



International Trade Union Confederation

GENERAL COUNCIL

Brussels, Belgium, 29 November – 1 December 2017

Agenda item 14:

The Regions

(b) Americas

The General Council is requested to approve the report of TUCA.

17GC/S/14(b)

ITUC Frontlines and Priorities

Region: Americas

- Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA).

Frontlines – 2017

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN THE REGION OVER THE LAST YEAR (September 2016 – October 2017):

CONTEXT: Workers in the region still face many difficulties and there has been a return to neo-liberal structural adjustment measures in most countries, aimed at reducing social and workers' rights. There is a clear preference for business-friendly free market policies. Many countries in the region are undergoing austerity reforms which affect social protection and undermine other social rights. The reforms are presented as the State's only solution to containing the fiscal deficits.

In Brazil we are witnessing the strongest attack on workers' rights in 100 years, through a number of reforms implemented by the illegitimate government. The negative impact that the "Brazilian example" will have is of enormous concern, given what this country represents in terms of the region and the world. Argentina continues to pursue a backward agenda that is affecting jobs and adding to the poverty of millions of people. In Venezuela, following a period of serious conflict and violence resulting from the political and social crisis which led to over a hundred deaths, the country has stabilised after electing a National Constituent Assembly and holding gubernatorial elections. The situation remains difficult, however, owing to the economic crisis and the shortage of food and medicines, high inflation and speculation over goods and services. In Colombia the recently signed Peace Agreement is at risk from the government's aggressive anti-grassroots measures and the persistent violence that has led to scores of assassinations of social leaders, including trade unionists. In other countries in the region we are also witnessing the steady loss of democratic space and a rise in authoritarianism expressed through violence and the criminalisation of social organisations and their leaders, including trade union organisations. TUCA is working with its affiliates to respond to this situation, maintaining its political vision of the need for trade union to remain on the offensive in the face of the attacks by governments and employers, strengthening its internal structures, bringing in more workers and acting as an instrument of democracy.

HIGHLIGHTS 2016-2017

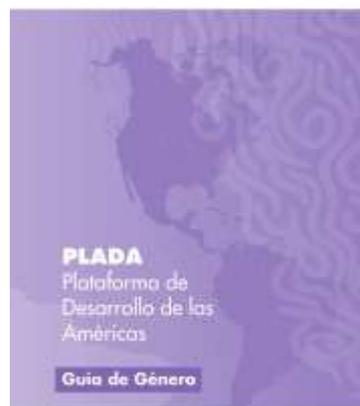
1. PLADA IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: the implementation strategy for the PLADA (Development Platform for the Americas), begun 2014, will continue throughout 2017 and 2018 in two directions:
 - Empowering affiliates: Continuing to increase affiliates' knowledge of PLADA and give them the skills to develop strategies that will impact on development policy (NATIONAL PLADAS).
 - Action Plan:
 - ✓ Continue with the presentations on PLADA at the national (national centres) and subregional (sub-regional coordinators) level.

✓ Training strategy:

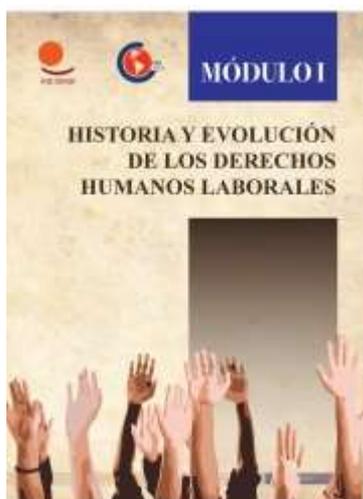
- Include PLADA in national centres' training plans;
- Foster distance learning and face to face training on PLADA by the TUCA (Schools network and TUCA-ECLAC courses) and make the manuals available.
- Disseminate the PLADA guides that we have: PLADA Gender Guide, PLADA Youth Guide, and PLADA Human Rights Guide;



Cursos en Línea sobre la PLADA



Cursos en línea sobre la PLADA



- ✓ Continue to publicise the TUCA's development proposals and make them visible to governments, multilateral and international organisations, political parties and social movements.
- ✓ Strengthen the environmental content of PLADA in the TUCA's political action with its affiliates, allied organisations and governments, at the national, regional and international level.
- ✓ Continue to strengthen the focus of TUCA and its affiliates on gender, and the active and effective participation of the women workers in America in decision-making fora, and on promoting the sustainable development agenda.

