



International Trade Union Confederation

GENERAL COUNCIL

Brussels, Belgium, 15 – 17 October 2019

Agenda item 15:

The Regions

(b) Americas

The General Council is invited to approve the TUCA report.

21CG/KM – 26.08.2019

21GC/E/15(b)

ITUC Frontlines and Priorities

Region: Americas - Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)

Frontlines - 2019

PREMISES – CONTEXT IN THE REGION DURING THE 2014 – 2018 PERIOD:

BACKGROUND: The final months of 2018 and the first six months of 2019 saw a consolidation of the negative trends in the region. Be it from an economic, social or political perspective, the indicators are pointing towards a deterioration in the situation in virtually all the countries in the region. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is forecasting 1.8% growth for LAC in 2019, just 0.5 points above that recorded in 2018, and insufficient to signal levels of economic recovery in line with the region's needs. Brazil and Argentina are the two countries most contributing to this low growth rate, being two of the three largest economies in the region. Both countries have experienced a sharp rise in unemployment, underemployment, informal and precarious employment since implementing a social and labour reform agenda. The entire region has been strongly affected by the deterioration in the social situation. According to ECLAC, high unemployment rates, which had been consistently falling between 2000 and 2014, are returning as a result of the economic decline and the commodity crisis in the region. Without the social protection mechanisms introduced in most countries, notes the Commission, the impact on the majority of the population would be much worse. The conservative governments currently in power, however, opposed to the social protection mechanisms that have been strengthened or created over the last two decades, have been focusing their energies on dismantling social security, divesting and reducing public spending.

The region is also seeing the advance of conservative political agendas. The electoral victories of Duque in Colombia and Bolsonaro in Brazil were followed by the election of Bukele in El Salvador. Bolsonaro and Bukele are characterised by their ultraliberal stance on the economy, their ultraconservative political views and their alignment with the foreign policy of the United States. The US government has hardened its policy towards countries in the region that are not allies (Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia) and is pressing the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean to block or limit the influence of China and Russia, which are increasingly present in the geopolitical battle in this part of the world.

The rise in hate speech, xenophobia and racism in many countries is a cause for great concern. Colombia once again has one of the highest rates of violence in the world. Over 700 social and political activists have been killed in the country since January 2019. In Brazil, meanwhile, former president Lula is still in prison, despite increasingly solid proof of his innocence. The violence has also been intensified in Brazil, targeting small farmers and indigenous communities in particular, as has the criminalisation of social and political protest.

HIGHLIGHTS: 2019

The TUCA started the process of moving its head office from São Paulo to Montevideo, at the same time as continuing with its work programme and activities, which represents a major political, financial and organisational challenge. It is also on the point of concluding the process of updating the Development Platform for the Americas (PLADA) and preparing for its 4th Congress, to be held in April 2020. The current climate in the region also requires the TUCA to follow the situation closely and assist affiliates confronted with national emergencies, as well as the conservative trends and the growing attacks on democracy in the region.



1. Strategy for Updating the PLADA: Responding to the need to reaffirm the vision of the trade union movement in the Americas in light of the changes in the region, the TUCA embarked on producing a new policy tool, the Development Platform for the Americas (PLADA), which was launched in 2014. This document remains applicable, in the main, being the result of broad discussions involving the national confederations affiliated to the TUCA together with social movements working in alliance with trade unions. The PLADA, however, now needs to be updated, for political and programme-related reasons. Two subregional meetings have already been held and the process of updating the text is set to culminate in November 2019 with the release of a new document. We should underline that the PLADA will not be rewritten but updated. It is with this aim in mind that the TUCA has called on its affiliates, together with sister organisations, social networks and movements, to take part in a new cycle of debates and proposals to bring it up to date, maintaining the substance in terms of the action plans and priorities, and making the changes required – removing, adding or amending elements of the text – to update it.



2. Alliance building policy: The TUCA has continued to strengthen its strategy of alliance building between trade unions and social movements fighting for the same cause. We support alliances with social and political movements involved in defending the interests of the working class, consolidating democracy and sovereignty, working towards more and better social rights and promoting an alternative agenda for the Americas.

The Continental Conference for Democracy and against Neoliberalism, a process launched in 2015, is an initiative bringing together a diversity of social movements, organisations and expressions of public opinion in the Americas. It is a platform reaffirming the principles of solidarity and internationalism that unite us, together with the commitment to keep up the fight for a systemic change tackling capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism and racism. We are calling for participation in the Antiimperialist, Solidarity Meeting for Democracy and against Neoliberalism, to be held from 1 to 3 November 2019 in Havana, Cuba, where the agenda of priorities will be updated and the joint initiatives for the forthcoming period will be determined.



