



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada

**THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT REPORT**  
**TO THE**  
**CLC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

February 11-12, 2008  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

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**1. DEFENCE AND PROMOTION OF WORKERS RIGHTS**  
**AND DECENT EMPLOYMENT**

International

- The CLC participated in the ITUC General Council in December in Washington. The agenda included discussions on “Building the New Internationalism”, Climate Change, Gender Equality, China, and the mobilization for an International Day of Action on October 7, 2008.
- Attendance at ITUC/TUAC consultation in November and preparations for stakeholders forum in early 2008 on engagement of the trade union movement on issues related to civil society and aid effectiveness, taking into account the current Aid Effectiveness Agenda, and the review of the 2005 Paris Declaration.

Andean Region

- Sent a letter to Prime Minister Harper to support the Bolivian constitutional process, and against the attempts to bring down the government of indigenous leader, Evo Morales.

Guatemala Solidarity

- Participated in the high level conference on Impunity and Fundamental Workers Rights in Guatemala sponsored by the ITUC at the end of January.

Haiti Solidarity

- Contributed support to the Haitian Federation of Workers (CTH).

### Kenya Solidarity

- The CLC released a Statement on January 3, 2008, in solidarity with Kenyan workers and their families. Continue to monitor the situation where violence, murder and displacement of communities has taken place following disputed results of the 2007 Presidential elections.

### Zimbabwe Solidarity

- Monitoring situation through Zimbabwe Reference Group. Met with DFAIT and CIDA officials to discuss Canadian government engagement plans.

### Pakistan

- Since President Musharraf declared a state of emergency, and following the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the situation in Pakistan continues to be tense. Radical terrorists along the Afghan border place Pakistan's arsenal of nuclear weapons potentially at risk.
- The CLC issued a statement to support the demand of trade unions and democratic organizations in Pakistan and supports a UN sponsored international inquiry into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

### Iran

- The government continues its oppression against the independent workers' movement, including long prison terms, torture, intimidation, house searches, confiscation of union materials, refusal of medical care for prisoners.
- Protest letters continue from many unions around the world, including the CLC and its affiliates. CLC staff assisted the ITF and the EU to meet with independent trade union members and their families in Iran.

### Philippines

- A recent study by the International Trade Union Confederation has labeled the Philippines one of the most dangerous countries for union activists, second only to Colombia. In light of this, workers' groups and NGOs are inviting Canadian unions to organize a mission to the Philippines.
- The mission aims to shine an international spotlight on the repressive conditions of workers in the country. It also aims to delve into the impact of Canada's foreign investments, trade and aid on Filipino workers and the labour movement there. Areas to be visited include the free-trade zones in Luzon and a mining operation.

### Burma

- Atrocities in the ethnic states include rape, forced displacement, forced labour and extrajudicial killings on a daily basis. The strong spirit of resistance of the people accounts for the increasing strength of opposition organizations. In response to our letter, the Canadian Pension Plan Board sent a letter to emphasize that they are also monitoring the situation with regard to human

rights and any potential risk to companies in their portfolio and they have started engaging with a small number of Canadian companies with regard to their operations in Burma, and their ability to comply with Canadian government sanctions.

#### Letters of Protest and Solidarity

- Please note that letters of protest and/or solidarity continue to be written to heads of government worldwide, in the defence of human and workers' rights. These letters can be found in the International Section of the CLC web site.

## **2. UNION BUILDING/CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND CEE**

### 2a) Labour International Development Program (LIDP)

- All overseas projects under the 2002-07 program were concluded at the end of September. A final report that reflects the results and achievements of the LIDP 2002-07 is available from the International Department.
- Approximately 30 projects will be implemented in the course of the 2007-2012 cost-shared program in the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, aimed at strengthening the role of trade unions in the promotion of equitable global development. In this reporting period, project plans and budgets were finalized and training was provided to LIDP staff on project management.
- Briefing of CIDA representatives prior to field missions and meetings with LIDP partners in Namibia, South Africa, and Nicaragua.

### 2c) HIV-AIDS Labour Fund

- Working with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) to strengthen existing projects financed by this Fund.

### 2d) Gender and HIV-AIDS Project in Mozambique

- Monitoring the last of the project in collaboration with CUSO.

### 2e) Shenzhen Workers Empowerment Project, China

- The Shenzhen Dagongzhe Migrant Worker Center in South China was the target of several attacks in October and November 2007. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, its legal representative, Huang Qingnan was stabbed by two unidentified men and very gravely injured. The Center will reopen after the Chinese new year and will again provide legal consultation and education to workers. The Center is promoting knowledge regarding the forthcoming New Labour Contract Law – in force as of January 2008.

2 g) Other

- Steve Benedict and David Onyalo, attended the Founding Congress of ITUC-Africa at the end of November, 2007. David is the current National Representative responsible for Africa.

**3. TRADE, DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

Colombia

- Week of Action on Colombia at the end of November as part of a national campaign to stop negotiations of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated. The Week of Action included:
  - a 'Fax your MP' link on the CLC main web page with an article on Ten Reasons Why the Canada-Colombia FTA is a Bad Idea;
  - special events and resolutions passed at the Conventions of the BC, Ontario and Quebec Federations of labour;
  - a march to the US consulate in Toronto to protest the "Bush-Harper" Alliance as part of the larger OFL march to Queen's Park;
  - protests outside Conservative riding offices in Calgary and Pictou County, NS;
  - events at the University of Edmonton and at Amnesty International in Ottawa.
  - CLC was instrumental in securing a letter to Parliament on US Congress Letterhead by a group of congress people from the Democratic Party and also sponsored the visit to Ottawa of Congressman Michaud to speak to Canadian politicians.

Korea

- The Canadian Labour Congress and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions signed a joint statement in opposition to a free trade agreement between the two countries. Deep concern was expressed that such a trade deal will greatly weaken fundamental workers' rights and labour standards for workers in both countries

**4. COOPERATION WITH CLC AFFILIATES, OUTREACH TO THE MEMBERSHIP AND CAMPAIGNS**

- Affiliates in the LIDC contributed funds for a resource person to speak at various labour and other venues across Canada about Colombia. Activities included lobbying the MPs in the two relevant parliamentary committees on the Canada-Colombia FTA (International Trade and Foreign Affairs).

### Labour International Development Committee (LIDC)

- Tsunami, HIV/AIDS and International Aid is a new 19 minute video, jointly developed and funded by the LIDC, now available as a tool to raise awareness and provoke discussion on the difference between charity and solidarity in international development. The video is available in English and French. A discussion guide is in the works to accompany the video, and should be available soon.

## **5. OUTREACH TO CANADIAN CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Participation in meetings and discussions on Canadian aid policy at the Aid Reference Group of the Canadian Council on International Cooperation (CCIC). Current work is focused on preserving an understanding of civil society, as an actor in its own right, in international development frameworks.
- Attendance at regular meetings of the CCIC Board of Directors and Executive Committee
- Cooperation with the Halifax Initiative, a coalition of development, environment, faith-based, human rights and labour groups, on various initiatives and issues related to the international financial system and its institutions, and Canada's role.
- Continuing participation in the CCIC Americas Policy Group (APG) with special emphasis during this period on the Colombia campaign.

