Indonesia

In June 2007, the IMF wrote to the Indonesian and Malaysian governments, urging them to intervene on behalf of 1,300 workers in their fight for payment of four months' outstanding wages and bonuses at an electronics plant in an EPZ in Batam. The workers – members of the IMF affiliate Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (FSPMI) – were fighting the owner of PT Livatech, Mr Goh Sing Hing, who closed the factory located in Batam and fled to Malaysia. He refused to settle any outstanding balances with the workers.

PT Livatech has used police and military forces to attack and intimidate workers rather than settle their debts. This is in direct conflict to a decision handed down by the Indonesian labour court ruling that the workers should receive the four months' salary and bonuses.

In July 2007, IMF affiliates attending the IMF South East Asia and Pacific regional meeting passed a resolution in support of these workers and their struggle for lost

wages. Affiliates also condemned the Indonesian government and military for supporting the employer of CHC in its anti-union decision to sack 480 Lomenik members, replacing them with precariously employed workers from a military outsourcing company.

Russia

In November 2007, workers at the Ford Motor Company in Vsevolozhsk went on strike demanding to start collective bargaining for higher wages and better conditions. Trade unionists were fighting for their rights for more than three weeks until the Ford management agreed to sign a schedule for meetings to bargain the collective agreement. It was finally signed in February 2008, making this the longest strike in modern Russia history. Workers faced attacks by local authorities, who had sent special police forces not only around the enterprise but within it. The international solidarity campaign in support of the unions exemplified how the IMF, affiliates and NGOs could extend many forms of support.

In 2008, trade union leaders and members from IMF affiliates involved in organising workers in the auto industry confronted violent attacks and threats by assailants. The IMF sent protest letters to the government demanding prompt, thorough and transparent investigations to bring the perpetrators to justice and to uphold workers' rights. Thus far the government has not commenced proper investigations and the threats and attacks have continued. The IMF has an ongoing campaign to defend unionists' safety and rights to form and join unions freely.

Organising the unorganised

It is estimated that there are around 70 million metalworkers around the world, but less than a third of these workers are members of affiliated unions. No matter how small the company or whether manufacturing steel or computer chips, the IMF believes that all workers should enjoy the rights and benefits of trade union membership. Therefore IMF continues to support its affiliates in the task of organising, by both coordinated the organising activities of affiliates, and providing a forum for exchange of information and experience.

This work has continued during the 2005–2009 Congress period, with activities reported in detail in the companion document *Reports of the Affiliates 2005–2009*, and in the examples below.

A fully fledged organising project in selected regions and Maquiladoras areas in **Mexico** began in 2005. The project is supported by the Finnish Metalworkers, TU, SASK, and the Mexican Miners' union. The main objective of this project is to create real unions in targeted metal industries and TNCs in the maquiladora border regions. Experience shows that the system of protection contracts in place in Mexico (Contratos de protección) powerfully protects employers against any union organising, especially in the major TNCs in the maquiladora areas. This means that, in many cases, it is extremely difficult or impossible to organise and to legally register an independent and democratic union. Nevertheless, the project has gone forward in the three selected regions, creating awareness among maquiladora workers of their rights to organise, denouncing abuses and building workers' capacity to defend their rights. In Mexico, the project continues with logistical, financial and structural

support from the Mexican miners' union (SNTMMSRM) and is ongoing until December 2009.

Since 2006, the IMF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has been gathering information and meeting with affiliates in order to start an organising drive in export processing zones (EPZs) in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Planning workshops took place in November 2008 to develop a plan of action for the following years.

In the Philippines, the 2005 IMF–SASK–FinnishMetall–PMA Pilot Project began after conducting two needs-analysis workshops, which had identified the need for PMA (which mainly comprises independent and plant-level metal unions) to organise and consolidate at national level. At the inception of PMA its membership was about 11,000 members. However, due to plant closures and down-sizing of manufacturing, the membership declined to about 6,000 in 2005. An IMF pilot programme was carried out in 2005, but had to be suspended because of serious internal divisions in PMA regarding, in particular, the Toyota dispute in Manila. From 2006 onwards, IMF Regional Office has been involved in working with a new Metal Alliance in the Philippines.

Since 2007, with support from our Swedish affiliates, IMF has been working in Indonesia with both our affiliates Lomenik and SPMI to organise workers in EPZs, particularly women workers who are in the majority at these plants. Membership of both affiliates has increased substantially and IMF has requested an extension of the project for 2009–2010.

The India Organising Project received support from our Danish affiliates until 2005, and was completed (with support from our Swedish and Finnish affiliates) in June 2007. The main project objectives – to expand the membership base; to build the capacity and financial sustainability of the participating organisations and in turn strengthen the IMF–India Committee; to educate and train leadership and members in five states – were achieved. When the pilot project started in 2000, the participating IMF affiliates reported a total of 75,320 members, whereas when the project ended in June 2007, the total membership of the same participating unions was reported to be 167,788 members. The project has achieved significant improvements in working conditions through improved collective bargaining agreements, training of the leadership, and increased involvement and political and social activism of the IMF affiliates. The membership base has broadly increased, creating more awareness about IMF policies and the international trade union movement among our affiliates. The IMF Regional Office has gained valuable experience in developing organising and education materials, carrying out organising rallies and in general creating a new culture of organising among our Indian affiliates, including migrant and subcontracted workers. This experience is guiding us and the India Committee to develop more sectoral-focussed projects in India in future (in the steel sector, for example) and to openly discuss questions of financial sustainability and strengthening of national structures.

Since 2005, the IMF Regional Office has been working at the enterprise level with individual trade unions in the automotive industry of Russia. In particular, the Regional Office helped them to organise a meeting to develop further strategy that had been implemented through establishing the Inter-regional Trade Union of Autoworkers of Russia (ITUA), which became an IMF affiliate in November 2007.

A social dimension to economic globalisation

In order to win the struggle for a better and more equitable society, the IMF continues to draw on support and work with other organisations that share its goals and ideals.

Much of IMF's work on globalisation issues has involved working closely with other Global Union Federations (GUFs), the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The IMF has also participated in the World Social Forum, and developed a research project on the impacts that trade liberalisation may have on jobs in the manufacturing (and metals) sectors.