3. Violence and harassment against men and women in the world of work: To restore dignity to women and scale up efforts in the fight to prevent and eradicate harassment and violence against women in the world of work, all TUCA affiliates stepped up their political lobbying in the region and advocacy at state level. All affiliates rallied behind the strategic priority to End Gender-Based Violence in the World of Work - 15 Days of Activism (25 Nov – 10 Dec), staging more than 27 different activities during this period across the continent, from Canada to Argentina. We succeeded in rallying

massive support from TUCA affiliates and securing a large delegation of women from the Americas at the 108th ILC, enabling a strategic impact on all the work of the Standard Setting Committee, which secured the adoption of C190 and R206. The results obtained are the fruit of the time dedicated to mobilising support and to lobbying governments, as well as the alliances forged with the women's movement, coordinated, in the Americas, by the TUCA and, above all, its Women's Committee (CMTA).

ITUC Congress 2018

Pillars, Thematic Areas and Goals

Pillar 1. Peace, Democracy and Human Rights

Countries at risk

- Guatemala: Criminalisation of collective bargaining denounced. Trade unions in Guatemala assisted with action taken vis-à-vis governments and employers to secure the implementation of the country's commitments within the framework of the ILO, following the closure of the Commission of Inquiry procedure by the ILO Governing Body.
- Haiti: Death threats against trade unionists denounced. Monitoring of commitments following the ITUC-TUCA-ACTRAV Mission regarding the Better Work programme. Heightened destabilisation and violence in the country as a result of the governance crisis linked to corruption allegations and other governance issues.

Migration and Slavery

- Participation in the meeting organised by ACTRAV to validate the workers' guide on Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, held in Denpasar-Bali (Indonesia), to contribute to the effectiveness of this tool as a guide for worker training activities.
- Reactivation of the TUCA Trade Union Network on Migration, with follow up activities at subregional level and participation in training activities with ACTRAV.

Peace and Disarmament

- Support for the initiatives of Colombian trade unions in response to the peace process crisis. Solidarity activities in Colombia and in front of the country's embassies to denounce the violence and the failure to comply with the peace agreements. Event to mark solidarity with Colombian trade unionism and the relaunch of the Peace Campaign at the 2019 ILC.

Pillar 2: Regulating Economic Power

Jobs, Shared Prosperity

New Social Contract with a minimum labour protection floor:

- Implementation of the project "Inequality, poverty and the pathway to social security" coordinated by the TUCA and financed by the Olof Palme Center (OPC), in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic, strengthening trade union action on social protection. Studies into national proposals on social protection, the care economy and fiscal policy. Production of outreach materials on trade union proposals regarding social protection systems.
- Trade union participation in international forums on social protection. (Participation in the discussion on the General Survey of the CEACR on Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors at the 108th ILC; 8th World Social Forum on Health and Social Security. Bogota, Colombia).

Corporate Power:

UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights

- Participation in the process of drafting the Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights being discussed in the United Nations, with **the writing of comments on the “Zero Draft” of the text together with social organisations involved in the Global Campaign.** Lobbying of governments in the region. Participation in the Campaign coordination meeting in June 2019 and the discussion session.
- Activities conducted within the framework of the Global Supply Chains project, aimed at developing knowledge on the issue among affiliated organisations from five countries in the region through:
 - A distance learning course on “Global Supply Chains and Trade Union Action” (second edition), lasting 10 weeks. Content covered during the course:
 - I. TUCA introduction – Global Supply Chains – decent work and the development model in dispute.
 - II. Labour Rights in Global Supply Chains and in Export Processing Zones.
 - III. International Regulatory Framework and Global Supply Chains.
 - IV. Trade Union Action to Tackle Global Supply Chains.
 - An information kit produced within the framework of the project on Global Supply Chains.

The kit includes:

- ✓ Educational guide: <http://csa-csi.org/Include/ElectosFileStreaming.asp?FileId=4785>
- ✓ Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvEhrIFActg>
- ✓ Booklet - <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/materiales?projector=1>

Multilateralism

Multilateral reforms, labour rights and union participation

Trade union participation in the OAS General Assembly

Delegates from the TUCA, the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and Colombian trade union centres took part in the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), meeting in Medellin, Colombia, from 26 to 28 June under the banner “Innovating to Strengthen Hemispheric Multilateralism”, during which they presented the trade union declaration to government delegations, expressing the trade union vision and position on the socio-economic and political climate in the region, characterised by the rollback of social rights, political authoritarianism and the radicalisation of the neoliberal agenda. It also provided an opportunity to outline the trade union priorities on labour and trade union rights, migrant workers’ rights and the future of work.



