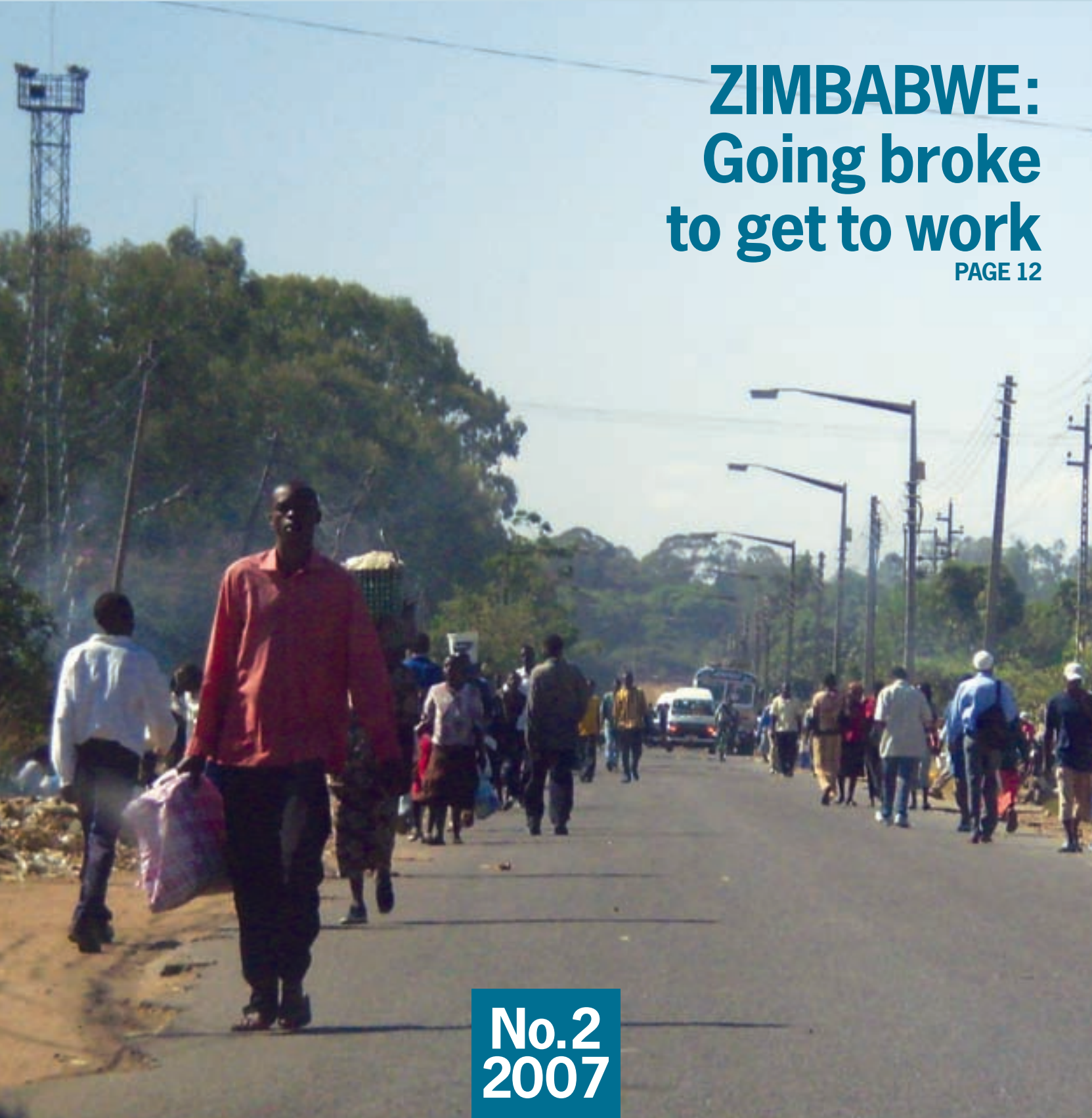


# METAL WORLD

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS' FEDERATION

## ZIMBABWE: Going broke to get to work

PAGE 12



No.2  
2007

## Sustainable development in Africa

My generation had the satisfaction of living during the age of the dismantling of colonialism in Africa.

We were all excited and looked to the future of the African continent with hope during the fifties and sixties when, after centuries of slavery and living under the rule of Europeans, Ghana, Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia declared their independence.

Sustainable development would now take off and alleviate the terrible living conditions of millions of people in Africa.

That was our dream.

Well-educated African leaders became politically responsible for their countries.

Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia and later Samora Machel in Mozambique and Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe were the first to lead their countries in independence.

But what disillusionment we have felt after four decades of tribal wars, political scandals, deadly disease and natural catastrophes.

The latest bitter disappointment is in Zimbabwe where our hopes were raised when it gained independence from the British in 1980, but have more recently been dashed as the country falls apart under Mugabe's dictatorship. The dire political and economic situation that people face in Zimbabwe today is the subject of the feature in this issue of Metal World.

On too many occasions old colonial regimes have been replaced by African dictatorships corrupted by the interests of transnational corporations (TNCs) seeking to keep control of natural resources in African countries.

Africa must return to the top of the world's political agenda as it was in the early days of its struggle for independence. It is a question of survival; a question that should not only be addressed by Africans themselves, but also by the rest of the world.

Political decision makers cannot remain quiet and watch

governments and TNCs cruelly continue to exploit and ravage the natural resources of the African continent.

Cancelling foreign debt for the poorest countries, as has been proposed and implemented by European and Canadian governments, is not enough.

There is a need for long-term sustainable development that involves and benefits the people of Africa, not just the few already rich and powerful people.

There is also a new actor in Africa that will not make things easier, China.

Chinese companies are aggressively establishing a presence in the African market, seeking access to the natural resources Africa has to offer.

The Chinese, like many others, want these natural resources for their own production and manufacturing industry, and for this reason Chinese government and business delegations visiting Africa have multiplied considerably in the last few years.

China's desire for access to resources is as legitimate as it is for America and Europe. The problem is that if the exploitation of Africa's wealth continues, it will make it even more difficult for Africans to benefit from their resources.

Utilisation of Africa's natural resources must first be to create wealth for the people of Africa, not only elsewhere.

The international community and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have a great deal of responsibility to make sure this happens.



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**METAL WORLD is published by the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF).**

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**METAL WORLD is published in English, Russian and Japanese editions.**

**Opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF.**

# CONTENTS

Vol. 8 • No. 2 • June 2007



## IMF NEWS

### Partial victory in Mexico

After more than a year of struggle, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia is once again recognized by the Mexican government as leader of the Mexican Miners' Union (SNTMMSRM). However the struggle is not over yet as Gómez remains in exile waiting for outstanding charges against him to be dropped so he can return to Mexico.

5



## FEATURE

### Going broke to get to work

While the Zimbabwean economy is in free fall, workers' wages are worth less and less each day. The cost of transport to and from work now surpasses the average worker's daily wage. What happens when a workforce must pay to work? And what are the implications for union organizing?

12



## SPECIAL REPORT

### Sustainable unions in Africa

The IMF regional office in Africa works closely with affiliates to build international solidarity, strengthen trade unions and improve the lives of workers. As described in this report, the challenges are enormous requiring a strategic focus on building sustainable unions as can be seen in Tanzania and Swaziland.

18



## PROFILE

### Aghni Dhamayanti

Aghni Dhamayanti was recently elected to the National Board of the IMF-affiliated trade union Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (SPMI). This election result happened after increased numbers of women began solving problems in their workplaces and also became more involved in the union.

24

## Unions in Africa

As this issue of Metal World goes to print, the official rate of inflation in Zimbabwe reached 3,500 per cent, almost double the rate it was one month earlier when the feature on pages 12 to 17 was written.

The severity of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, combined with the ongoing repression of trade unionists, is devastating. "Going broke to get to work" gives a first hand account of the impact the crisis is having on the lives of metalworkers, their families and their union and reports on the trade union response to the situation.