Fundamental labour rights

The situation in the countries that make up the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is getting worse. Legislation in some countries is undermining the workers' right to strike by imposing an over-long and complex procedure for collective labour conflict. As a result, in the whole of Russia there were only two legal strikes in 2007, although there were thousands of spontaneous stoppages and wild-cat strikes, which were not even registered by statistic bodies because they did not correspond to the criteria of a 'strike'. The right to have a solidarity strike or a national strike is also violated in CIS, because such strikes are prohibited by national legislation. During the Congress period, legal pressure on trade union activists began to transform into physical attacks against union activists: in Russia there were five attacks against the ITUA activists at TagAZ (Hyundai) and Ford Vsevolozhsk in 2008. In some cases the police refused to investigate cases reported by the activists who had been beaten; criminal cases were not started and nobody has been punished.

A new international architecture

Unification of the trade union movement has come at a time when, more than ever, workers need to fight together across borders and enterprises to ensure living wages, internationally recognised labour rights and basic worker protections. Following the founding of the new unified international confederation, ITUC, the IMF affiliates have been engaged in an important debate on the objectives and priorities of collaboration with sister international trade union organisations. This has resulted in the adoption of a memorandum through which the IMF has defined the basis for a more concrete and effective collaboration with the global unions.

One theme on which collaboration with other GUFs and TUAC has been crucial in recent years (and continues developing fruitfully) is that of financial markets – particularly the destructive impact of private equity buyouts. Once largely confined to North America, private-equity-owned firms today also employ millions of workers in Europe. Buyouts based on leveraged debt have been encouraging unnecessary closures, staff reductions and privatising public assets. Trade unions are increasingly confronted with aggressive anti-union behaviour in the service of reducing wages and

benefits. The process is fostering the accumulation of record levels of debt that threatens the already unstable international financial scenario.

Several activities, in cooperation with other international labour organisations, have addressed the issue of private equity capital. For example, a joint GUF conference involving the IMF, IUF and UNI (Nyon, 2007) brought affiliates together to compare information on approaches to collective negotiations and possible areas of cooperation. The IMF presented an analysis of management strategies and restructuring as it relates to leveraged buyouts, and provided background on collective bargaining involving private equity in the metal sector. This was a follow-up to a previous IMF–IUF–UNI joint conference on Private Equity Capital (Nyon 2006), which identified and underscored the need to fight against the impacts on workers caused by ‘financialisation’, and to mobilise for regulatory and collective bargaining protection for workers and the public’s interests.

Very close collaboration between global unions on financial issues has proved increasingly important in recent years. As dramatically shown by the crisis of the international financial system in recent months, the financial markets are insufficiently regulated, and the price of their failure is being paid by society; particularly by working families. It is a structural crisis that is likely to lead to increased unemployment and slower economic growth in the most vulnerable parts of the global economy, with an increase in the use of precarious work and the growth of an irregular labour market – even in countries where workers have traditionally enjoyed high levels of legal protection.

The work carried out by the Washington Office of the global unions has been of crucial importance to make the voice of the workers heard by international financial institutions. The key criticism – raised repeatedly by the international trade union movement – is the lack of any rules to guarantee a minimum level of transparency and accountability. The IMF has supported the work of the global unions’ Washington Office and collaborated closely with it, with the objective of trying to ensure that the workers, particularly metal and other industrial workers, are not the ones who pay the price for this crisis. There has been some success: the World Bank’s IFC has stated that it recognises the need to incorporate the respect of labour standards into its lending criteria. This, however, still has to be translated into visible changes in its behaviour, while the policies of the international financial institutions remain the same.

The IMF together with other GUFs has voiced concern that corporate interests and deeply-rooted anti-union attitudes continue to be the basis of the policies of the Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The IMF has therefore recommended a serious critical review of the effectiveness of the strategy of the global unions to promote fundamental workers’ rights in the multilateral system, if something more than mere statements of good will are to be achieved.

Another important priority area of collaboration during this Congress period, particularly with the TUAC, has been on the global trade and investment policies of the OECD. The IMF has fruitfully interacted with the secretariat of TUAC and supported its work, particularly with regard to multinational companies. The leading role played by the IMF on this has raised the profile of issues that are of particular relevance for metalworkers, with regard to OECD governments – particularly issues of investment policies, of the labour legislation in many countries including the most

highly industrialised, and of the anti-worker behaviour of transnational corporations (TNCs).

The IMF has also contributed to TUAC's efforts to promote close and concrete cooperation between the OECD and the ILO. This process culminated, in June 2008, in the 'High-Level Roundtable on Employment and Industrial Relations' – the first ever joint initiative of the two institutions to promote responsible business conduct in the globalising economy. The meeting delivered an important message to OECD governments: urging their businesses to observe recognised principles and standards wherever they operate, and to encourage their local managers and business partners to do the same. It was also the opportunity for the representatives of developing countries to voice their request that the presence of large firms from OECD countries should have a positive influence on the entire value chain in local economies, instead of bringing evasion of minimum standards, cost-cutting in the worst way and increased insecurity, as is often the case.

Closer collaboration between the OECD and the ILO is just one example of what should be an increased role of the ILO in the multilateral system. Over the past congress period the IMF has actively supported the Workers' Group at the ILO and its efforts to promote the Decent Work agenda in all instances.

The IMF has interacted more systematically with the ILO in many ways. For instance, on the issue of respecting of ILO standards, numerous campaigns have been promoted that are of particular relevance (such as the campaigns in Mexico and on freedom of association in Korea, which are described earlier in this Report).

Another important trade union achievement to which the IMF made a critical contribution at the ILO was the resolution that promotes the elimination of future use of all forms of asbestos adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2006. This was an important step in winning the fight to ban one of the world's leading occupational health killers – responsible for 100,000 deaths each year. While the resolution does not bind ILO Member States to stop production of asbestos, it does carry moral weight. The resolution is now part of formal ILO policy, encouraging Member States to develop national policy and internal programmes to ban the use of asbestos in their countries.

The IMF has also contributed, together with the other GUFs, to the re-definition by the ILO of its sectoral activities. Emphasis should now be shifted much more towards the implementation of the outcomes of tripartite meetings. The new pattern should hopefully bring about a more effective allocation of resources and meaningful follow-up initiatives. This, however, is something that will take time to bear fruit, and will need to be kept under scrutiny.

Economic, financial and trade policies to benefit the world's people

Trade, employment and development

More and more people, especially the young, are subjected to poor working conditions. Even if there has been growth and increased income for some in recent years, poverty and a declining standard of living are visible everywhere in the world;

the gap between the haves and the have-nots has dramatically deepened in developing as well as industrialised countries over the Congress period.

The negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the Doha Development Agenda have failed to address the fundamental question of social repercussions of trade liberalisation. The trade unions' goal to establish rules that are democratically agreed by all countries – on making free trade work for the benefit of working families everywhere in the world, on reducing poverty and inequalities, and on promoting the respect of fundamental workers' rights – is far from being achieved.

Together with the international trade union movement, and in collaboration with other social movements, the IMF has continued to deliver the message to trade negotiators of the negative repercussions that the proposed WTO agreement may have on jobs, on development prospects and on workers' rights, unless WTO member countries and the organisation itself take the responsibility of an assessment of the social impact of trade liberalisation agreements.

The congress period has seen a multiplication of initiatives organised by the IMF, together with its affiliates to raise awareness and promote dialogue among metalworkers about the impact of globalisation.

At the international level, the Working Party – which was established in 2004 to assist the Secretariat and develop dialogue and coordinate action among the affiliates on trade related issues – has met on a regular basis. The focus of its work has been increasingly on the employment and development implications of trade liberalisation. With a composition that reflects the diverse socio-economic reality of the IMF membership in all regions, the Working Party has developed a constructive debate even on complex and potentially controversial issues.

Working Party members have systematically produced analysis and information on the trade unions' views on ongoing negotiations, particularly on aspects of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) of particular relevance to metalworkers. They have assisted the Secretariat in activities at regional level, with research work and through the exchange of information and of trade union experiences from different contexts. The Working Party has paid particular attention to dialogue with government and employer representatives in developing and emerging countries. Dialogue and the exchange of experiences have also taken place between the Working Party and colleagues from other GUFs. The Working Party met in Geneva in 2005, in Canada in 2006, and in Brazil in 2007; while the meeting due to take place in India in 2008 had to be re-scheduled.

At regional level, several seminars have taken place, bringing together the leadership of metalworkers unions from neighbouring countries to develop collaboration and coordinate strategies.

In Canada, in October 2006, IMF affiliates from South and North America, together with colleagues from Africa, Europe and Asia, examined the situation of bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade negotiations, and expressed concern about new trade liberalisation which, if implemented in an inflexible and generalised way, could seriously damage less developed countries and undermine their ability to build their own industrial policy. Participants reiterated the importance of incorporating

mechanisms for labour protection in trade agreements and the need for metalworkers to promote the IMF Strategies for an Alternative Globalisation

In South Africa, in 2007, the leadership of IMF affiliates in Africa, together with colleagues from Brazil and India, discussed the increasing presence of China in African countries and the impact that its fast-growing trade and investments are having on development and on the lives of workers, particularly in the countries with the most vulnerable socio-economic situation. Trade experts and China specialists helped in analysing the growing role of China in different areas of the world, the presence of Chinese companies in the fourteen countries that make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Chinese loans to African countries. A possible coordinated trade union response was discussed and the need to organise workers at Chinese-owned companies was stressed.

The outcome of the Working Party exchanges, and of the several regional initiatives, has been translated by the Secretariat into the action jointly developed together with the ITUC and other GUFs in the Trade and International Labour Standards (TILS) network. IMF inputs have focussed in particular on the trade–employment linkage, an issue on which IMF affiliates have greatly contributed to the work of the global unions.

On this key issue, the IMF has developed – with the support of the ILO – a research project on methods to assess the potential repercussions that trade liberalisation in industrial goods might have on jobs, especially for metalworkers. A survey was carried out in 2007–08 with the assistance of researchers of Observatorio Social in Brazil and LASOS-Laboratorio Social Sindical in Argentina, with contributions from trade union representatives from the Coordinadora de las Centrales Sindicales del Cono Sur (South Cone TU Coordination Committee) and the metalworkers unions of Força Sindical and CUT in Brazil, and UOM, AOMA, SMATA and ASIMRA in Argentina.

At two meetings, organised in partnership by the promoting organisations, the leadership of the unions involved discussed the implications of the research results for the trade unions' strategy on collective bargaining, industrial policies and productive integration in the region.

The research focussed on the linkage between trade, production and employment levels in Argentina and Brazil in recent years for the steel, automobile and auto parts, electronics and agricultural machinery sectors. The fundamental goal of the project was to start developing a method to understand and assess the repercussions of trade and production flows – particularly with possible tariff cuts on industrial goods – on the objectives of industrial policy of developing countries and, most importantly, on the number and the quality of jobs. All the affiliates involved in the survey felt that trade negotiations can be influenced only by making sure that the generation of good jobs as the critical indicator to assess trade policies is put on the agenda of negotiators. They felt that this is the only strategy against poverty and inequality everywhere; and that it is the only way to avoid the situation where workers of different countries are put against each other and have to compete on jobs that become more precarious every day.

World Social Forum and Regional Social Forums

The IMF attended the World Social Forum (WSF) held in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2007, along with representatives of affiliates from all continents. The IMF's contribution focussed on the idea that women and men in all countries, developing and industrialised alike, have the same right to enjoy fundamental democratic guarantees and protections at work regardless of cultural, economic and social differences, and that quality employment is a fundamental human right and is the only way out of poverty.

Unfortunately, the main activity organised by the IMF at the WSF had to be cancelled due to a double booking of the venue. However, the metalworkers' delegation contributed to several of the activities in the WSF programme and carried the message that the creation and protection of good jobs must be a key priority of national and multilateral policies.

At the regional level, IMF affiliates actively participated in regional Social Forums. The IMF regional offices have organised various initiatives with other global unions, for example with PSI, ITF and BWI at the India Social Forum in New Delhi in November 2006. This included a rally through the forum involving trade unionists and social activists, a stall from which a range of publications were distributed, and a seminar on 'the impact of globalisation and liberalisation on labour'.

ANNEX

Annex

IMF Action Programme 2005-2009 (Part 3)

3.1 Global structures to meet global challenges

The IMF already provides an international platform and co-ordinates global campaigns on behalf of its affiliates. But its structure needs to be improved further in order to meet the challenges facing unions.

It is crucial that the IMF continues to build a global union structure capable of co-ordinating and implementing actions at all levels anywhere in the world, wherever and whenever they are required.

It is imperative that these changes to our structures are carried out as rapidly as possible and involve everyone in the organisation from the presidents of national unions down to the individual members.