Trade Union Delegation at the OAS Assembly, 2019 Trade Union Presentation at OAS Assembly, 2019

Pillar 3: Global Shifts - Just Transitions

Industrial Transformation and Just Transition – Climate

- Systematic inclusion of the Just Transition in the discussions at the 3rd Regional Conference on Energy, Environment and Work. Formulation of the Just Transition strategy to update the Development Platform for the Americas, as part of the economic and environmental pillar.
- Regional trade union meeting to prepare for the COP25 in Santiago de Chile. Presentation of the Just Transition perspective developed by trade unions and allied social movements. Coordination of social and trade union initiatives for COP25.

Industrial Transformation – Future of Work

- Participation in regional initiatives to develop the trade union position at the ILO discussion on the Future of Work within the framework of the ILO Centenary. Discussions within the TUCA Executive Board to determine the overall strategy.
- **Regional seminar on “The Future of Work, Global Supply Chains and Challenges for the Trade Union Movement” on 21 to 23 May, attended by 59 colleagues, including 39 representatives of the 13 trade union centres from the five countries taking part in the project, representatives of the region’s Young Workers’ Committee (CTJA) and Women’s Committee (CMTA), together with representatives from sister organisations and social movements such as the World March of Women (WMW), Movimento Atingidos pela Barragem (MAB - Movement of People Affected by Dams), Repórter Brasil; the ENS (National Trade Union School of Colombia) and other allied organisations.**
- The Future of Work, Work of the Future from a Gender Perspective
- The TUCA and its affiliates have strengthened the decent work agenda and freedom of association as priority issues for women workers of the Americas within the context of the future of work and the work of the future from a gender perspective, devising a range of proposals to improve policy advocacy strategies. National workshops have been held on this theme with CUT Chile; CUT and CTC Colombia; CUT-A Paraguay; CTA-T and CGT-RA Argentina, and CTRN, Costa Rica; as well as a regional workshop, held in Bogota, Colombia, in October 2018.
- Raise awareness and propose initiatives to foster more gender equality and shared social responsibility in the provision of care.
- Influence company and government policy, to stop reinforcing the view that the ideal worker is a worker with no family responsibilities.
- Discuss strategies to combat the ever-growing informalisation of employment resulting from technological change, and identify initiatives to transition towards the formal economy (ILO Recommendation 204).
- Discuss and foster the changes needed for trade union organisations to adapt to new ways of organising work.

Pillar 4: Equality

Economic Integration of Women

- Awareness raising among young organised workers about patriarchy and the direct effects on women, especially young women, many of whom are mainly engaged in care work and unpaid work and are highly vulnerable to many forms of violence. The aim is to empower women within all spheres of trade union activity, not only within the structures for young people but within the trade union organisation as a whole.

Organising against Discrimination and Exclusion

- The affiliated organisations from Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Guatemala have held training activities for women, geared towards women’s empowerment and policy advocacy, which have contributed to strengthening women’s leadership. As a result of this process, 90% of the TUCA’s affiliates now have women’s committees.

- The trade union movement has been strengthened thanks to the implementation of gender equality policies, within the framework of the trade union self-reform processes, which have contributed to promoting women's empowerment and leadership, and the design of strategies and initiatives working towards parity. The rate of women's participation in decision-making structures is over 30% among 52% of the TUCA's affiliates, and 31% have reached parity. This is the result of gender policies that have been drawn up and adopted by 90% of the trade union centres.
 - The need to include and/or adapt clauses within collective bargaining agreements to promote gender equality and to reconcile work and family life. Costa Rica, for example, has ratified C156. Substantial progress has been made in the recognition of and respect for domestic workers' rights, with the ratification of C189 in Peru and the drafting of a bill on the implementation of the Convention in Dom. Rep., for example.
 - Young trade unionists, through the Young Workers' Committee of the Americas (CJTA), have confirmed their interest in and their commitment to promoting campaigns against discrimination of any kind, be it within TUCA-affiliated organisations or at national level. Many are actively taking part in mobilisations and movements defending the rights of people of African descent, migrants, LGBTIQ+, abortion rights, etc.
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