Continuing with a focus on Africa, the special report on pages 18 to 21 takes a closer look at IMF's work on building sustainable unions in Africa. This special report coincides with a more detailed report presented to the IMF executive committee in May on trade union structures in Africa, which is available on the IMF website.

The challenges in Africa are great, but through a strategic focus of resources and effort, progress at building strong unions able to defend workers' rights is taking place, offering some hope for the sustainable development of countries in Africa.

Thanks to our readers who responded to the Metal World readership survey in the last few months. Your feedback on the magazine has provided us with valuable information as we review and reinvigorate Metal World in the coming months.



**ANITA GARDNER**  
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### AFFILIATES' NEWS

## Zero Cancer

**GLOBAL** A global "zero cancer" campaign aimed at tackling the number one workplace killer was launched on April 27, one day prior to Workers' International Memorial Day.

The campaign was launched at a World Health Organisation seminar on the prevention of occupational and environmental cancer in Geneva, where global union representatives called on workplace regulators and employers to do more to end the worldwide epidemic

of occupational cancer.

A coalition of 11 global unions together representing over 300 million members in more than 150 countries produced a new cancer prevention guide, which reveals that over 600,000 deaths a year – one death every 52 seconds – are caused by occupational cancer, making up almost one-third of all work-related deaths. For more information go to: [www.imfmetal.org/cancer](http://www.imfmetal.org/cancer)

AG

**Occupational Cancer**  **Zero Cancer**  
International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) [www.imfmetal.org/cancer](http://www.imfmetal.org/cancer)

## Metal World readers speak

**GLOBAL** According to respondents of the recent readership survey, features and special reports are the most read sections of Metal World. The majority of respondents also believe that Metal World reports on issues that are relevant to them and finds the journal interesting. Respondents have asked to see more reports on IMF activities and are also

interested to see more opinion and comment from IMF affiliates.

This and other details gathered in the IMF's recent readership survey will contribute to the renewal of Metal World in the second half of this year. If you would like to know more please contact the editorial team at: [news@imfmetal.org](mailto:news@imfmetal.org)

AG

## T&G + Amicus = Unite

**UK/IRELAND** Unite, the new two million-strong union formed from the merging of Amicus and the Transport and General Workers' Union, is now the UK's and Ireland's largest union.

The new union, launched on May 1, will represent members from a variety of industries and sectors including workers in transport, manufacturing, aviation, farming, finance, and public

services, the voluntary sector and services from construction to contract cleaning.

Unite reports there will be a period of transition and the integration of the two unions into one should be complete by November 2008.

KP



## SOLIDARITY

## Partial victory in Mexico

**MEXICO** After more than a year of struggle, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia is once again recognized by the Mexican government as leader of the Mexican Miners' Union (SNTMMSRM).

This decision was announced by the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security in April after the department submitted official notification of being in favour of Gómez as general secretary of the union.

The measure is not a new taking of note for Gómez, but rather the recognition of the registration which he obtained in 2002 and which was suspended on 17 February 2006 when he was forcefully removed by the Fox government after speaking out against the Mexican government and mining company in response to a tragic mine accident in Pasta de Conchos that left 65 miners dead.

At a press conference on the day of the decision, the union leader's lawyers Carlos de Buen Unna and Néstor de Buen Lozano stated their satisfaction with the result, but also explained that the struggle is not over yet as Gómez remains in exile waiting for outstanding charges against him to be dropped so



Workers at Pasta des Conchos in February 2007

PHOTO: KP

that he can return to Mexico.

"This is an example for the Mexican labour movement, which has always been somewhat abused, now it has a reason to calmly confront any situation and will be well aware that with unity among the workers you can go a long way," said Néstor de Buen Lozano.

Néstor de Buen Lozano stressed the importance of international support and the complaint to the International Labour Organization (ILO) to convince

the Mexican government to correct "this totally aberrant situation; that was also useful, and I think we should pay tribute to those colleagues of the union organizations who also made an important contribution to this result."

The IMF launched an ILO complaint against Mexico in March 2006 following the removal of Gómez and is continuing to support the union to ensure Gómez returns to Mexico as soon as possible. **JC**

## ZCTU office raided, NEWU staff member arrested

**ZIMBABWE** On the morning of March 13, two days after the government opened fire on an unarmed group of people at a Save Zimbabwe Campaign rally, the office of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was raided by police.

Video tapes and documents were seized, including posters and materials being prepared for the general strike that took place on April 3 and 4. Documentation about the event

included names of organizers and supporters, forcing many labour leaders and union members to go into hiding to avoid arrest or worse.

The raid followed repeated reports in recent months of unionists being severely beaten, arrested and tortured. A staff member of IMF affiliate the National Engineering Workers' Union (NEWU) went missing for three days having been detained by police.

In a letter sent to Zimbabwean

President Robert Mugabe, IMF general secretary Marcello Malentacchi blasted Mugabe and condemned the attacks.

"Given the news of these recent attacks against the ZCTU and NEWU, I am gravely concerned for the safety and protection of our union brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe. In the strongest terms, I urge you to stop this attack on basic workers' freedoms," Malentacchi said. **KP**

See feature on Zimbabwe, pages 12 to 17.

## SOLIDARITY

## Bloody May Day in Turkey

**TURKEY** Union leaders and activists marking the anniversary of the May Day killings of 1977 in Taksim Square in Turkey met brute violence from police and security forces.

Reminiscent of that brutal day, May Day demonstrators laying wreaths and flowers in Taksim Square were met with tear gas, water cannons and beatings from police and security forces that occupied the city's square. More than 600 people were arrested.

Turkish metalworkers are fighting under the leadership of Birlesik Metal-Is against undemocratic laws that violate internationally recognised fundamental rights.

Existing laws severely limit the workers organising and collective bargaining rights while granting a quasi-monopoly condition to undemocratic organisations that pretend to represent workers interests.

As part of its international solidarity campaign, IMF, together with the European Metalworkers' Federation and IG Metall, joined leaders of Birlesik and the national trade union centre DISK to meet Turkish government officials and opposition leaders in April. The unions denounced the repression of workers and asked for changes to Turkish laws to bring them in line with ILO Conventions already ratified by Turkey. **KP**

## Global solidarity at Thales Australia

**AUSTRALIA** In recent months Thales Australia, a major defence contractor and French multinational, attempted to use the new anti-union labour laws in Australia to introduce individual contracts instead of collective bargaining at its Australian worksites.

At the request of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and with support from the IMF, affiliates in France contacted Thales headquarters and reminded management of its obligations to respect international labour standards at all of its operations around the world.

Thales has pledged support for the United Nations' Global Compact, which includes a commitment to the "effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining", and has a policy to exceed the international labour standards of the International Labour Organisation.

Due to the company's stated commitments at the international level



Workers rally at Thales Garden Island site PHOTO: AMWU

and with the solidarity support of unions in France and the IMF, the AMWU got Thales Australia back to the collective bargaining table in Australia.

Collective agreements have now been reached at almost all Australian work sites, except Garden Island where the AMWU is still struggling to gain acceptance for a collective agreement. **AG**

## Belarus faces EU trade cuts

**BELARUS** Belarus is set to lose millions of euros a year in trade with the European Union due to the Lukashenko regime's repeated violation of labour rights.

The Generalised System of Preferences of the EU, which gives some tariff concessions to Belarus trading in the EU market, was established to promote, among other things, respect for worker and trade union rights. Following numerous violations of trade union rights, the EU is set to remove Belarus from the GSP on June 21.

Independent trade unions in Belarus declared that as the country benefits from the GSP agreement it has to respect core labour standards. The

independent unions believe that the Belarusian Government shall "bear full responsibility should the country and its people face the losses of many million of euros".