Even the day-to-day work of trade unions needs to be globalised so that every action at all stages links the local and international levels. It should be transparent to all in the organisation that every single action can, and does, influence working conditions elsewhere.

To provide the regional and global structures required to challenge the growing power of international capital, it is critical that IMF affiliates are actively involved and committed to achieving this goal.

3.1.1 *International trade union organisations*

The industrial landscape is continuously changing and divisions between historic industry sectors are blurring, particularly with the introduction of new technologies and manufacturing processes.

The IMF will continue to work with other Global Union Federations (GUFs), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) to pursue the interests of its affiliates and to deliver the objectives of its Action Programme.

As industry sectors merge, the trade union movement needs new structures at the international level.

The IMF will actively pursue closer cooperation with other GUFs and we will together develop strategies to build a stronger, more united, responsive and efficient labour organisation at the national and international level that is able to stand up to the global power of transnational corporations.

Areas of cooperation will include:

- information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives;
- TNCs related actions, and reporting on the industrial relations and environmental practices of TNCs;
- core labour standards;
- analysis of trade and investment agreements and government negotiating positions for their impacts on workers;
- joint union-building projects; and
- building up appropriate structures to respond to concrete needs.

3.1.2 *IMF country councils*

In countries where there is more than one IMF affiliate, trade unions should always strive towards unity and the building of one strong, united metalworkers' organisation.

To facilitate this, the IMF encourages its local affiliates to establish country councils to:

- encourage co-operation between the unions;
- mediate disputes and inter-union rivalries;
- build unity between unions in the core areas of collective bargaining, education and organising the unorganised.

Country councils have been set up in a number of countries during the past Congress period and accomplished valuable work. Efforts must be pursued to consolidate this work.

3.1.3 *Information network*

In an increasingly complex and global environment, information plays a vital role in the interplay between employers and trade unions, as well as inside trade unions.

In their day-to-day activities, whether formulating wage demands or drafting social and economic policies, trade unionists require rapid access to up-to-date economic, corporate structure, and industrial relations information.

The IMF will initiate the construction of information networks between affiliates, with special attention to TNC-related structures and regional sector-based conferences.

IMF World Councils and Action Groups, for example, must establish communication channels to enable them to link members in-between meetings, quickly process requests for information and coordinate information coming from the national and regional levels.

3.1.4 The IMF communications system

Effective information systems require a rapid and simple means of communication.

The voice of the IMF and its affiliates needs to be heard – whether lobbying for social and economic reforms or supporting workers whose rights are violated. Rapid exchange of accurate information is a key aspect of international solidarity and successful campaigning. In this regard, the IMF and its affiliates must improve their capacity.

One important aspect of this work is to strengthen the legitimacy of international trade union work amongst rank-and-file members and trade union activists at different levels. Affiliates' communication channels are vital in this regard. Moreover, the IMF will continue to arrange meetings for trade union journalists and communication officers, as a way to strengthen cooperation and exchange information.

The Internet has revolutionised communication and the IMF multilingual website and its e-mail newsletter are its main communication channels. At the same time, it is important that the IMF is not disadvantaging those who do not yet have access to the internet. Therefore, the IMF will continue to make information available via traditional means and advise affiliates that want to set up digital communication channels.

The IMF will continue to produce a quarterly magazine to keep members abreast of developments in the metal industries and provide in-depth analysis of key issues, and to publish occasional research documents and reports to assist members in their day-to-day trade union activities.

To be able to improve its overall communication, the IMF as an organisation must develop a coherent communications policy, laying down responsibilities and guiding principles.

3.2 Strategies to engage transnational corporations

The political reform of the globalization process must include binding regulations for multinational corporations, which must recognize their social, ecological and human rights responsibilities and obligations, and reflect these in their actions. The objective must be the creation of legally binding international regulations with effective enforcement and sanction mechanisms. International framework agreements are important instruments in this direction.

At the same time, IMF actions to engage transnational corporations (TNCs) will continue to focus on building and maintaining solidarity among trade unions and workers across the global production chains of metalworking companies and industries. Such solidarity is fundamental to overcoming the challenges of today's corporate-driven globalization and market competition that pit workers and communities against one another. These forces, if not effectively countered and changed, threaten to undermine the jobs, living standards, working conditions, and social protections of metalworkers and their communities around the world.

3.2.1 *Building and strengthening links across TNC production chains*

The IMF will continue to strengthen links between unions representing workers across TNC production chains through IMF World Company Councils and action groups, with sector-based coordination through activities of the IMF Industrial Departments. As part of this effort, the IMF will work with unions in the home countries of transnational corporations to assist host country unions to obtain information and consultation opportunities similar to those in the home country.

IMF World Councils have played an important role in defending workers' interests across national boundaries. We will carry on efforts to remake IMF World Company Councils into smaller permanent working bodies that are company funded, and so better able to:

- respond to urgent requests for action;
- develop and implement joint strategies;
- co-ordinate actions with regional worker representative bodies (e.g. the European Works Councils).

IMF regional sector-based meetings support the remaking and strengthening of World Company Councils, as well as building industrial union coordination, by effectively combining company and sector-level forums for workers. Where appropriate, company- and sector-based regional networks will be developed in support of strategies to engage TNCs.

Organizing the unorganized across TNC production chains is an important focus of IMF councils, action groups and regional sector-based meetings. Union building opportunities will be identified and activities developed where TNC investments have created newer or growing concentrations of workers (including supplier operations), and where conditions exist to support union building efforts. The active involvement and effective support of IMF affiliates and especially unions in the home country of TNCs are necessary to effectively advance such efforts.

Organizing initiatives must also address the spread of non-union operations in countries that have strong existing unions. Many companies have refused to accept unions at new plants in countries where they have been active for years or in countries that are new to them. Efforts to ensure that these facilities become unionised are critical to maintaining and restoring the strength of IMF affiliates and a critical task for the IMF.

Among the critical challenges that increasingly impact workers across TNC production chains are outsourcing, the spread of precarious work and EPZs. The burden of their impacts often falls most heavily on women metalworkers. The IMF will seek to respond as part of a strategy to engage TNCs by using international framework agreements, ILO conventions, the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, and other means of international solidarity, and by working in alliance with select NGOs that share our aims to protect and promote worker and trade union rights.

However, effective trade union organisation is an essential component. Without effective unions, workers' rights, including those enshrined in core labour standards and international framework agreements, cannot be effectively monitored and implemented.

