



E-MAIL CIRCULAR

Geneva, 15 June 2012

**To: affiliated organizations
(to the Executive Committee for information)**

Concerns: Decisions of the IUF 26th Congress

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The IUF 26th Congress, held in Geneva from May 15-18, 2012, was the largest and most representative in the organization's history, with 393 delegates representing 152 affiliated organizations taking part. Of the delegates with voting rights, 39.9% were women, up from 28% at the 2007 Congress - in part a result of the 2007 rules changes mandating at least 40% women's representation. The entire Congress was marked by a great spirit of participation, commitment and solidarity, establishing an ambitious agenda for the IUF's work over the next 5 years and beyond. Excerpts from the proceedings can be viewed at <http://www.iuf.org/26thcongress>

Participation from delegates was active and informed, setting the tone for the entire Congress. The practical work of the Congress was organized around four aspects of the Congress theme "Organize, fight and win!": winning the fight against precarious work, winning the fight for food rights and a sustainable food system, organizing to build a stronger IUF, and winning politically. For each of these, and for the secretariat's related areas of work, Congress approved a set of objectives and action points defining the secretariat's mandate for the current Congress period (attached as "Organize, fight and win!: the 2013-2017 mandate").

Franz-Josef Möllenberg kicked off the session on precarious work with a keynote presentation. The session on winning the fight for food rights and a sustainable food system included a panel discussion with UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Olivier De Schutter, David Nabarro, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Food Security and Nutrition and Miguel Pestana of Unilever, with UK Guardian journalist Felicity Lawrence as moderator. The session on "Winning politically" included a panel on the 'Arab Spring' with unionists from Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria emphasizing labour's central role as a catalyst and guarantor of democratic struggle, and the many challenges still facing workers and democrats in both Africa and the Middle East, as of course elsewhere. In this political context PSI general secretary Peter Waldorf presented the organization's campaign for Quality Public Sources, which had to be defended as an integral component of labour's fight for defending public goods as an anchor of social welfare and democracy.

All of these form part of the Congress mandate for "Building a stronger IUF" which included organizing the IUF as an effective international force, in the first instance as an effective force for challenging the major transnational companies where so many IUF members are present or need to be organized. Organizing in both TNCs and in sectors required fully functional, integrated and militant organizations capable of responding rapidly and effectively in order to defend members and organize new ones. Winning recognition and engagement with more companies was a vital element in this work, as was strengthening women's representation.

Commitment to the IUF's transnational company work and culture of solidarity was highlighted by the enthusiastic reception for the launch of the "We are the 53!" campaign in defense of dismissed union members at the Nestlé factory in Panjang, Indonesia, and the associated campaign fund. The Panjang dispute was settled with all the union demands being met less than 7 days after the Congress. Congress also voted support for new or ongoing organizing and solidarity campaigns in a number of other companies and sectors around the world.

Amendments to the Rules

Congress adopted the following changes to the IUF Rules:

Article 4 — Membership

14. The Executive Committee shall have the right to suspend, and the Congress shall have the right to expel, an affiliated organization, after charges have been preferred by another affiliated organization or by the Administrative Committee, for action deemed to be in contravention of the Rules or contrary to the interests of the IUF. Provision shall be made for a hearing of charges before a decision is rendered. The procedure for such hearings shall be laid down by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall also have the right to keep in abeyance the rights and privileges of an organization as an affiliate of the IUF as long as the Executive Committee deems it necessary.

DELETE “have been preferred by another affiliated organization or by the Administrative Committee”

REPLACE WITH “have been recommended by another affiliated organization to the Administrative Committee or have been preferred by the Administrative Committee itself”

Article 9 — The Administrative Committee

44. a) The Administrative Committee shall consist of the President, the General Secretary and eight Vice-Presidents, of which at least two should be women. The President and Vice-Presidents shall be elected by Congress from among the titular members of the Executive Committee.

Congress shall also elect a substitute for each of the Vice-Presidents from among the titular members of the Executive Committee.

The composition of the AC shall take into account the IUF policy on fair representation, i.e. that neither men nor women should have less than 40% representation. In addition the Presidents of any IUF Trade Group representing 10% or more of the membership of the IUF and the President of the Women's Committee shall have ex-officio positions on the Administrative Committee. The Vice-Presidents of these Trade Groups and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Women's Committee shall act as alternate members.

DELETE “of which at least two should be women”.