2. REGIONAL INTEGRATION:

- The regional situation has changed in the last few years, and radically so in the last year and a half (e.g. the political victories of Macri in Argentina and Trump in the US, the political coup orchestrated in Brazil in 2016). We find ourselves at present with conservative governments in many Latin American countries, including in the most important and influential ones. There is a clear attempt to dismantle the regional integration mechanisms (MERCOSUR, UNASUR and ECLAC) to facilitate the implementation of the neo-liberal agenda in the region. These developments, together with the current regional and global economic crisis, have led to a reduction in, amongst other things, social and labour rights.
- Trade negotiations between Mercosur and the European Union are progressing. But society at large does not know what is being negotiated or conceded by the Mercosur governments. It is essential that there be transparency in the negotiations.
- UNASUR is still without a general secretary since 2017, and is operating at reduced capacity.
- The 8th EU-Latin America and Caribbean Trade Union meeting organised by the ETUC and TUCA was held on 2 and 3 October. It adopted a statement highlighting the problems faced by the workers of both regions and the action that should be taken by governments.

3. ALLIANCE BUILDING POLICY:

TUCA continues to strengthen its policy of building alliances between trade union and social struggles. The **“Continental Day for Democracy and Against Free Trade”** launched in Havana in 2015 with the involvement of several regional and national associations continued in November 2016 with dozens of joint mobilisations and actions by its members. The initiative continues in 2017 and the centrepiece will be the big meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, to be held on 16 to 18 November. Various actions have been organised to mobilise people for the Continental Day, including in Colombia in the framework of the Intermediate Assembly of the Coordination of Latin American Rural Organisations (Asamblea Intermedia de la Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo - CLOC) and the trade union’s participation in the May Day events in Bogota. This united effort seeks to give a response not only in terms of resistance but also by setting out an alternative agenda to the neo-liberal model, with each sector presenting their initiatives.



4. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: continuing and strengthening the Continental Campaign begun in 2013, with the following highlights in 2017:
- Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS, ILO Conference) 2017: trade union participation at the 106th ILC’s CAS was solid and coordinated, thanks to prior preparation with ITUC-TUCA affiliates and the Global Unions, including a regional preparatory meeting (Montevideo, March 2017) at which the proposed list for the CAS was discussed as well as the trade union position for the other committees at the 106th ILC. We defended the ITUC-TUCA in the sessions on the individual cases in the Americas, calling for the adoption of conclusions with clear and specific requirements for governments to take the necessary measures to protect workers’ rights. As part of this process, a regional meeting was held to evaluate the CAS (Sao Paulo, August 2017) with affiliates to reinforce the political strategy for our participation in future CAS meetings and the ILO’s supervisory mechanisms.

- Inter-American Human Rights System: trade union participation and involvement in the OAS's Inter-American Human Rights System has grown stronger, with contributions to the strategic planning of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), thematic hearings before the IACHR, and the definition of emblematic cases to be presented to the contentious jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Hearings before the IACHR included one on freedom of association in Paraguay (April 2016) denouncing the increasing persecution and repression of the trade union movement in Paraguay, and a hearing on freedom of association in Mexico (December 2016) denouncing the persistent and generalised use of employer-sponsored collective agreements which obstruct the democratic and independent collective representation of workers. In October 2017, there was an individual hearing on Brazil concerning the negative impact on workers' and human rights of the labour reforms and on Argentina concerning the criminalisation of trade union organising and the work of labour lawyers.
5. **WORKING WOMEN'S COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAS (CMTA):** the Working Women's Committee of the Americas (TUCA/CMTA) held its first post-Congress meeting in Guatemala on 3 and 4 September. In addition to an analysis of the situation in the region and its impact on women workers, the meeting examined TUCA's strategic plan, highlighting the gender perspective contained throughout the strategy for the coming years. The meeting also prepared the CMTA's work plan and approved two CMTA statements. One [Statement](#) condemned the parliamentary coup in Brazil and the other [Statement](#) expressed support for the peace process in Colombia.
 6. Violence at the workplace: work has been going on to impress on governments the urgent need for a new ILO convention to stop Gender-Based Violence at the Workplace, which is on the agenda of the ILC 2018. There has been follow-up to the questionnaire that was sent out with the deadline of 15 October 2017. Forty three (43) organisations took part in revising and sending out this tool.