Independent trade unions and ordinary workers in Belarus face continuous attacks on their rights, which are the subject of the International Labour Organisation's continuing investigation of the violation of Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The IMF is closely monitoring the situation in the country and at its recent executive committee meeting once again declared support for independent trade unions in Belarus, including its affiliate REPAM. **AI**

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

## Czech autoworkers win pay rise

**CZECH REPUBLIC** Workers at Skoda Auto, a unit of Volkswagen, reached agreement with management that wages would rise by 10 per cent immediately, but overall wages including various benefits would grow by 12.7 per cent through 2008.

The agreement came after Skoda workers staged a walk out on April 17, cutting the daily production of 2,500 cars by about a third. IMF affiliate OS KOVO had threatened to strike again if a deal was not reached.

Wage gains include:

- Wage increase by 10 per cent,
- 2007 bonus of 10,000 CZK (US\$483.73),
- Incentive payment increase from 14 to 15 per cent,
- Guaranteed company bonus increase by 10 per cent,
- One-off payment of 2,500 CZK (US\$120.93) in July 2008,
- Pension insurance contribution increase of 100 CZK (US\$4.84) from



Skoda workers rally

PHOTO: OS KOVO

April 1, 2007 and by another 100 CZK on January 1, 2008, and

- Severance pay increase up to 12 months of a workers' average wage.

Skoda had sales of 203.7 billion CZK (\$9.85 billion USD) last year and employs more than 27,000 workers. **KP**

## Agreement reached with Gerdau

**USA** An agreement between the United Steelworkers (USW) and Gerdau Ameristeel, a U.S. subsidiary of Brazilian steelmaking giant Gerdau, was ratified by workers at three former North Star Steel plants in March.

Worker gains included:

- A pay rise of more than US\$4 an hour,
- Improvements in benefits and work rules, and
- Financial resources for employee retirement insurance.

The agreements, which were reached at locations in Texas, Minnesota and Iowa, came after a long and fierce struggle between USW and the company. The new contracts are effective March 2007, and run through March 2010, July 2010 and September 2010, respectively.

Workers have been fighting for a contract since September 2004 when Gerdau Group acquired North Star Steel from Cargill. The IMF and its affiliates that represent Gerdau workers around the world have actively supported the USW.

Metalworkers from Chile, Brazil, Canada and the U.S. protested at the company's annual shareholders' meeting held last year calling on Gerdau to negotiate fair contracts. More recently, members of IMF affiliates in Brazil, CNM-CUT and CNTM Força Sindical, leafleted outside Gerdau plants in Brazil in solidarity with steelworkers in the U.S. **KP**

## German and Swedish agreements

**GERMANY & SWEDEN** IG Metall reached agreement with employers to increase wages by 4.1 per cent from June this year and a further 1.7 per cent after twelve months. The pilot agreement was reached in south-west Germany on May 4 after lengthy negotiations between IG Metall and the employers' organisation Gesamtmetall. This agreement is expected to be adopted across all regions in Germany. The pay increase includes:

- 4.1 per cent increase from June 1, 2007 until May 31, 2008,
- 400 € lump sum payment in April and May 2007,
- 1.7 per cent increase from June 1, 2008 (with an option to postpone the start date depending on the economic

situation in the company), and

- 0.7 per cent one-off-payment for the months June until October 2008.

Three months earlier, in Sweden, IF Metall representing 440,000 members in five industry branches reached a preliminary agreement for new national collective agreements.

The agreement gives members a total increase of 10.2 per cent over three years, from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2010, the highest increase since the joint industrial agreement started 10 years ago.

Worker gains include a 9.6 per cent real wage increase and an increase in the lowest wage level. During the agreement period, pension benefits will be increased by a total of 0.6 per cent. **KP**

INDUSTRY NEWS

## Save jobs at Delphi plant in Spain

**EUROPE** Delphi workers across Europe protested in May against the recently announced closure of the Cadiz plant in Spain.

Since the inclusion of Delphi USA in Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and despite European management declaring to its workforce in Europe that this decision was not going to have any effect on Delphi in Europe, workers now face the progressive dismantling of industrial activity in the EU.

On May 21 unions distributed leaflets to Delphi workers informing them about the current situation in Delphi and how Delphi is failing to

adequately consult with its European Employee Committee on the issue of restructuring.

Two weeks earlier, at its meeting in Seville, the executive committee of the IMF declared its full and unconditional support of the workers faced with job-losses following Delphi's announcement to close its Cadiz plant.

"Metalworker trade unions from around the world are calling on Delphi to fulfil its obligations to the workers and the community that depend on employment at its Cadiz plant in Spain," said IMF general secretary Marcello Malentacchi. **AG**

## GM Europe - day of action

**EUROPE** Trade unions representing workers at General Motors operations across Europe organized protest actions in solidarity with the striking workers in Antwerp and in support of European-wide demands to the company.

GM Europe workers at 15 sites in eight countries stopped work for several hours on May 3, demanding a decent production volume that secures a sustainable future for the Antwerp plant in Belgium, and for an agreement with the company at the European level that would secure the viability of the European plants until 2016.

Solidarity messages in support of the European Day of Action called by the GM European Employees' Forum and the European Metalworkers' Federation were sent by affiliates of the IMF in countries across North and South America, Africa and the

Asia-Pacific region.

"The successful European Day of Action and international solidarity messages again make clear that workers and their trade unions will resist company attempts to play workers of one country off against another," said IMF general secretary Marcello Malentacchi. **RB**



See [www.gmworkersblog.com](http://www.gmworkersblog.com)

## Alcoa unions pledge further cooperation

**GLOBAL** Unions representing Alcoa workers from Australia, Brazil, Iceland, Mexico, Suriname and the U.S. met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in April to discuss recent labour, financial and operational developments at Alcoa.

"We recognize that Alcoa's increasing size and global scope poses a threat to the bargaining power of unions representing Alcoa employees everywhere," read a joint statement following the meeting. "Unions in economically developed countries face the threat of production being shifted abroad, while unions in less developed countries struggle to find the resources to bargain with a multinational corporation such as Alcoa. It is therefore more important than ever that unions communicate, collaborate and coordinate across borders."

The unions plan to establish an Alcoa global union network comprised of unions with members at Alcoa operations around the globe.

"Increased cooperation and international solidarity is fundamental to ensuring that the rights of workers are guaranteed in today's ever broadening global labour market," said IMF general secretary Marcello Malentacchi. **KP**

## Brazilian's take action against precarious work

**BRAZIL** Tens of thousands of workers from the ABC industrial region near São Paulo and workers in several other states, participated in mass mobilisations in May to support President Lula's veto of a bill that - if passed - would result in precarious workers losing access to social benefits.

Two months earlier, President Lula signed into law a bill that creates the "Super-Receita" a public organisation that combines the revenue collection units with the social security tax collections. However, Lula vetoed the controversial "Amendment 3" that had been approved by Congress by a very large margin. This amendment prohibited tax collectors from deciding whether a "self-employed" professional could be considered a "firm" or a regular individual tax payer, effectively limiting workers that have no clear employment relationship from accessing social benefits.



Rallying for workers' access to social benefits  
PHOTO: CNM/CUT

Since vetoing the bill, Lula has come under intense pressure from industry groups. To counter this pressure and to support precarious workers, trade union national centres CUT and Força Sindical and social movements in Brazil have staged mass mobilisations across Brazil. **AG**

## IMF Central Committee 2007

**BRAZIL** Global Action Against Precarious Work is the central theme for the meeting of the IMF Central Committee taking place on November 28 and November 29, 2007 in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The meeting will finish with a public parade against precarious work in central Salvador.

IMF affiliates are encouraged to come forward with proposals for action against precarious work for consideration at the meeting. These proposals should reach the IMF Secretariat by September 21.

The IMF Executive Committee has set a target of 25 per cent participation

by women at the Central Committee. Affiliates are asked to take this target into account when deciding on the composition of their delegation.

A women's workshop will take place at the same location prior to the Central Committee on Monday November 26, and will focus on the impact of precarious work on women.