3.2.2 International Framework Agreements (IFAs)

The IMF and its affiliated unions utilize a range of mechanisms to engage TNCs operating in the metalworking sectors. Among the most important are the negotiation and implementation of international framework agreements.

Every IMF member union undertakes to attempt to conclude international framework agreements with multinational corporations headquartered in their countries.

The IMF, which has adopted a model International Framework Agreement and a policy paper on negotiating and implementing IFAs, has successfully negotiated such agreements with TNCs in several metalworking sectors. The IMF will seek to further this progress through the following actions:

- negotiating additional international framework agreements, drawing on our experience and results thus far and utilizing the IMF model agreement;
- after consultation with unions covered by the agreements, the IMF will identify opportunities to strengthen existing agreements, and what options and means are optimal to pursue possible improvements;
- mechanisms for monitoring and implementation towards compliance will be built and further developed through IMF structures and regional offices, through training and the involvement of affiliates, with the aim of achieving best practices across TNCs that have signed framework agreements;
- the IMF will explore possible strategies designed to encourage resisting TNCs to negotiate and/or implement international framework agreements. Cooperation of affiliates, and particularly those in the home country of a TNC, would be instrumental to such efforts.

3.2.3 Other mechanisms to engage TNCs

Potential leverage to engage TNCs is also available to unions in some countries through workers' capital in the form of pension and retirement funds. IMF affiliates are also involved in efforts to influence corporate governance that vary from one country to another. These tools are most effectively used by unions in the home country of TNCs in order to promote and protect worker and trade union rights across global production chains, to fight corporate corruption, and to push for greater social accountability by corporations. The IMF will continue to work through TUAC and the ICFTU to further strengthen these mechanisms.

Facilitating the exchange and sharing of information on company strategies, union responses and outcomes are necessary and effective means to fully engage TNCs. Through IMF councils, action groups and regional sector-based meetings, we will continue to develop networks for information exchange and action that aim to be

efficient, timely, accurate and accessible. Technical and political support by IMF affiliates is needed to build and strengthen networks and for successful international coordination of information coming from the national and regional levels.

The IMF will continue to gather, analyze and distribute information on the metalworking industries, with particular focus on companies and industrial sectors where workers and members are concentrated. Areas covered include collective bargaining; technological changes; innovations on how production is organized; working time; pay and classification systems; and industrial actions. Whenever possible, these and other joint research activities should be done in cooperation with the EMF and other GUFs, and fully utilize resources of the ILO, UN and other international agencies.

3.3 Solidarity and organising

3.3.1 *Collective bargaining*

Collective bargaining is the core activity of trade unions and remains the best instrument for regulating the relationship between employers and workers and solving problems at the workplace. Its impact in fact goes beyond the workplace and affects the living conditions and the development prospects of communities. Collective bargaining should be increasingly used as a tool for trade unions to engage with communities and promote the broader interests of workers as citizens and consumers.

However, over the past decade the trade union movement has been under attack by employers and their allies who are determined to weaken the effectiveness of collective bargaining and thereby weaken the union movement. In particular, employers are eager to eradicate national, sectoral, and sometimes even enterprise-wide collective bargaining. Using the threat of outsourcing production and services, they are also pushing for more flexibility and concession bargaining. New forms of employment and work practices are being imposed on employees, increasing stress and insecurity. In developing countries, foreign investors are demanding regulatory changes that totally disregard the development dimension of such measures.

The response to these attacks by the IMF and its affiliates must be resolute.

The IMF will work with affiliates to ensure that collective agreements continue to provide a framework to ensure decent wages and working conditions in keeping with existing national practices. Such agreements are the basis for a decent standard of living for the members of IMF affiliates.

Through improved information exchange and international solidarity campaigns, the IMF will increase its efforts to assist its affiliates in bargaining on wages and working conditions, but also on outsourcing, job security, work organisation and the host of other issues associated with corporate restructuring. To this end, the IMF will

- co-operate with the EMF and work towards establishing a global collective bargaining information network, drawing on the experience with the Eucoba's network;

- organise seminars/workshops on specific bargaining issues, such as working time, flexibility, life-long learning, new work contracts, outsourcing, etc.

The IMF is particularly concerned by the effect new technologies are having on the skills required in the metalworking industry. The IMF will coordinate pressure on employers through collective bargaining to ensure that worker skills are upgraded to prevent skill shortages and needless layoffs.

3.3.2 *Union-building and education*

3.3.2.1 *Building strong unions*

Workers can get their voice heard only if they are organised into strong, representative and democratic trade unions. For the IMF the task of promoting organising efforts as well as gathering existing metalworkers' unions under the banner of the IMF is a high priority.

IMF will promote union-building by coordinating and supporting projects and by providing advice to its affiliates on issues such as organising strategies, union structures, equal rights, strategic planning etc. This is especially the task of IMF Regional and Project offices.

3.3.2.2 *Training the members*

The IMF will contribute to union education carried out by its affiliates where the education tackles core union activities such as collective bargaining, organising and defending workers' rights, links local to global issues, and is methodologically sound.

However, worker education needs are best met by the trade unions themselves.

The IMF will work with affiliates to build the skills and resources required to meet their own education needs by providing training and materials for groups of educators selected by the local trade unions.

3.3.2.3 *Unions that can be supported*

The IMF will provide assistance to trade unions that:

- are committed to activities leading to self-reliance;
- have established their own priorities and identified their needs;
- are working in accordance with the IMF union-building policy;
- are building union structures that respond to workers' needs locally and internationally and that include women at all levels;
- are able to organise activities or are prepared to closely co-operate with the appropriate IMF regional office to organise such activities and
- are building union structures that are democratic, not dominated by political parties and are independent of employers;

- are ready to co-operate with other IMF unions at local, national and international level;
- are subject to persecution by repressive governments.

3.3.2.4 *Projects that can be supported*

The IMF will provide resources and financial aid for union building projects that:

- build organisations independent of employer and government control;
- enhance democracy within the organisation and encourage and enable members, particularly youth and women, to take part in the activities of the organisation. Projects should contribute to eliminating political, racial and gender discrimination;
- increase the capacity of the organisation to carry out its own core union activities, i.e. build self-reliance, particularly in the area of education;
- strengthen solidarity inside the organisation, among unions in the country and/or region, and inside the IMF;
- support independent trade unions confronting and fighting repressive governments.