Climate Justice and Industrial Transformation

- Influencing national development policies:
 - Deepening the strategy of influencing government policy to ensure a new paradigm for production, distribution and consumption, in line with the model defined by PLADA in order to guarantee fair transition in face of the impact of climate change.
 - Strengthening the position of trade unions in their countries through the organisation of workshops to prepare for trade union participation in the Bonn COP.
 - United Nation Commitments: supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development regarding climate change and the fulfilment of the Paris Agreement, to guarantee that States respect the commitments made in both forums.

Taming Corporate Power in Supply Chains

- In accordance with the Strategic Plan approved by the Executive Committee in October 2016, two regional activities were held with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES). One was attended by several civil society organisations and TUCA, to discuss the impact of the activities of multinational companies in the region and the other was attended by 11 national centres affiliated to TUCA, one friendly organisation and the Trade Union Federations, to discuss the same theme, this time linking it to the world campaign for a Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights. Both events helped reaffirm TUCA's policy on an integral approach to action targeting multinational companies and their production strategies through the Global Value

Chains. It recognises the need for a comprehensive approach (training, organising, legal work and lobbying) to the action of the national centres and TUCA, in coordination with the ITUC, through the Campaign to End Corporate Greed, and the global unions.

- There is also a need to form alliances with social movements to take joint action with them, two fundamental initiatives being the Continental Day for Democracy and Against Neoliberalism and the work towards the adoption of the Binding Treaty.
 - Project with DGB- Bildungswerk on Value Chains: The project began in February 2017, with the objective of supporting affiliated national centres in Argentina; Brazil; Costa Rica; El Salvador and Panama, developing strategies to protect workers' rights in supply chains. The aim is to maximise the work being carried out under the project to End Corporate Greed coordinated by the ITUC. The following activities have been carried out so far: An analysis of the level of involvement so far and the prior experience of the national centres working on the issue of global value chains. Basic distance **learning course on "Global Production Chains and Trade Union Action"** with the following objectives: 1) Discussing the changes in the labour world and how Global Value Chains represent a new form of work organisation; 2) Comparing experiences in the region regarding the monitoring of multinationals and decent work in Global Value Chains and 3) sharing tools from different areas that contribute to strengthening the work of participating trade union organisations in dealing with Global Value Chains. Fourteen national centres participate in the course, with a total of 129 people, of whom 50 are women (38.75%) and 35 are youths (27.35%).
- ✓ Regional Meeting. Objectives: Share a general analysis of the activities of multinational enterprises and global production chains and their impact on the labour world; Define the principal lines of action and strategies of the trade union movement of the Americas within the framework of the project **"Strengthening trade union action to defend workers in the supply chains of the Americas"** and establish agreements and responsibilities. The meeting was held in Sao Paolo from 25 to 27 September and the principal lines of action adopted were on training, organising and raising awareness of this issue, both within the national centres of the project partner countries and affiliated trade unions, establishing a road map that would link up with other areas of work and programmes by TUCA and its affiliates in the five project partner countries.
- 2016-2020 GTDIH ACTION PLAN:
 - ✓ In line with the objective of bringing unions together within the campaign for a Binding Treaty on Multinational Enterprises and Human Rights, TUCA took part in the third session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights, at the end of October in Geneva. We worked in coordination with the ITUC and other Global Unions to ensure that the trade unions' view was included in the "Elements" document drawn up by the Government of Ecuador, which chaired the Working Group. Initiatives and actions were similarly coordinated with the organisations that have joined the Global Campaign for a Binding Treaty.
 - Strengthening alliances with the Global Unions: Two meetings of the Global Unions Regional Council were held (March and August 2017) to follow up on the joint work agenda. There was also a joint tour of Colombia and Chile, to back up unity and coordination between the national affiliates of TUCA and the Global Unions.

Eliminating Slavery

- Forced labour: The TUCA's strategy and plan of action for the elimination of forced labour was strengthened at a continental meeting in July 2017 in Buenos Aires at which there was an in-depth discussion on forced labour at the world, regional and national level, and participants were informed of the ITUC campaign for the ratification of the 2014 Protocol on forced labour.

