

No 2 - May 2010

UNI Commerce

Bulletin

UNI  
global  
union

## CONTENTS

- Shoprite Checkers signs global agreement
- European Alliance for Work Free Sundays
- EWC project
- Trends for Japanese Department Stores
- Union Alliance Activities
- Pick'N'Pay Union Alliance Launched
- Global Employment Trends

## May Issue

### Shoprite Checkers signs global agreement with UNI

On 23 February 2010, Africa's largest retailer, Shoprite Checkers, signed a global agreement with UNI Global Union; and thus became the first African retailer to join the growing family of corporations that wants to be modern socially responsible employers. The agreement ensures respect for core labour standards such as the right to organise and bargain collectively and prohibits any use of forced labour and child labour and any form of discrimination.

Shoprite Checkers is a company with a high social profile and which states on its corporate website, that in addition to be profitable to its investors it aims at: "being a responsible corporate citizen fully aware of its obligations to the broader community." It puts a lot of resources into numerous social and community activities for example mobile soup kitchens and the sponsoring of football (soccer) teams.

The UNI Shoprite Checkers Union Alliance has high hopes and expectations for the development of a constructive dialogue with the company.

#### It is all in the timing!!

While the media often paints a bleak picture of Africa the signing of the global agreement comes at a time when especially Sub-Saharan Africa has endured long lasting economic growth and increased political stability, and thus has developed into an area of great interest to investors. Though Shoprite Checkers is the biggest of the retail chains, it is by no means the only one. Competition is increasingly fierce from chains like Pick'N'Pay and Massmart, and rumours has it that Walmart is on its way to South Africa.

The continent further experienced the expansion of multinational and regional corporations; and in many ways these companies are monopolistic and due to their competitive advantage in new technologies, they tend to drive small and medium enterprises out. Whilst this development brings with it a number of challenges, it is also an opportunity to strengthen co-operation amongst UNI affiliates in Africa and globally to counter the race to the bottom, so often imposed by these corporations.

Therefore, we will continue our work to strengthen the trade unions in Africa and insist that multinational corporations show respect for people e.g. by allowing workers to freely join trade unions and create decent jobs and healthy and safe working conditions.



From the signing of the agreement. At the table centre: Philip Jennings and Callie Berger (Shoprite, HR Director)

You can read more about Shoprite Checkers and the UNI Shoprite Checkers Union Alliance at the new commerce multinationals portal: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/20090202\\_vhfkEn](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/20090202_vhfkEn)

To read more about Shoprite Checkers' corporate policies, go to: <http://www.shopriteholdings.co.za/pages/1019812640/Home.asp>

Keith Jacobs,  
UNI Africa Commerce



## European Alliance for work free Sundays

UNI Europa Commerce is strongly supporting the creation of a European Alliance for work free Sundays. Sunday closing is not only a matter for employees in the retail sector but a society issue, about protecting leisure, family and rest against consumerism and asocial working hours. On 24 March in the European Parliament, UNI Europa Commerce together with its allied organisations from political, religious and civil rights background organised a key conference that gathered more than 400 participants. The conference has shown that beyond traditional diversity, unity can be achieved on core issues, like fighting against Sunday work. In parallel, the EU Commission has reopened the debate on the working time directive, in which the commerce sector unions will express their claims in order to improve retail workers' employment conditions.

### EWC-project

On 14 April a seminar on the EWCs in companies based in Nordic countries and the UK (Tesco, H&M, IKEA, Jysk, Marks&Spencer, Sportsdirect.com, Ahlsells, ICA among others), was held in Elsinore, Denmark. 30 shop stewards and union reps participated in the seminar. Participants learned about the special role EWCs have in promoting decent work and implementing GA in global retail companies and how working with and in EWCs can be organised.

More seminars on EWCs will be held this year covering companies based in France and Germany.