IMF Regional and Project Offices will work with affiliates to identify and assess their organisational needs and assist in the development of projects and activities to meet these. To ensure resources are efficiently deployed, the IMF will seek to co-ordinate activities across member organisations.

To make sure these projects meet their declared goals, regional and head office staff need to have the skills to manage the planning, reporting and review process of these activities.

3.3.2.5 *Changing work*

The organization and techniques of production in the metal industry are undergoing dramatic changes. Technological change is accompanied by changes in work organisation; certain professions are disappearing, and some workers' skills are in danger of becoming obsolete. In addition to emphasising job security, trade unions should ensure access and opportunities through collective bargaining to lifelong learning for their members and other workers instead of narrow skills often limited to one work process, and be involved in working out the appropriate training policy and programmes.

IMF will launch a process for its affiliates to discuss the issue, learn from each other and adopt best practices in order to better safeguard the right of their members to develop and maintain their skills.

3.3.3 *Equal rights*

The IMF believes that all workers should enjoy equal rights irrespective of their sex, age, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion.

The challenge to improve the levels of unionisation of women and young workers in order to protect their rights is one of the greatest we face as a union movement.

Vast numbers of women continue to enter the labour market throughout the world. In developing countries, women are the primary labour force in EPZs, in many of which trade unionism is repressed. The vast majority of women are not organised at all, particularly those working for small and medium-sized companies. The IMF will ensure that women workers are given priority in campaigns to organise the unorganised, with a focus on EPZs and small and medium enterprises.

The rights of women workers continue to be abused. IMF will promote improved legal protection for women workers, including maternity protection and equal pay. It will work with affiliates to ensure that women participate directly in collective bargaining and that bargaining is used as a mechanism to improve women's rights.

Women's representation at all levels of trade union organisation is still too low. Few women hold positions as union officers even where they are a majority of the membership. The IMF has taken steps towards improving the level of participation within the organisation and will continue to redress this imbalance. Goals will be set for women's participation in IMF activities and meetings, which will contribute to the strengthening of IMF structures. IMF will encourage its affiliates to examine union structures and electoral processes to remove barriers to women's representation.

The IMF will also give priority to extending legal protection in all facets of collective bargaining, organising and other issues related to internationally recognised labour standards, to all workers who are subject to any form of discrimination.

3.3.4 *The right to safe working conditions*

Health is a worker's most basic asset. Therefore defending and promoting health and safety at work is a fundamental trade union task that all IMF affiliates should include at the top of their agendas. Although the physical workplace environment has improved considerably during the course of the last decades, too many people still die from injuries and illnesses caused by accidents and exposure to dangerous working conditions.

According to ILO statistics, millions of workers lose their lives every year at work. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. What we can neither see nor account for are the many deaths from disease, such as cancer, resulting from exposure to chemical hazards and substances.

Working hours as well as the pace of work are two important factors that can affect health and safety conditions of workers. Fatal and injurious accidents at the work place as well as psychosomatic diseases are closely connected with long working hours and the high pace manual and non-manual workers are expected to work. This is also directly linked to the way production is organised. Work organisation and health and safety are two issues that IMF will continue to focus on in its activities.

With the introduction of new technology, computers and automation, new hazards are affecting the health and well-being of workers. Stress and poor psychological working conditions are often a serious health hazard, especially in non-manual

occupations. This particular matter has been discussed at various IMF activities and has been a matter for research in an international project.

Prevention is the best way to ensure that workers do not suffer from an unhealthy workplace, so measures to this effect must be our priority. Preventive action must be based on adequate national legislation. ILO conventions and codes of practice must be incorporated into national legislation and collective bargaining agreements. However, the health and safety of workers does not depend exclusively on working conditions. There are other factors such as the environment outside the workplace, which might cause additional problems for workers.

The international trade union movement must work at different levels in order to ensure that existing rules and norms are implemented and respected, such as ILO Convention N°155 on Occupational Health and Safety and the Working Environment and Recommendation N°164 on Occupational Health and Safety, as well as the numerous codes of practice.

The IMF will:

- work together with the ICFTU, TUAC and Global Union Federations to put pressure on the ILO to educate and inform employers, governments and trade unions about existing legislation on health and safety at work;
- start comprehensive training programmes on workplace health and safety for instructors, who will then teach and train stewards at plant level;
- continue working to ensure that health and safety committees at plant level are set up in all workplaces with elected or appointed trade union health and safety representatives;
- address occupational health and safety at meetings of world company councils;
- continue to fight for shorter working time.
- Campaign for a ban internationally on the production, import, export and use of asbestos. Treatment and compensation for workers suffering from asbestos-related diseases should be borne by employers. Pressure should be put on national governments to implement transition programmes for workers displaced by the banning of asbestos.

3.3.5 *International solidarity*

In the age of economic globalisation the mobility of capital and the cutthroat competition for attracting investment are exacerbating tensions between and within countries, and are undermining labour solidarity. Under the threat of outsourcing/offshoring, corporations are seeking to remove or weaken hard won benefits and rights, and pit workers against each other, leading to a race to the bottom with lower security and incomes.

Workers in all countries have the right to economic and social development, which capital flows can help achieve, and they all have a common interest in the upward harmonisation of terms of employment. Trade unions must build better understanding of the forces at play and strong solidarity if we are to counter the

growing competition in the labour market, which is beneficial only to the interests of capital.

The IMF needs to do more to focus on support for national development strategies. That, in turn, means unions in the South must engage with the state, rather than just capital. It also means that the IMF, through its affiliates, must increase pressure on the states of the North to stop countering development efforts in the South, whether directly or through the WTO and the International Financial Institutions.

International solidarity actions in support of social achievements, workers rights, organising and collective bargaining are more important than ever. For these to be effective, unity and solidarity between workers and between unions at national and regional levels are indispensable and, to that end, the IMF and its affiliates should consider various forms of cross-border collective actions.

The IMF must continue to improve its speed and efficiency in responding to calls for solidarity actions - circulating information as quickly as possible to affiliates and requesting their support. IMF support will include assistance in campaigns to counter transnationals' attempts to relocate production without adequate consideration of the impacts on their workforce in all parts of the world.

To enable the IMF to provide timely support, affiliates are therefore expected to furnish comprehensive information on the dispute, outline efforts taken to resolve it nationally, and the support they expect the IMF to deliver.