Invitations and attendance forms will be distributed to affiliates and be available on the IMF website in June 2007. Attendance forms indicating at least the number of delegates attending, should be returned to the IMF no later than August 15. **AG**

## Precarious work and women

**ASIA & AMERICAS** Recognising that women workers are overrepresented in precarious employment, IMF recently held two regional meetings to discuss how women are affected by the rise in precarious work.

The IMF Asian Regional Meeting on women and atypical work held in Hong Kong in March was attended by affiliates from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia. The second meeting, which took place in May in the Dominican Republic, was the first IMF Inter-Americas meeting. Participants from Chile, Peru, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, Panama, Mexico, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Canada and the U.S. had the opportunity to discuss issues affecting women precarious workers in both North and South America.

Despite the diversity of the countries represented in these meetings, participants, both male and female, reported that women are more likely to be forced into precarious employment and are the first to lose their jobs. As a result, they are less likely than their male colleagues to be covered by social insurances such as healthcare and retirement benefits. Precarious work also widens the gender pay gap.

In all cases, unions spoke of the difficulty of organising precarious workers and the need to build unity between workers in regular employment and those in precarious jobs. **JH**

## IMF ACTIVITIES

## First Boeing World Conference

**USA** The first Boeing World Conference took place in Portland, Oregon in late March, bringing together trade union representatives from the mother company in the U.S. and Canada as well as trade unionists from major supply companies in Australia, Italy, Germany, Japan and Sweden.

The inclusion of supply chain companies and its unions was important given the increase in the outsourcing of work by Boeing to suppliers.

“No longer can Boeing workers in one nation afford to bargain or organize in isolation,” said International Association of Machinists and

Aerospace Workers (IAM) President R. Thomas Buffenbarger. “Our goal is fair treatment for Boeing’s global workforce, without regard to language, borders or nationality.”

Conference participants agreed on the necessity of a “global alliance” within Boeing and its suppliers and initiated the setting-up of a worldwide network to exchange information. The participants also called on Boeing to respect and strengthen human and workers’ rights and to follow the example of its competitor EADS that negotiated and signed an International Framework Agreement with the IMF. **KP**

## ILO Tripartite Meeting on Electronics

**GENEVA** Adhering to recognized international labour standards throughout electronics supply chains was a key issue discussed at the International Labour Organisation tripartite meeting on manufacturing in the electronics sector in April.

IMF and affiliates from Japan, Germany, UK, Indonesia, Brazil, Finland, Tunisia, Singapore, Hungary and the U.S. represented workers at the meeting with employer and government representatives.

At the conclusion of the meeting, all agreed to the importance of social dialogue between the three groups and respecting recognized labour standards throughout supply chains.

Employers and governments also pointed out International Framework Agreements and voluntary activities on Corporate Social Responsibility as positive examples for collaboration to

guarantee and increase protection of workers’ rights.

Areas defined as priorities for further ILO actions included:

- expanding efforts within the framework of the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes,
- fostering respect of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,
- investigating and promoting industry-specific occupational health & safety,
- providing technical assistance to member states on labour inspections, and
- training and promoting best practices on improving working conditions. **RS**

## OECD considers steel market consolidation

**TURKEY** The steel committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) met in May to discuss the latest trends in the steel industry and the likelihood of future consolidation.

Delegates heard how the steel industry is expanding worldwide and benefiting from increased demand from Asian economies, particularly India and China, which has driven a dramatic increase in the demand for steel globally. To date the steel industry is still fairly fragmented with the 15 largest steel companies combined producing 33 per cent of the steel globally compared with the automotive industry, for example, where the top 15 companies produced 87 per cent of the world market in 2005.

There has been an almost constant process of restructuring in the steel industry in recent years, however nearly half the industry remains in public hands.

IMF director for steel Rob Johnston presented a trade union perspective on the consolidation and reminded delegates at the OECD meeting that, “the transition from public to private ownership has been a difficult one, with workers often suffering as a consequence.”

A copy of the IMF position and recommendations to the OECD on the steel industry is published on the IMF website. **RJ**

## IMF ACTIVITIES

## Implementing the Indesit IFA

**ITALY** Indesit management and an IMF delegation met in Rome in March to undertake the joint monitoring of the International Framework Agreement (IFA) on complying with and promoting fundamental rights at work.

Indesit, Europe's third largest producer of domestic appliances, with subsidiaries across the globe, signed the IFA with the IMF and Italy's three national metalworkers' unions, the FIM, FIOM and UILM, in 2001.

During the meeting Indesit management reiterated its commitment to comply with the agreement, particularly at supplier companies, and reported on the rescission of a contract with a supplier for non-fulfilment of its obligations towards its employees.

Indesit management guaranteed its absolute neutrality towards freedom of association in all countries, with no restrictions on a worker's freedom to join a union of his or her choice.

The company also 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.

The "international table" will meet twice a year and the agenda of the next meeting will include proposals on implementing the agreement and on health and safety issues. **AG**

## IMF executive meets

**GLOBAL** A lively debate on the future of the international trade union movement was held by the executive committee of the IMF at its meeting in Seville on May 10 and 11.

While no conclusions were reached, it was agreed that in seeking closer co-operation with other global union federations the IMF must be mindful of aiming to strengthen the international trade union movement and remain faithful to the interests of metalworkers.

The committee also heard a report on IMF's work in the Africa region where IMF resources are focused on certain countries where there is a 'critical mass' of workers and the potential for sustainable unions, in particular general manufacturing unions.

The IMF executive committee once again firmly reiterated its support of Napoleón Gómez, the general secretary



Press conference on Delphi, Seville **PHOTO: HM**

of the Mexican Miners' Union. On April 16, Gómez was again recognised by the Mexican government as the elected leader of the union, but remains in exile, until legal cases pending against him are resolved.

The executive committee also welcomed two new affiliates as members of the IMF. They are:

- Fédération de la Métallurgie CFE-CGC – France
- Autonomous Metalworkers' Union of Serbia (AMUS)

**AG**

## Chinese workers lack trade unions in TNC operations

**CHINA** Workers at TNC invested factories in China were found to have little understanding of trade unions or their capacity to represent workers' interests in a new study by the Asia Monitor Research Centre, which was commissioned by the IMF.

The research also found that while working conditions at foreign invested metal sector plants are better than average factory working conditions in China, only one third of factories surveyed had a trade union present.

WTO policies and free trade agreements are resulting in metalworkers around the world often ending up in direct or indirect competition with China. Yet worker and human rights in China do not meet

international standards and independent trade unions remain illegal.

The research examines the current industrial relations and working conditions in metal sector transnational companies in China.

The investigation includes research on the working conditions inside 27 factories with foreign investors including Daimler Chrysler; Hyundai, Volkswagen, Toyota, Nokia, Delphi, Bosch, General Electrics, Electrolux, Panasonic and Flexitronics.

The report is available in English (editions in French, Spanish and German will follow) on the IMF website at: [www.imfmetal.org/chinareport](http://www.imfmetal.org/chinareport) **AG**





Charles Chirowdza stands next to the industrial creek that serves as a community bath for workers who sleep at the railway station

PHOTO: KRISTYNE PETER

# GOING BROKE TO GET TO WORK

*While the Zimbabwean economy is in a free fall, workers' wages are worth less and less each day. The cost of transport to and from work now surpasses the average worker's daily wage. What happens when a workforce, teetering on the brink of survival, must pay to work? And what are the implications for union organizing in the country and the region?*

**TEXT BY KRISTYNE PETER**

**PHOTOS BY STEPHEN NHLAPO AND KRISTYNE PETER**





Charles looks at the place he sleeps after work

PHOTO: KP

Charles Chirowdza, a metalworker at CT Bolts and a member of the National Engineering Workers' Union (NEWU), sleeps outside the railway station in downtown Harare about two to three times a week. He isn't alone. On any given night, 150 to 200 workers will be huddled together under the station's faded blue awning that provides little protection from the rain, and no protection from police, drunks or thieves. Here, as in many areas around the city, workers struggle under the constant threat of arrest and violence to report to work the next morning.