Progress and setbacks in the policy to combat forced labour and modern forms of slavery such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation and the worst forms of child labour are constantly monitored in coordination with the affiliates. The strategy and plan of action include the targets of the ITUC's Frontlines campaign "Eliminating Slavery" linked to Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, and the situation in global production chains.

- Eradicating Child Labour: TUCA has been working to strengthen the organisational structure and impact of the Continental Network to Combat Child Labour, including a communications component (social media) and preparations, in coordination with the ITUC, for trade union participation in the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour (Buenos Aires, 14-16 November 2017). The preparations are aimed at achieving solid, coordinated and united participation, to ensure we have a political impact on the debates and outcome of the IV Conference. Sub-regional trade union preparatory activities were held in the second half of 2016 and first half of 2017 in the Southern Cone, the Andean area, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean, and a tri-partite regional meeting, attended by affiliated national centres, friendly organisations and the international trade union federations. This process included looking at the progress made in our participation in the Regional Initiative for a Latin America and Caribbean Free of Child Labour. We also worked on coordinating our strategies for the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, particularly on achieving SDG 8.7, and two documents were published: the book Outlook and Actions of the Trade Union Movements of the Americas on child labour and the pamphlet Trade Union Movements of the Americas and the fight against child labour, both designed to be used for the IV Conference and for our activities in the next few years.

Countries at Risk

- Guatemala: constant continuation of the **"Decent Work for a Decent Life" Campaign** supporting affiliated organisations in submitting complaints to the ILO Committee of Experts on the **Application of Standards** about the Guatemalan government's lack of political will to tackle the impunity of the widespread systematic violation of trade union and workers' rights, in a clear failure to respect the Road Map signed by the government and the ILO.
- Haiti: continuing to provide international solidarity by helping to strengthen the Haitian trade union movement. TUCA continues to provide trade union cooperation in Haiti, helping to promote the right to organise, social protection, gender equality and trade union unity. In 2017 a video was produced in [Spanish](#), [English](#), [French](#) and [Portuguese](#) showing how international cooperation has contributed to strengthening the trade union movement in Haiti.

Global Coherence and Development

- Strategy for the implementation of the PLADA: to continue the process that began in 2014, the aim is to make progress in the five main areas of the strategy for the implementation of the PLADA, namely:
 - Capacity building for TUCA national affiliates on PLADA, so that they can elaborate strategies to influence national development policies;
 - Strengthening the TUCA's networking, to coordinate the implementation of the PLADA;
 - Making studies/analyses on national and regional development policies;
 - Training and strengthening the participation of TUCA affiliates in global debates on development;
 - Presenting PLADA to governments, multilateral and international organisations, political parties and other social actors: Drafting of the Pamphlet on the link between the PLADA and the SDGs; production and dissemination of a video on the PLADA and the SDGs.
 - Creation of two materials: "Turning the PLADA into National Strategies – **Facilitator's Manual**" and "**Participant's Manual**".

- National Workshops on the specific contents of the PLADA, linking them to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (possibly with technical support from ECLAC) – attended by members of the Development Cooperation Network (TUCA-TUDCN) and the Working Group on Hemispheric Development and Cooperation (Grupo de Trabajo sobre Desarrollo e Integración Hemisférica - GTDIH).
- **Production of the document “Comparative Political Perspectives - the PLADA and the 2030 Agenda”.** The document establishes a dialogue between the 2030 Agenda 2030 and the agreements set out in the PLADA.
- Trade Union Development Cooperation Network: reinforcing the influence of the network on development and cooperation policies (in particular the implementation of the 2030 Agenda) through the direct link with ECLAC, which will coordinate the monitoring of the SDGs in the Americas;
- Social Protection: TUCA is working at the national and regional level to campaign for universal social protection in accordance with the Social Security Platform for the Americas (SSPA/PLACOSS). National workshops were held in seven countries in the region (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic and Paraguay) to strengthen the capacity of affiliated national centres to put forward proposals and impact policy on social protection. Two regional meetings were held. The first was aimed at making progress on trade union action to guarantee social protection for migrant workers in the Americas region through multilateral agreements like the Multilateral Iberian American Social Security Agreement. The second regional meeting was on “Fiscal Reforms and Social Protection”, looking at what is happening in the region in order to analyse the situation and prepare a strategy for trade union action, to resist regressive reforms and advocate for reforms that guarantee better coverage and more rights. One of the strategies adopted was to add the defence of universal social protection to the goals set out for the Americas on the 7 October, the World Day for Decent Work. In the framework of the WDDW affiliates can report on the actions they have taken on TUCA’s social media fora (Twitter and Facebook).
- Studies have been written on Fiscal Policy, Social Protection Floors and the Care Economy for Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. TUCA’s Social Security Network, which is used to share trade union experience regarding social security, has been expanded.
- TUCA is taking part in alliances to achieve the SDGs, such as the *Social Protection, Freedom and Justice for Workers Initiative* on goal 1.3 and the Global Deal Initiative on Social Dialogue and Decent Work.