REPLACE WITH “of which at least four shall be women”

DELETE “The composition of the AC shall take into account the IUF policy on fair representation, i.e. that neither men nor women should have less than 40% representation”

REPLACE WITH The rule covering women's representation in the Executive Committee (Paragraph 37) shall also apply to the Administrative Committee.

44. b) Should a Vice-President retire from her/his position, the Executive Committee shall designate her/his successor from the same region, preferably seeking to ensure that s/he is from the same country as the retiring Vice-President such that at least one Vice-President is a woman. The same rule shall apply for alternate Vice-Presidents.

DELETE: “*such that at least one Vice-President is a woman*”.

REPLACE WITH “The rule covering women’s representation in the Executive Committee (Paragraph 37) shall also apply to the eight alternate Vice-Presidents.

Article 13 — Special Groups

65. Unions affiliated to the IUF shall have the right to form special groups. Such groups shall be governed by statutes which shall not conflict with the principles of the Rules of the IUF and shall be communicated to the IUF. Member unions of the IUF belonging to such special groups shall have to take into account the policy and the decisions of the IUF in their activities.

66. In the case that unions not affiliated to the IUF shall be admitted to membership in such a group, there shall be previous consultation with the IUF. Such unions shall not be members of another international organization of food and allied workers.

67. To ensure the best possible contacts, the governing bodies of such groups shall invite the IUF General Secretary or her/his representative to participate in the meetings of the group concerned. S/He shall have a consultative voice in these meetings. Minutes of group meetings shall be communicated to the IUF Secretariat.

68. At the request of the IUF General Secretary or of the governing body of the group concerned, problems arising shall be solved to the extent possible by mutual consultation.

DELETE existing text and **REPLACE WITH**

Article 13: Special Groups

65. In order to further advance the general work of the IUF, unions affiliated to the IUF and/or the secretariat shall have the right to propose and form special groups. Special groups' overall activities and objectives shall be governed by the policies and Rules of the IUF.

66. The establishment of any special group shall require authorisation from IUF governing bodies. Such authorisation shall be given only when a proposed special group has established an agreed purpose with concrete objectives, a plan for the work of the special group and a financial plan regarding resources (including but not limited to resources from the IUF's general fund), initial working languages and the specific role of its members in the running of the special group.

67. Membership in special groups shall, as a rule, be limited to IUF members in good standing. Exceptions will require the specific authority of IUF governing bodies.

68. The IUF General Secretary and/or a representatives designated by her/him shall be ex-officio members of any and all special groups.”

Appendix 2 to the IUF Rules

Regulations Governing the Functions and Duties of the General Secretary

5. The General Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of the official organ of the IUF (News Bulletin).

Paragraph 5

DELETE “for the preparation of the official organ of the IUF”

REPLACE WITH “for the IUF website and other such periodical publications as may be approved by the Executive Committee”.

Membership

Congress gave a particularly warm welcome to the new affiliation, for the first time, of unions from Burma and Palestine.

Elections

Congress unanimously re-elected Ron Oswald and Hans-Olof Nilsson to another term as IUF General Secretary and President, respectively.

The results of elections to the IUF governing bodies can be found in the lists attached.

Affiliation Fees

Congress unanimously agreed to the following membership fees over the coming five years:

2013: Full fee to be set at CHF 2.80

2014: Full fee to be set at CHF 2.90

2015: Full fee to be set at CHF 3.00

2016: Full fee to be set at CHF 3.10

2017: Full fee to be set at CHF 3.20

Congress mandated the IUF Executive Committee to review the use of the transnational companies fund at the 2015 EC meeting and determine whether the fund requires additional support. If it determines that it does, the EC would have the authority to adopt an additional CHF0.10 increase for one or both of the years 2016 and 2017 to replenish the fund.

Resolutions

A full list of resolutions adopted by the Congress is appended. In addition, Congress adopted Statements: (1) in support of the Living Wage Campaign spearheaded by the trade unions in New Zealand and (2) in support of our Swiss affiliate UNIA and the 1,250 Geneva-based employees of pharmaceutical giant Merck-Serono in their fight against the company’s plans to close the Geneva site.

With very best wishes, I am

Yours in solidarity,



Ron Oswald
General Secretary

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Encl:

- 1) Organize, fight and win!: the 2013-2017 mandate
- 2) Adopted resolutions
- 3) Newly elected governing bodies