In Zimbabwe, the rising price of public transport, which now costs more than the daily wage of an average worker, has forced thousands of workers to live on the streets. In an effort to save the meagre wages they make for necessities such as food, water, and rent, workers sleep in parks and public buildings close to factories and work sites. It is a new breed of homelessness, tempered by weekends with the family.

In the winter months, when temperatures can fall as low as  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $23^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), workers burn tires for warmth. A small creek, filled with industrial and human waste, serves as a community bath in the mornings, leaving Charles with

severe skin rashes. The area is littered with rotting garbage, discarded clothes, human faeces and snakes. It is hard to imagine the desperation that has forced hundreds of men and women to call this railway yard a temporary home.

### PAY TO WORK

The average metalworker in Zimbabwe makes around Z\$140,000 (US\$559.45 at the official rate, April 2007) per month. The price of public transport costs approximately Z\$14,000 per day, round trip. Proud Ndlovu, a NEWU shop steward at CT Bolts, says the "ride deficit" is the union's major issue in negotiations. "At the end of the day, I'm paying the company to work, or I'm subsidizing the company to make its profits," Proud said. NEWU has been fighting for a transport allowance for the 15,000 members it represents for the last three years. However companies are resisting giving in.

In the case of CT Bolts, the company reported profits for the last quarter, but still maintains that a wage raise is not an option. Morale is low. Workers claim the company is expanding, buying new cars for management, and renovating the premises while the workers literally teeter on the brink of starvation.

“We are given a meal,” says Charles, referring to the lunch the company provides, which is deducted from his pay “but instead of eating that sadza in the afternoon, we are going into the streets selling that sadza to get bus fare.”

NEWU is demanding that employers carry the cost of reporting for duty, either through a transport allowance or by providing real transport.

Given the current situation, it begs the question: Why do workers, still work?

“Hope,” says Stephen Nhlapo, IMF regional representative for Africa. “These people have an intense hope that things will change. And IF they change, they’ll have employment. But, if they don’t continue working and things change, they will lose out on the benefits of that change.”

Women workers, who are less able to travel the long distances to factories due to family constraints, are forced into the informal economy, selling vegetables such as tomatoes and onions to subsidize their husbands’ shrinking salaries. Often their wares are confiscated by police under Mugabe’s orders to crackdown on all unlicensed vendors, a policy the police interpret loosely given their own depreciating salaries.

“Can you imagine negotiating maternity leave?” asks Stephen, “You ask for six months, and they give you three years, with no pay!”

### ZIMBABWEAN CRISIS

Zimbabwe, once considered the “breadbasket of Africa”, enjoyed a robust economy and thriving workforce in the mid-1990s. Today, the situation for Zimbabweans is dire. Chronic shortages of food, electricity, petrol and medicine has reduced the life expectancy to a tragic 34 years for women, the lowest in the world, and to just 37 years for men. Most Zimbabweans live on one meal a day, some even less. Eight out of ten workers are out of work, and the unemployment rate continues to rise.

Led by Robert Mugabe, independence hero cum dictator, the country’s steady decline has been punctuated by a series of bad governmental policy at best, and shocking human rights violations at worst.

“Operation Murambatsvina” which is Shona for “Operation Drive Out Trash”, has undoubtedly had the most devastating effect on Zimbabwe’s working poor. In May 2005, Mugabe unleashed what he called an “urban renewal program” to squash illegal vendors. The result was the demolition of 94,460 urban homes which left 700,000 people homeless and affected 2.4 million people directly or indirectly, according to the United Nations. Between May 2005 and May 2006, prices for accommodation jumped by 3,000 per cent. Because many of the homes destroyed were outside of industrial complexes, metalworkers were largely impacted.

## PRICES OF BASIC GOODS IN ZIMBABWE

The average Zimbabwean metalworker makes approximately Z\$140,000 (Zimbabwean dollar) per month. In April 2007, inflation was at a world record of 1,700 per cent with inflation climbing each day, workers’ salaries are worth less and less, while the cost of basic goods continues to soar. In a country where the price of cooking oil is half a month’s salary, and a bar of soap is almost a third of a worker’s monthly wages, how are Zimbabweans surviving?

	Official rate US\$*	Informal rate US\$
Monthly wages Z\$140,000	559.64	
Loaf of bread Z\$6,500	25.95	2.59
Litre of Petrol Z\$22,000	87.91	8.71
Aspirin Z\$50,000	199.81	19.98
Cooking Oil Z\$70,000/ 2 litres	279.73	27.97
Butter Z\$70,000/ kg	279.73	27.97
Milk Z\$4,000/ 500 ml	15.98	1.59
Bar of Soap Z\$30,000	119.88	11.98
Flour Z\$30,000/ 5kg	119.88	11.98
Mealie Meal Z\$30,000/ 10kg	119.88	11.98
HIV Medicines Z\$300,000	1198.83	119.83
Toilet Paper Z\$55,000/4 pk	219.79	21.97
Monthly’s Electricity Z\$20,000	79.92	7.99
Monthly Rent Z\$100,000	399.16	39.91
Monthly Water Z\$50,000	199.81	19.98

\* The official rate is what the Zimbabwean dollar is worth, according to the government and banking institutions. However, foreign currency is bought and sold regularly at “informal” prices at markets and on the streets. The informal rate, sometimes known as the “black market rate”, is approximately one tenth the official rate at time of writing, April 2007. The informal rate fluctuates frequently.

### NOWHERE TO GO

In June 2005, Brighton Munyaradzi, a serviceman for AFA PVT LTD and NEWU member, was ordered by police at gunpoint to remove his belongings and leave his Highfield one-room cottage. “The police, they came in their vehicles ordering people to destroy their houses. In a matter of hours we had nowhere to go, we were sleeping outside,” said Brighton, referring to his young wife, Itai, and then one and a half year old baby.

Brighton now lives with his wife and two baby girls, three years old and five months old, in a temporary dwelling using plastic for the walls and the roof. During the rainy season the structure leaks, and he gets little sleep trying to protect the children from the damp. Unable to afford the high price of transport, Brighton gets up at the crack of dawn each day to walk the 12kms to work. After putting in a full 9-hour day, he hurries back home, afraid to leave his children and wife unprotected after dark. “It is like I am working twice. At work I have to make sure I work a full day so I can get food for my children. Then I get home and I must make sure my children are protected, from either snakes or thugs who want to steal something from us — me, I have nothing, but they try.”

Charles also once had a two-room cottage on the outskirts of Harare in Chitagweza, which he shared with his wife and kids. It was reduced to rubble after government bulldozers flattened it. He now lives with his parents on the days he is able to afford transport home. The modest two-bedroom house provides basic shelter for Charles and 15 other family members. Charles’ father, Micheal Chirowdza, is a former telecom worker who thought his children would be able to care for him and his wife in their old age, a point he makes often to Charles.

For Charles and Brighton, and hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans just like them, life before Operation Murambatsvina or “Tsunami” as the locals call it, was pretty good. Brighton had a small garden, a sturdy roof, the protection of doors that lock, and electricity for a TV and radio. For Charles, he had independence, a home for him and his family close to work, and hope for the future. At the moment, the future looks bleak. Charles, whose anger and frustration is noticeable on sight, remarks that things have grown unbearable in the last year; “I don’t know where we will be in April, May. We just pray that things might change because ehhhh, I wish I was dead.”