3.3.6 *Organising the unorganised*

Of the estimated 70 million metalworkers around the world, less than a third are members of affiliated unions.

In the early stages of this new century, the challenge of organising the unorganised is as important a task for the labour movement as it was in the 20th century.

The movement of factories to 'low-cost' areas where union activities are restricted or even suppressed, and the shortcomings in union communications with young people, non-manual employees and women workers, make this challenge all the more pressing. Unions need to seek new ways to reach out to these workers who often know little about unions or do not see their interests represented by unions and so are less motivated to join.

In the past decades, TNC investment has flooded into EPZs in which wages and working conditions are low and workers' rights are routinely violated. Women are often favoured for EPZ employment, where generally it is difficult to organise, and they are forced to accept the lowest wages and conditions. This development not only threatens employment in countries with higher standards, including other developing countries, but also undermines sustainable development by depriving the EPZ workers of an equitable share of the gains.

Furthermore, although the backbone of the trade union movement has traditionally been 'blue collar workers' in large manufacturing plants, the IMF and its affiliates cannot afford to ignore small and medium enterprises or the hi-tech industries, and hi-tech workplaces in traditional industries. Neither can we ignore the changes in the composition of the workforce brought about by the structural and technological

transformation of metal industries, and the fact that non-manual workers represent an increasing share of the labour force.

The “Hi-tech” sector has a number of special characteristics, which demand a strong effort from the IMF. Activities must be expanded and intensified and directed at workers at all levels of the companies concerned. In this context, efficient co-ordination must be ensured between the relevant IMF departments.

No matter how small the company or whether manufacturing steel or computer chips, the IMF believes that all workers should enjoy the rights and benefits brought about through membership in trade unions.

Organising remains a basic task of all IMF affiliates and organising drives can only be carried out by unions themselves. However, the IMF can help support and, when appropriate, coordinate organising activities of its affiliates, and provide a forum for exchanging information and experience.

Organising efforts will focus in particular on:

- EPZs where workers’ rights are regularly trampled and exploitation is a daily reality;
- small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), particularly where part of the production process in an organised workplace has been contracted out;
- hi-tech companies, with special emphasis on companies that provide technological components for products produced by members of IMF-affiliated unions;
- companies’ up- and down-stream in the production process whether dealing with research and development, design, providing parts, raw materials or distribution;
- women, young people and non-manual workers. Concerning this latter group, the IMF and its affiliates will follow up the policy paper adopted by the IMF Executive Committee in May 2004, which set a number of goals and recommendations for future work. Greater emphasis must be placed on making unions useful and responsive to the concerns of these workers who represent an increasing share of the labour force but are weakly organised;
- support to affiliates’ efforts to bring about changes in legislation providing for and protecting the right to organise and collective bargaining.

This work must be coordinated with efforts to unionise workers at TNC-related companies that have IMF structures. Non-union operations of those companies, whether they are new plants or outsourced production from unionised facilities, must be an organizing priority for the IMF.

3.4 A social dimension to economic globalisation

The IMF will continue to mobilise its membership on international, regional and national levels around all issues that affect workers.

While working with its affiliates on workplace issues, the IMF will also continue to pursue economic, social and human rights - issues with broader relevance to the trade union movement.

To win the struggle for a better and more equitable society we will need to draw in support from other organisations sharing similar goals and ideals.

An impressive mobilisation against globalisation that favours only the TNCs has developed since our last Congress, indicating that people around the world are concerned at the impact that globalisation is having on workers, in particular in developing countries. This social movement is increasingly moving its focus from mere protest to the search for alternatives and the definition of strategies.

The global labour movement must be part of that process and make workers' voices heard.

The IMF, together with other trade union organisations, has been interacting with NGOs and social movements. The World Social Forum has provided, during the past Congress period, an important framework for establishing fruitful exchanges and alliances.

In seeking a social dimension to globalisation, the IMF will strive to further promote dialogue and cooperation with other groups that share its aspirations and fundamental values, and take the lead in specific campaigns. Priority areas for such co-operation will be: the promotion of human and trade union rights; the organisation of workers in unprotected and unregulated employment; initiatives to favour environmentally sustainable production; and the democratisation of the institutions of global governance.

3.4.1 Fundamental labour rights

The adoption by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998 and the Decent Work agenda in 1999 marked critical milestones for workers' rights and the promotion of quality employment.

However the promotion of the ILO Declaration is not enough to avoid the risk of a race to the bottom in employment conditions. Special efforts are required to ensure that the fundamental rights included in the Declaration are effectively recognised for all workers, irrespective of nationality, countries' economic conditions and of the ratification of the relevant Conventions by each country¹. Migrant workers in particular need to be protected against discrimination in law and practice.

The IMF and its affiliates will continue to support actions at national and international levels for:

¹ These ILO conventions include:

- Freedom of association and the right to organise (convention n° 87);
- Collective bargaining (n°98);
- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour (n°29&105)
- Abolition of child labour (n° 138&182) and
- Non-discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (n° 111) and Equal Remuneration for work of equal value (n°100)

- the drafting and adoption of labour legislation implementing the ILO Conventions by all national governments;
- the inclusion of internationally recognised Core Labour Standards, including the rights to organise and bargain collectively, in trade and investment agreements;
- their adoption as system-wide principles, policy guidelines and rules of all multilateral institutions of global governance, in particular the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation;

Regulation and collective bargaining are the most important tools to ensure that employers meet their social responsibilities in the global economy; these must include the social, environmental and human rights effects of corporate activity.

The IMF will continue including in its educational programmes and in publicity materials the promotion of its goals with respect to fundamental labour standards.

3.4.2 A new international architecture

The present weakness of the institutions of global governance is clear. While the new international architecture called for, among other organisations, by the labour movement is far from being established, the multilateral system is showing the weakness resulting from its structural imbalances. Institutions of finance and trade dominate, while those for development, the environment, social issues and labour play a minor role. The achievement of peace and justice for workers and all citizens requires internationally agreed democratic rules, and strong, legitimate institutions to implement them. For this to be possible, all organisations of the multilateral system must be transparent and accountable to their entire membership, and committed to genuine development goals that benefit workers and people everywhere in the world. Policy coherence must apply to the whole system and the compliance of member country Governments has to be constantly scrutinised.