You can read more about EWC here: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/participationatwork/ewc.htm>

*Fabrice Warneck, PO,  
UNI Europa Commerce*



## Trends of Japanese Department Stores: Fast or Slow Fashion?

Japanese department stores are groping for survival. Sales at department stores nationwide in March 2010 decreased 3.5 % compared to the same month in the previous year, marking 25 consecutive months of negative growth. Nine stores have been closed down in 2009 and another 11 stores are anticipated to follow the same fate in 2010. Are there alternatives for department stores in Japan to survive? There seem to be two different ways of tackling this issue. One is offering a wider variety of high-end goods at flagship stores. For example, ISETAN SHINJUKU focuses more on sales of up-market items. The other is hooking up with the so-called enemy, "Fast Fashion". In



March, TOBU department store had ZARA open a shop in one of its branches in the Tokyo metropolitan area. UNIQLO, which is a leading fast fashion retailer in Japan, has opened three new stores in both TAKASHIMAYA and SOGO and, Forever 21 has established one in GINZA MATSUZAKAYA, one of the oldest Japanese department stores. Specialized stores attempt to expand business by opening new outlets in conveniently located department stores. On the other hand, department stores hope to attract the younger generation. Those two intentions have coincided with each other and led to such mutual collaboration. Let's wait and see how this alliance will turn out.

*Atsuko Danjo, International Affairs,  
Japan Federation of Service and Distributive  
Workers Unions (JSD)*



## Union Alliance Activities

UNI Commerce's work with setting up union alliances in target companies continues. 18-19 May the Carrefour EWC (CICE) will hold a seminar followed by the Alliance's first meeting on 20-21 May. On 14-15th June in Berlin, a union alliance in Metro will be launched. The Metro EWC (Euroforum) closely with the Alliance to represent all around the world. The Alliance works to establish a good global dialogue with the company and aims to achieve a strong global agreement. Metro has publicly welcomed union participation in its Indian operation, a principal UNI Commerce believes must cover all of Metro's operations.

### **Pick'N'Pay Union Alliance Launched**

On 28<sup>th</sup> April unions met in Johannesburg to set up a union alliance in Africa's second largest retailer Pick'N'Pay. The meeting was chaired by UNI Africa President and SACCAWU General Secretary Bones Skulu, who said: "The Pick'N'Pay Union Alliance will ensure worker-to-worker contact and offer global solidarity as the company expands across Africa and beyond." The Pick'N'Pay Union Alliance which brings together union reps and shop stewards from Africa and Australia aims to organise workers in Pick'N'Pay, its subsidiaries and franchises, establish national shop stewards councils who will keep workers mobilised and informed and to negotiate a global agreement with Pick'N'Pay. The meeting uncovered a number of challenges e.g.: organising workers in franchise stores, labour brokers and wage inconsistencies between workers.

*Contributions by John Musonda, UNI Africa  
and Jakob Thiemann, UNI Commerce.*

## Global employment trends

In March the ILO published a report on the development of the global economy in selected sectors during the crisis years 2008-2009. The report described the global trends within a number of key sectors with retail and wholesale being one of them. The report is updated every quarter and the current issue was prepared on the basis of statistics from 56 countries covering 85% of all countries that produce monthly or quarterly labour force surveys worldwide. 30 of those were developed economies while 26 were developing/emerging countries.

Across all sectors a pattern of the Asian-Pacific region being more resilient than the rest of the regions has appeared, with job losses being almost twice the number in the developed economies as in the developing/emerging economies.

However, in retail/wholesale the development was opposite to the global trend as the APRO-region has lost 7 million jobs from the beginning of 2008 and until October 2009, or about 30% of the employment in about 21 months. Over the same period of time European employment dropped from 32.432.900 to 31.998.500 and the trend is the same for the Americas, which started out at 30.469.700 employed and ended with 28.959.100 employed (about 5% drop). These figures conceal big variations within each region, for example

the unemployment rate for the USA continues to be just under 10 %, also in the retail/wholesale sector. That APRO is hit so hard in this survey may be a result of the limited number of countries in the pool including Japan with a near-collapsing retail sector, where monthly earnings have dropped by about 9.5% (also, see page 2).