### KICKS OF A DYING HORSE: WIDESPREAD REPRESSION

As in many parts of the world, the labour movement in Zimbabwe has been a leading force for change. The Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), to which NEWU is an affiliate, has been at the forefront in addressing



NEWU member Brighton Munyaradzi

PHOTO: KP

the workers’ suffering under Zimbabwe’s economic collapse. Viewed by Mugabe as enemies of the state, members of the ZCTU have been attacked with a force that has astonished the international community, including government-sanctioned beatings, torture, abductions and arbitrary arrests. Mugabe has banned political demonstrations, he has shut down the independent press, and declared war on any and all that criticize his policies.

On April 3 and 4, the ZCTU organized a mass stay away after talks broke down within the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) regarding payment of salaries in accordance with inflation. The TNF is a joint negotiating body that comprises representatives from business, labour and the government, in which the ZCTU plays an active role.

In the days leading up to the action, and those that followed, ZCTU offices were ransacked, staff beaten, and workers and trade union leaders were arrested. Witnesses in the townships reported that people were forced to go to work at gunpoint, however, many of them had no “work” to go to. Helicopters hovered over downtown Harare and businesses were threatened with losing their operating licence, should they shut production down.

The media was quick to call the worker action a failure, however, given the nature of the stay away, its success is hard to measure. Only 20 per cent of the country is formally employed. Of that number, 70 per cent work for the government. Journalists are denied access to Zimbabwe, so those who operate in the country risk arrest, or worse. In April, Edward Chikombo, a cameraman for the state-run broadcaster ZBC, was found pummelled to death in a shallow grave on the side of the road after he leaked images of a beaten Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and former mineworker and ZCTU General Secretary.



Charles at home

PHOTO: KP

NEWU general secretary, Japhat Moyo, who is also acting assistant general secretary for the ZCTU, referred to the recent attacks as, “kicks of a dying horse,” and explained the reasoning behind the stay away. “Last time we went to the streets we had our limbs broken,” he said, referring to the strike on September 13, 2006 that resulted in the arrest and torture of 15 unionists, many so severely beaten they had to be hospitalised. “If you demonstrate in the streets, you are going to be butchered. We are not going to be sending other people’s kids to the war front. We are supposed to be on the front lines ourselves,” Moyo said.

“The workers decided that we cannot risk our leaders, let’s stay at home as a sign of demonstration. Every three months we are doing these activities, and we are not limiting ourselves to only stay aways. If the situation improves, if government upholds human rights principles, we will be able to go to the streets instead of sitting at home,” Moyo added.

Workers like Charles and Brighton believe collective action is the only way change will come. “I have to participate. To make sure that things get better for me, I have to take part in the action,” said Brighton a few days before the stay away. “If you want to have a better life you have to do something.”

Charles doesn’t flinch when asked if he is worried about being attacked by police during demonstrations “being beaten is okay,” he says. “Because the situation is getting out of control. People are suffering, people are dying. We are suffering so much,” he said as he placed his hand on his stomach, “being beaten is better than this. At least we are trying to accomplish something.”

Every three months, workers plan to risk arrest and torture in a brave attempt to win basic worker rights and a living wage. As Charles put it so succinctly, “I just wish my take home pay would take me home.”

## Regional and international response

The IMF has taken a three-pronged approach to addressing the problems Zimbabwean metalworkers face.

First, for the past 15 years, the IMF’s Africa office has assisted Zimbabwean metal unions in building one strong national metalworkers’ union through the merging of smaller unions. Their growing strength has helped metalworkers weather the difficult economic climate (see page 21).

Second, the IMF regional office has been an outspoken critic of Mugabe’s attacks on human and labour rights and has worked to encourage IMF affiliates to support change in Zimbabwe through their national centres. “We condemn the current government’s terror campaign on the people of Zimbabwe, especially the gross violations of workers rights,” said IMF regional representative for Africa, Stephen Nhlapo.

“The sub-regional meeting two years ago adopted a resolution calling on all of our affiliates in the southern Africa region to work with their respective national centers to put pressure on the Zimbabwe government to stop the brutal attack on workers and their leaders. We are also encouraging our affiliates in the region to participate in all campaigns that are organized by the national centers and NGO’s which focus on changing the situation in Zimbabwe,” Stephen said, noting that international solidarity will only be as strong as the participation of the affiliates in that region.

In South Africa and Botswana, national centers have demonstrated at the Zimbabwean border in solidarity with the ZCTU. Their criticism of Mugabe’s actions have been key to private discussions taking place among the leaders of the Southern African Development Community.

Third, the IMF has supported the International Trade Union Confederation’s (ITUC) initiatives to block Zimbabwe’s participation in key international summits and its work with the International Labour Organization to bring about change. The IMF regularly reports on developments in Zimbabwe, and is urging its affiliates to work through their national centers in supporting the work of the ZCTU.

# Building sustainable unions in Africa

*The IMF regional office in Africa works closely with affiliates in the region to build international solidarity, strengthen trade unions and improve the lives of workers. As described in this report, the challenges in this region are enormous requiring a strategic focus on countries where there is a 'critical mass' of workers and the potential of sustainable unionism.*

REPORT BY STEPHEN NHLAPO

Successive waves of political, cultural and economic colonization and global power struggles have left Africa an economic shell. Today, human and mineral resources are extracted and small pockets of industrialisation remain to support the ongoing plunder. Alongside this, vast ghettos of poverty and suffering exist.

The countries that make up Africa are a diverse grouping in terms of geography, population size, language, wealth, distribution of wealth, life expectancy, health, public sector resources, trade union size and cohesion, labour market size and HIV prevalence.

The depth and deepening of poverty in many African countries has often not served to mobilize workers and their organisations but has in fact weakened them both politically and organisationally.

### Colonial and neo-colonial effects

Historically, colonial powers pushed Africa into the production and export of raw minerals and agriculture and the importation of processed goods. After independence many African countries tried to build a domestic economy by producing locally what was being imported. This also tended to employ more people. But Africa was caught in a debt trap and to try and escape this debt countries were forced to accept Structural Adjustment Programmes. These programmes and the dropping of tariffs through trade liberalisation saw a move from import substitution to export oriented-growth.

However, the increased presence of foreign companies has had a negative effect on the development of many sectors in

African economies, creating a poverty cycle with increasing unemployment and people relying on subsistence activities in the informal sector.

The winners from these economic policies have been big business and the losers the people of Africa. These policies have also caused a lot of disinvestment by governments in the metal sector. For instance in Zambia the state used to own and support metal and engineering sectors. Some of the state-supported industries like engineering firms were liquidated and closed down as a result of the structural adjustment programs of the 1990s. It is the same group of externally imposed policy measures that is resulting in privatisation of services such as water, electricity and health care, often making these services more expensive and forcing poor people deeper into poverty.

### Poverty

Approximately 315 million Africans, nearly one third more people than the entire population of the U.S., survive on less than one dollar per day. Eighty per cent of the African population survives on less than two dollars a day. Africa is the only continent in the world to have grown poorer since 1979. From 1990 to 1999, poverty in Africa actually increased by three per cent, whereas in all other areas of the world poverty declined by about seven per cent.

The number of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has nearly doubled, from 164 million in 1981 to 315 million in 2001. Moreover, 33 of the 49 countries defined by the United Nations as 'Least Developed Countries' are in Africa.