The report of the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation provides an important opportunity for the ILO to play a leading role in the democratisation of global governance. The report denounces economic and social imbalances that are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable, and clearly indicates the linkage between fair employment conditions and sustainable development. The Commission's report stresses the need for decent work to be made a global goal and be pursued through coherent policies within the multilateral system. The IMF together with its affiliates will support initiatives by the ILO to address the investment, development and employment policies of the IFIs, UNCTAD and the WTO.

Workers need to be mobilised so that trade unions can play a key leadership role in the indispensable process of democratic reform of the multilateral system. The IMF, together with its affiliates, will continue campaigning at national, regional, and international level, calling for an integrated approach to development issues and new regulatory and participatory mechanisms in global governance. The reform of the global institutions of governance must ensure that:

- their rules and policies reflect policy guidelines oriented to sustainable development;

- transparency in their procedures and democratic consultation of representative social actors and movements are key aspects of policy formation;
- the International Labour Organisation is given a key role in global governance and its views are integrated in the decision making and dispute resolution process of organisations of the multilateral system, particularly trade and financial institutions;
- environment, labour and social standards are incorporated in international agreement conditionalities;
- democratic rights, accountability, participatory democracy, and human and workers' rights provide the system-wide framework of rules of policy formulation and implementation for all multilateral institutions.

3.4.3 Economic, financial and trade policies to benefit the world's people

The tight economic and fiscal policies being followed by national governments and supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank do not benefit workers and are proving detrimental to sustainable development everywhere in the world.

The IMF has been discussing thoroughly an alternative economic programme emphasising growth, social wellbeing and employment rather than restrictive monetary policy and budget balancing.

This process culminated in the presentation of the paper "*IMF Strategies for an Alternative Globalisation*" at the IMF Central Committee in December 2003 that proposes strategies for the implementation of an alternative economic programme. It addresses action to be taken by IMF at the global and regional level, as well as the responsibilities that IMF affiliates have to undertake at the national level.

Reaching our goals requires a new approach and a coherent overall strategy to be implemented in close collaboration with other organisations of the international trade union movement and with social movements that share our fundamental democratic values and aspirations. Human and worker rights and participatory democracy are indispensable enabling elements of a programme for equitable and sustainable growth and development; this needs to be based on four pillars:

- *Job creation and purchasing power*
- *Debt cancellation and development assistance*
- *Regulating capital movements*
- *Reform of the global institutions of governance*

The implementation of alternatives to market- and corporate-driven globalisation requires the mobilisation of our forces together with the international trade union movement and allied organisations of civil society. Strategies and tactics must include:

- *A direct approach to TNCs* in which collective bargaining must have the fundamental role. The IMF, together with other GUFs, has a special responsibility to prevent initiatives by TNCs in the area of “corporate social responsibility” – merely cosmetic in most cases – from undermining existing binding rules. Collective bargaining, particularly the negotiation of international framework agreements, remains the most effective way to ensure workers’ rights and the consideration of social and environmental concerns.
- *Mobilising for effective lobbying.* For lobbying to be effective it has to come after mobilisation and in conjunction with alliance building. Unity in the labour movement and the importance of collective bargaining need to be emphasised. Our tactics must address coherently the national, regional, and global levels, with mutual support between international trade union organisations and allied social movements.
- *National affiliates have a key role to play* by formulating and promoting alternatives primarily within their countries, according to each country’s prevailing conditions. Their most important task is to prepare concrete means to move from a critique of neo-liberal globalisation to the implementation of alternatives that move Governments towards the policies outlined above. IMF affiliates should work closely together with national trade union centres. Country-specific mobilisation plans should include policies to be implemented as a national priority, identification of potential allies, information for and mobilisation of union members, and alliance building.
- *The principal tasks of the IMF Secretariat* will be to assist its affiliates and cooperate with the ICFTU and the other GUFs. A key priority will be to unify GUF positions on globalisation and ensure that mobilising and alliance building become top priorities for the international trade union movement. For this purpose it is essential that the IMF and like-minded GUFs make concrete proposals for mobilisation at the global level and for joint activities with selected social movements.
- *IMF regional structures* will work to influence economic agreements that are negotiated at regional level, between regions or countries. Appropriate education and alliance building activities must be undertaken, with the assistance of IMF Regional Offices or the IMF Secretariat.
- *At world level* a key task for the IMF will be to cooperate with other GUFs in dealing with TNCs to engage them in social dialogue and negotiate, monitor and implement IFAs.

The IMF will work together with its affiliates, in cooperation with other organisations, for the policies outlined above to be coherently implemented at all levels. Renewed solidarity is required against the policies of TNCs and their allies in Government that result in pitting metal workers against one another and undermine employment security for all. The IMF, together with its affiliates, will promote dialogue and the search for solutions in particular towards critical trade issues.

Trade by itself will not produce economic growth and sustainable development, but it can contribute.

For this to be possible, expansionary economic policies need to be implemented. Trade policies and the export oriented recipes promoted by the international financial institutions that have failed to benefit the great majority of people in the developing world must be urgently reoriented towards genuine and coherent development goals.

Until trade and investment agreement negotiating agendas address the needs of workers, the IMF and its affiliated unions should oppose the continuation of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade negotiations that are designed to promote the interests of corporations and their allies at the expense of workers and citizens.

Trade policies must include provisions for effective special and differential treatment for developing countries and improved access to markets in the developed world. International and regional trade agreements must be subordinated to multilateral environment agreements (MEAs), and must guarantee the fundamental human needs and rights to food, water, health and education through the protection of vital public services and of the right for governments to determine national economic policy. Trade distorting subsidies should be eliminated. Social norms, including labour standards, must be incorporated in trade rules.

All this is impossible without a radical reform of the WTO. Its undemocratic decision-making procedures need to be changed if it is to become really transparent and inclusive. Events in the last few years have proved that the democratic deficit of this organisation is dramatically undermining its own effectiveness as well as the credibility of the whole multilateral system. While the Governments of its most powerful member countries seem to be unable or unwilling to address this crisis, new actors from the developing world are taking important initiatives. These focus, on the one side, on the urgent need for a democratic review of rules and practices of decision making; on the other, on trade issues of critical importance for sustainable development, especially agriculture.

The IMF together with its affiliates will contribute to this process by promoting dialogue, including with Government counterparts, on the social, employment and development impact of trade. Workers need to be mobilised, first of all at national level, for this struggle for democracy.

The IMF will assist and support its affiliates in this effort, and will act together with other international labour organisations and progressive organisations for the achievement of the objectives indicated above.

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