There is consensus that from the outset of the crisis men suffered higher degrees of unemployment than women because building and construction sectors were hit hardest and first, and as the crisis spread women followed suit.

In retail/wholesale there is a similar picture with women and men reaching job losses around 9.6% on average. This result was achieved by a sudden increase in job losses among women in the third quarter of 2009.

You can find the report on:

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_124478.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_124478.pdf)

The EU retail market has shown signs of stabilization as announced job gains now almost equals announced job losses. During the report period, companies like Carrefour, Metro and Tesco has reduced their number of employees with about 6100 while LIDL, ALDI and IKEA have announced the creation of around 3800 new jobs across Europe.

Read more: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?and=en&catId=89&newsId=751&furtherNews=yes>

## Forthcoming Events

18-19.05.2010: EWC (CICE) CARREFOUR Seminar, Nyon, Switzerland

20-21.05.2010: UNI CARREFOUR Global Union Alliance Meeting, Nyon, Switzerland

18.06.2010: UNI Europa Commerce Steering Committee, Copenhagen, Denmark

18.06.2010: CICE Carrefour, (Steering Committee) Paris, France

11.06.2010: European SD, Brussels, Belgium

14-15.06.2010: UNI METRO Global Union Alliance Launch, Berlin, Germany

21.07.2010: UNI Americas Steering Committee Meeting, Colombia

22.07.2010: UNI Americas Walmart Alliance, Cartagena, Colombia

9-10.09.2010: METRO EuroForum (Steering Committee), Barcelona, Spain

13-17.09.2010: Establishing SD in MNCs in Africa & Middle East, Cairo, Egypt

16.09.2010: CICE CARREFOUR, (Steering Committee) Paris, France

22-23.09.2010: UNI Europa Commerce Steering Committee, Brussels, Belgium

24.09.2010: European SD Working Group, Brussels, Belgium

27-28.09.2010: UNI Apro Commerce Steering Committee, Jakarta, Indonesia

8.10.2010: 2nd EWC Seminar, Berlin, Germany

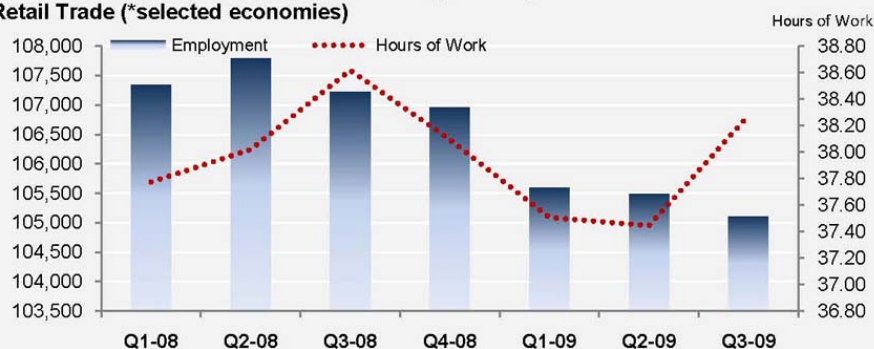
19-21.10.2010: CICE CARREFOUR Plenary, France

**9-12.11.2010: 3rd UNI Global Union World Congress, Nagasaki, Japan**

29.11.2010: European SD Plenary, Brussels, Belgium

## Wholesale & Retail Trade

**Figure 12.1: Employment ('000s) and Average Weekly Hours of Work in Wholesale & Retail Trade (\*selected economies)**



Source: ILO based on National Labour Force Surveys and Official Estimates of each Country. Data for European Union Countries are provided by Eurostat. \*Selected Economies Include: Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (China), Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macau (China), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan (China), Thailand, United Kingdom and United States.

### UNI global union

8-10 Av. Reverdil  
1260 Nyon  
Switzerland

Tel: + 41 22 365 2100

Fax: + 41 22 365 2121

[contact@uniglobalunion.org](mailto:contact@uniglobalunion.org)