# SPECIAL REPORT

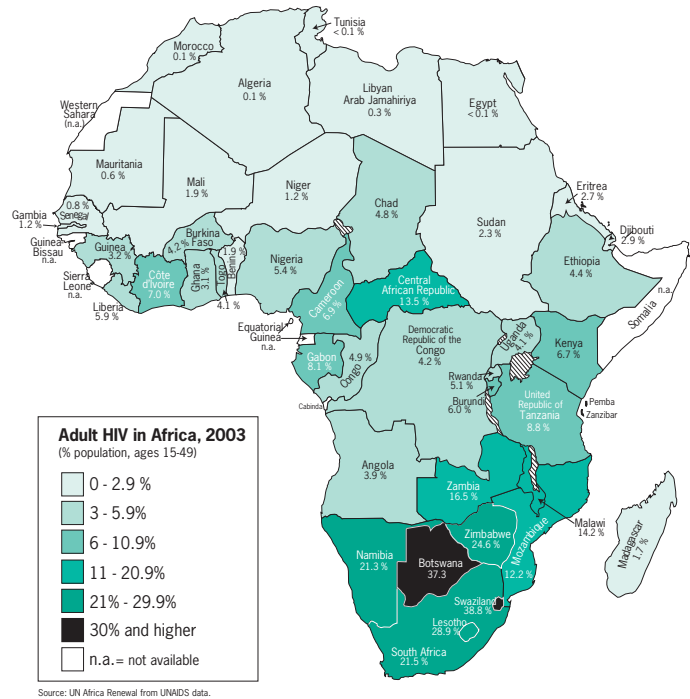
## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE UNIONS IN AFRICA

### HIV & Disease

Africa's health systems are near total collapse due to the combined effects of structural adjustments, the plundering of human resources by the West and the demands placed on the system by malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS.

According to UNAIDS, every day in Africa, 6,600 people die and another 8,500 contract the HIV virus, 1,400 of whom are newborn babies infected during childbirth or by their mothers' milk. Africa is home to 25 million people with HIV – 64 per cent of global infections.

Mass deaths due to disease are not a new phenomena. Despite a country such as the U.S. eradicating malaria, the efforts of the West to do this in Africa have proved alarmingly incompetent, driven as they are by questionable agendas and support for drug companies. Africa must not wait for the West to solve the problems of HIV/AIDS but must drive its own agenda. It is not only a medical problem, but also an economic and development issue.



### Some of the key IMF affiliates in the region \*

Area	Country	Metal Trade Unions	Employment in the metal sector	Union membership
East	Kenya	Amalgamated Union of Kenya and Metal Workers	31,116	3,600
		Kenya Engineering Workers Union		approx. 5,000
East	Tanzania	Trade Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO)	8,865	6,605
West	Cameroon	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats des Industries Metallurgiques and Mécaniques (FENASIMECAM)	Not available	2,362
West	Ghana	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union	Not available	42,070 (5,000 in metal)
West	Nigeria	Steel and Engineering Workers Unions of Nigeria (SEWUN)	500,000 (Figure not confirmed)	24,000
		National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA)		173,000
South	South Africa	Metal & Electrical Workers Union of South Africa (MEWUSA)	280,000	10,000
		National Federation of Workers in Metal, Energy, Chemical Industries in Angola (FSIMEQ)		21,638
South	Zimbabwe**	National Engineering Workers Union (NEWU)	29,530	14,000

\* see IMF website for complete list of African affiliates

\*\* see page 21 on Zimbabwe union merger

# SPECIAL REPORT

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE UNIONS IN AFRICA

### Trade union situation

Potential agents for social change in Africa are trade unions. However, given the broader political and economic situation, African trade unions face many challenges. The shift from domestic capital to foreign investment has resulted in the collapse of many local industries. This reduction in employment levels and a shift from permanent to atypical employment over the past ten years in most African countries has led to a decline in union membership.

Like in many other parts of the world, African unions tend to reflect the structure of capital. The decline and stagnation of many industries that occurred following liberalisation of African economies, has left in its wake many small and fragmented unions that are not sustainable through membership contributions alone. External funds became a way for these organisations to sustain themselves, often resulting in unions more accountable to outside funding organisations than to their membership. This, coupled with poor democratic structures, corruption and lack of accountability to members resulted in unions becoming increasingly irrelevant to its members.

A trade union's orientation towards rich organisations in the North for support has also undermined solidarity between unions as they compete for resources to tackle national issues. Issues-based funding, focused on topics such as gender and HIV/AIDS, can result in unions paying lip service to the issue to gain resources, instead of ensuring the subject is integrated into central organisational activities and values. Lack of communication and administrative infrastructure is also a contributing factor that weakens unions in Africa.

Given the constraints, the IMF Africa regional office has developed a strategic approach concentrating on certain countries where there is a 'critical mass' of workers with the potential of sustainable unionism across the sectors of that country. A central component of this strategy is the development of sustainable general manufacturing unions.

### Tanzanian Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO)

Some unions in Africa have realised that their survival depends on the unity of workers in the country - irrespective of the sector. One such union is the Tanzanian Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO). The union was formed ten years ago. When it was formed it moved away from a narrow sector union to a more inclusive or general union. The union organises workers from about five different sector of the economy, including metal, textile, energy, commercial and banking sectors. They also organise workers in the informal sector.



Samuel Lyimo, TUICO education director, using trade union material produced by the union

The IMF began working with TUICO in 2003 on a project to improve the union's capacity to produce education materials and conduct their own union education and increase membership. When IMF started the project the union had around 28,000 members. Today the union has grown to have more than 50,000 members. The union has achieved this growth despite continued loss of members through retrenchments. The project has managed to train more than 400 shop stewards and produced materials on collective bargaining, health and safety, women in the trade union and workplace and labour laws.

The IMF feels that in order for the labour movement to be able to survive in Africa it needs to develop unions similar to TUICO. There are manufacturing industries in Africa and we need to bring workers in different sectors together in solidarity. This approach will also assist unions to combine their resources to greater effect. Today TUICO is one of the unions that can be classified as self-sustainable.

# SPECIAL REPORT

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE UNIONS IN AFRICA



SATU union members on strike in April 2007

### Swaziland Amalgamated Trade Union (SATU)

Five years ago the IMF, working closely with NUMSA, embarked on a project to build and assist the union in Swaziland to merge and form a stronger metal union. Over the years some unions in Swaziland were known as “briefcase” unions – as they essentially consisted of a general secretary operating from his briefcase. These unions had no resources and no full time staff.

The IMF project produced a new union in 2003 called Swaziland Amalgamated Trade Union (SATU). The union covers about five sectors, including metal, construction, mining, commercial and security workers. The union has grown from less than 2,000 members when it merged to 3,500 today. While there have been set backs, such as some sectors being forced by the national centre to pull out of the union, the union is becoming stronger every day. Now there is a union in Swaziland that can successfully lead campaigns, including leading a strike against a Chinese TNC. The union employs four staff members and pays them from its own finances.

### Sustainable unions

The success of this union is because of the unity of workers in Swaziland irrespective of sectors. For the IMF, sector unions do not have a future in Africa. Instead, workers, their unions and the IMF must focus our resources and efforts into building self-sustainable unions that are not dependent on outside sources of funding and are better able to demand changes that will result in the sustainable development of the region.

## Zimbabwe unions merge

Zimbabwe Metal Energy and Allied Workers’ Union was launched at its inaugural congress in Harare, in February this year. The union is the result of a successful merger of four unions in Zimbabwe.

The merger was strongly supported by the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), which passed a resolution at its last congress calling for the merger of small unviable unions to reduce the number of affiliates to the national centre from 36 to 13.

In the region, IMF affiliate NUMSA also gave support to its sister union, facilitating discussions, assisting in the formulation of the constitution and providing continued support in areas such as setting up administrative systems and branch structures.

IMF regional representative, Stephen Nhlapo praised the new union saying, “This merger is an example to fractured unions all over Africa of the viability of mergers to build solidarity and create sustainable unionism, but most importantly it is a great step forward for metalworkers in Zimbabwe.”

IN MEMORIAM

## Gennadiy Trudov



Gennadiy Trudov, chairman of the IMF affiliated Engineering Workers' Union of Russia died on March 27 at the age of 64.

Gennadiy began working as a machinist at a machine-building factory in Leningrad in 1960. After graduating from the polytechnic university in Leningrad he worked as a design engineer and later as a

chief designer of the design group at a factory of hoisting and conveying equipment named after Kirov.

Since 1991, Gennadiy Trudov chaired the Russian Heavy Industry Workers' Union, later Engineering Workers' Union of Russia and the International Association of Unions of Metalworkers.