Global Governance of Migration

TUCA’s Migration Working Group has reinforced cooperation between affiliates both at the level of the continental working group and also in the Southern Cone, Andean and Central American regions. Affiliated and/or friendly organisations have been involved in our work on the migration agenda from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. We have also worked to ensure the more active participation of affiliates from the US and Canada, given that they are two of the biggest migrant receiving countries in the world. Workshops and seminars have been held with the support of the DGB Bildungswerk and ILO/Actrav. The work carried out has led to trade unions signing bilateral and multilateral trade union, political and technical cooperation agreements. In Brazil TUCA and its affiliates in the country were consulted as representatives of the labour world during the drafting of a new Migration Law by social organisations directly involved in the process. The working group also played a crucial role in supporting the participation of affiliates in the 106th ILO Conference, in the Committee for Labour Migration. The technical coordinator of the working group together with three other representatives took part in the ILC, and prior to the ILC the working group prepared a document that was used by trade unionists in the region participating in the conference. In August TUCA represented workers at the regional consultation meeting on the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, organised in Chile by ECLAC.

Count Us In!

ITUC Campaign "Count Us In!": Work has been done to strengthen the training of women leaders in Guatemala on empowerment, participation and leadership, with a view to developing action to promote the respect of international agreements and conventions on equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the labour world. Progress has been made on analysing the situation regarding social protection coverage (in terms of the opportunities and challenges for the trade union movement with a special focus on women); on the basis of this analysis conclusions were drawn about the strategy to be followed by TUCA, following through on the principal lines of action approved by the TUCA's working women's committee, such as violence against women and the care economy, in order to develop strategies to influence policy at the national and regional level.

There has also been work to improve the coordination of the activities of the national level Gender Departments to help give political guidance to the trade union activity of women workers. We have helped these departments meet and work together in a coordinated fashion on matters of common interest to women workers, overcoming the gender gap and achieving equity and equality in trade unions and in society at large.

Domestic Workers

"Domestic Work: Work like no-one else, rights like anyone else" campaign. Work has continued on strategies to influence policy to ensure the implementation and ratification of C189. There have been 13 ratifications, in the continuation of the "12*12" Campaign and the joint work plan with the International Domestic Workers Federation to organise and train women domestic workers in the region.

Organising

Consolidation and expansion of the "Organisers" campaign: within the framework of the ITUC's Global Organising Academy, the TUCA continues its strategy of developing an organisers programme for the Americas. We held a Regional Organisers Academy at the TUCA headquarters in Sao Paulo in March 2017 and we sent the action plans and strategies for action to the staff responsible for the Academy in Brussels, as well as the sectors chosen by the affiliates in the priority countries in the region in order to organise the agenda of activities up to April 2018. The trade union organisers training in the Dominican Republic was consolidated through this process, and national workshops are planned for the end of November, together with the CNUS and the CASC. A workshop was held in El Salvador together with CATS from 17 to 19 October and we are evaluating whether or not the CSTS should remain in the programme. We also held a national workshop in Colombia, with the support of the ILO, with workers from affiliates of the CUT and the CTC, in Bogota, from 21 to 23 June. We are waiting for the CUT Chile, previously one of the priority countries, to decide together with the TUCA and the ITUC, whether it will stay in the programme, and we are waiting for the situation in Venezuela to normalise before beginning trade union organising in 2018 together with ASI, with a view to enlarging and strengthening the national organisers teams and increasing membership levels in the country. The next Regional Academy is due to be held in March 2018, at a place yet to be decided.