In 2000, under Gennadiy's leadership, his organization joined the IMF, later his colleagues elected him to the position of the coordinator for the IMF affiliates in Russia.

He was always deeply committed to labour issues and will be remembered as a wise leader and trade unionist who struggled for workers' rights.

## Doug Meyer



The UAW has merged the governmental and international affairs department with legislative affairs, which is headed by Alan Reuther. Doug Meyer has been named deputy director for international and governmental affairs of the UAW.

Meyer, 50, comes from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) where he served as the associate research director for

the last four years. Before that, he was director of research and international affairs for the International Union of Electronics Workers (IUE) for 18 years, where he worked closely with the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM).

Meyer served on the IMF Electronics Industry Steering Group and was a lead organizer for the IMF-GE World Council Meeting in Washington, DC in 2000. He has a doctorate in economics from American University.

## Steve Beckman



The UAW bid farewell to Steve Beckman who retired after serving for 22 years in the UAW's governmental and international affairs department.

Beckman, who was named director of the UAW's international affairs department in 2004, was involved in major U.S. trade negotiations (Uruguay Round, U.S.-Japan Framework, NAFTA) and legislation giving testimony before House and

Senate committees on behalf of the UAW.

Beckman got his start in the labour movement in 1976 as an intern in the AFL-CIO Research Department. He went on to the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) and the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO where he worked on international trade, technological change and collective bargaining.

## Gabriell Ackim Phiri



Gabriell Ackim Phiri, 53, was elected as general secretary of the National Union of Building, Engineering & General Workers (NUBEGW) in Zambia in November 2006.

Phiri entered the union movement at the age of 21 as an indentured apprentice in the Mufulira copper mine, now the Mopani copper mine. He began working as a fitter and turner, later learning the trade of

machinist.

Many challenges face NUBEGW and its members. Phiri says his hopes are "very big." As general secretary he wants to grow the union to make it self-sustaining, improve conditions and salaries for members, and bring stability to the union. "There is plenty of room to grow," says Phiri.

## This is the IMF

**The International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) represents workers in the metal industry. The IMF was founded in 1893 and has its head office in Geneva, Switzerland. Currently the IMF represents the interests of 25 million metalworkers in 200 affiliated unions in 100 countries.**

The IMF endeavours to build a strong metalworkers' movement throughout the world. The Action Programme adopted by the last IMF Congress, in 2005, presents four major areas of activities: working for an alternative economic programme, organising the unorganised, promoting solidarity and fighting for human and trade union rights.

The highest decision-making body of the IMF is the Congress, which meets every four years. Between Congresses, the Central Committee, consisting of the delegates of all affiliated unions, meets every second year. The Executive Committee consists of 25 members elected by the Central Committee and usually meets twice a year.

The IMF head office, where the Secretariat is located, is in Geneva, Switzerland, where world-wide activities are coordinated with a network of regional and project offices:

- East and Southern Africa - Johannesburg, South Africa;
- South Asia - New Delhi, India;
- Southeast Asia and the Pacific - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;
- Latin America & Caribbean - Santiago, Chile and Mexico City, Mexico;
- CIS - in Moscow, Russia (project office).

The IMF has also developed regional and sub-regional structures for Africa, Asia and Latin America. In some countries, the IMF-affiliated unions have formed Country Councils.

To coordinate activities in specific industrial sectors, the IMF has industrial departments for the following sectors: aerospace, automotive, electrical and electronics, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding, and iron, steel and non-ferrous metals.



**For the address of the IMF head office in Geneva, see page 2. The addresses for regional and project offices are:**

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E-mail: sao@imfmatal.org

### SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Selangor Darul Ehsan  
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fax: (60/3) 56 38 7902  
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## Calendar 2007

### JUNE

- 03 – 06** Toyota Working Group, Bangkok, Thailand
- 12 – 13** IMF meeting on the implementation of the Rheinmetall International Framework Agreement, Neckarsulm, Germany
- 20 – 21** IMF Communicators' Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
- 24 – 26** IMF Working Group on Ford, London, United Kingdom
- 26 – 28** IMF Shipbuilding Action Group Meeting, Mumbai, India
- 26 – 28** Workshop on Chinese Trade and Investments in SADEC Countries, Johannesburg, South Africa

### JULY

- 12 – 13** National Workshop on the Abolition of Protection Contracts (Mexico), Mexico
- 23 - 24** IMF 13th Sub-regional Committee Meeting for Southeast Asia & the Pacific, Jakarta, Indonesia

### SEPTEMBER

- 03 – 07** SKF World Council, Gothenburg, Sweden
- 10 – 12** IMF co-ordinating workshop for Russian autoworker unions, St Petersburg, Russia
- 10** Eastern Europe workshop on organising women in electronics supply chains, Budapest, Hungary
- 12 – 14** IMF sub-regional meeting for Southeast Europe, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 26 – 28** IMF working party on trade and development, São Paulo, Brazil

### NOVEMBER

- 26** IMF women's workshop on precarious work, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
- 27** IMF Executive Committee Meeting, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
- 28 – 29** IMF Central Committee Meeting, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

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# Learning to lead

*Aghni Dhamayanti was recently elected to the National Board of the IMF-affiliated trade union Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (SPMI), after she and other women began solving problems in their workplace and became more involved in the union.*

**JAKARTA INDONESIA** When Aghni Dhamayanti first started working at the Toshiba plant in Bekasi, outside Jakarta in Indonesia, there was no union. Yet she and her workmates were experiencing many problems so together with a friend they decided to form a union, affiliating it first to SPSI Indonesia, then eventually to the SPMI. As Aghni points out, many women are forbidden by their husbands or other family members from becoming active in the union. As a result, women's participation in SPMI was extremely low.

In 2003, IMF launched a project with SPMI, funded by the Swedish trade union centre LO-TCO, that aimed to organise more women workers and increase their role in the union. As a result, the union managed to increase the number of women members from 29,780 in 2003 to 42,272 in 2006. SPMI also focused on changing its union structures to enable increased participation of women. At its Congress in December 2006, SPMI adopted rule changes for a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women at all levels and elected women, including Aghni, onto its National Board for the first time. The number of women leaders at the branch level also increased from 18 per cent in 2003 to 25 per cent in 2006.

Aghni compares the initial impact of the project on the women of SPMI to entering kindergarten for the first

time. "Before the project, I only looked at issues at the plant level. The project enabled me to share information with women from other plants and regions and for us to encourage each other. By 2004," she says, "we felt that we had progressed to elementary school as we began to learn how to be leaders." When speaking of the four women now on the union executive, Aghni stresses that it is 'us' not 'me' – she sees the women's struggles and achievements as collective, not individual. While Aghni holds the position of women and youth empowerment on SPMI's National Board, the other women are responsible for finance, international relations and education, enabling the women to get involved in broader policy issues affecting the union.

Aghni says that thanks to the higher profile of women in the union, many women leaders are now emerging at branch and sectoral level. "In general there is a much greater awareness of women's issues in the union. For example, women usually only work in assembly line positions, although they would have the ability to progress further if they were given access to skills training, but they are not. In Indonesia, married women pay more tax and medical insurance than married men – after marriage men expect women to take care of the children so usually they resign from work."

Despite the problems, achievements are being made. For example, in Aghni's plant, pregnant women were accumulating poor absenteeism records as they were forced to skip work to attend medical appointments. The plant union was able to negotiate paid leave



Aghni Dhamayanti hopes to create new women leaders

for pregnancy medical checks and thus keep women's absenteeism records low.

Aghni describes her journey through the union as a gradual opening of her mind to issues beyond her plant to first the national and then the international trade union movement, and a recognition of the issues that unite women. "The most important thing for me is to create new women leaders who can work together and change things for the better."

Jenny Holdcroft

## AGHNI DHAMAYANTI

**Country:** Indonesia

**Position:** Vice President, Women and Youth Empowerment

**Union:** SPMI

**Interests:** Reading, listening to music, tennis