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UNI Commerce

Bulletin

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UNI
global
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August Issue

UNI
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Feature: equal opportunities

This issue is dedicated to highlight the work to promote equal opportunities in the global retail sector and in commerce unions. To UNI Commerce it is not merely a strategic target but a matter of course that men and women are given equal opportunities in all aspects of life including in working life.

Breaking Through for Women in Commerce

Dear colleagues,

Women represent the majority of workers in the commerce sector in most countries around the world. But their participation in union activities and structures on local and national level as well as in UNI Commerce Global Union is not yet a true reflection of their membership.

Many commerce unions have made tremendous efforts over the past years to ensure through collective agreements or legislation that men and women are treated equally in the workplace and to improve the conditions for women workers with regards to their particular needs regarding work-life-balance. Men have been encouraged to share family responsibilities in order to enable women to continue their career.

It is now time for UNI Commerce Global Union to make a break through in terms of women representation in its decision-making structures and meetings at all levels.

UNI Commerce Global Union will work closely with affiliates and the UNI Equal Opportunities department in order to analyse existing global agreements with multinational companies regarding their provisions on equal treatment of men and women and how these

provisions are being implemented.

Considering the lack of women's representation in the global decision-making structures of UNI Commerce global union, the UNI Commerce Global Conference in 2009 decided to provide for additional titular seats to be attributed to women for each region. These provisions will be reviewed at the next UNI Commerce Global Conference in 2013, with additional seats and other pro-active measures being removed as and when 40% representation of women has been achieved.

We strongly encourage all UNI Commerce affiliates to help us achieving this aim by adopting strategies and actions which provide women workers and union activists with the appropriate opportunities, including training and capacity building, gaining experience through participation in sector activities and events and sharing best practice.

Breaking through for women in UNI Commerce means breaking through for all commerce workers!!

Head of Department Alke Boessiger introduced this special feature Sector Bulletin.





Equal Opportunities: a group in UNI Global Union

Technology has made great progress, and together with the increase in international commercial exchanges, it has changed work organization all over the globe. The increase in outsourcing and sub-contracting, as well as temporary work has resulted in the inclusion of millions of workers into an unequal and unstable labor market where young, migrant and women workers are particularly vulnerable. This is why UNI Equal Opportunities Department is working with the regions and each sector towards to our goal: 40% representation of women in all UNI decision-making structures!

What have we done so far? We have developed efficient communication tools, including online web resources and released news bulletins to keep you informed of all our activities to promote gender equality.

We have published two gender-oriented training manuals: Gender Equality Practical Guide for Delegates and UNI Trade Union Man-



From the publishing of the training manuals, left to right: Denise Mc Guire: UNI World Women's president, Anjali Bedekar : ex-UNI Apro Women's president, Mette Kindberg:UNI Europa Women president., Louise Plaatjies: UNI Africa Women's president

ual on International Labour Standards and Equality of Opportunities, which are available at UNI's online library. Furthermore, we designed and developed target-oriented campaigns against Discrimination, Violence and Exclusion at the work place and launched UNI's "Break the Circle" and "Violence at work" campaigns with two educational videos, train-

ing manuals and a discussion guide to open debate on gender violence issues.

Equal Opportunities is currently running a campaign on violence against women in the workplace. See more about this at:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/btc_homeEn

Equality at work in global companies
UNI Equal Opportunities Department is about to launch a first part of a research carried out on nine global companies (DEUTSCHE TELEKOM, DHL, HSBC, IKEA, KIMBERLY CLARK, PROSEGUR, SANTANDER, TELIASONERA, and WAL-MART) to analyse the importance that these global companies give to equality policies within their organizational structure. We present a report that presents the information found in each case like general information about the company, global presence, workforce, and key equality issues found in the policies in force. The department hopes this report will be a powerful tool to work towards equality in all sectors concerned.

There's still a long way to go. But nothing will stop us because we know Equality is the answer.

Visit the Equal Opportunities website:
http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/thm_20090123_khn4En



Head of Equal Opportunities Veronica Fernandez Mendez together with UNI Women President Denise McGuire (on the left.)

Japan on the Gender Offensive

JSD (Japan Federation of Service and Distributive Workers Unions)

JSD, with women making up almost 60% of its total membership, has been actively dealing with gender issues. We aim to promote gender equality in the trade union movement proportional to the number of women in the sector and to create a women-friendly working environment, where they can continue to work for some time after giving birth. To this end, JSD has set up the "Office for Gender Equal Society" with the objective of checking policies and promoting activities to strengthen the case for gender equal-

ity. At the same time, each affiliate is requested to nominate an official in charge of gender equality.

One of the most important activities of the Office is drafting guidelines for actions taken by the affiliates. Based on these guidelines, they go into negotiations with management on improvement or implementation of assistance measures to female employees raising children.


Talk Battle

To raise awareness about gender balance issues among rank and file union members, the Office also organizes a forum. In "Talk Battle", one of the main sessions of the forum, participants, men and women sitting separately, indicate their vote by YES or NO to statements on gender equality, such as "Women are more suitable for taking care of others" or "Men will be more involved in child care if they work less overtime." Sometimes "Talk Battle" reveals differences between men's and women's perception of gender roles.



From a JSD "Talk Battle"

Also, JSD encourages the government through policy proposals by RENGO to expand a support system for women aiming to balance work and life.

 Atsuko Danjo, International Affairs

UI Zensen (The Japanese Federation of Textile, Chemical, Food, Commercial, Service and General Workers' Unions)

Promoting women's participation

Out of the total membership of one million of UI ZENSEN, 54% are women. However, the ratio of women officers in National Executive Committee is only 16.7%. UI ZENSEN has been working on promoting women's participation at all levels of union activities and structures under the 4-year Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality.

Narrowing wage gap and better conditions in collective bargaining

Among full-time workers, the average wage of women workers is 67.7% of that of men. This is mainly

because there is less chance for women of promotion and their length of service is generally shorter than that of men. Through collective bargaining UI ZENSEN seeks to achieve equal treatment at workplaces and correct any company personnel systems and practices which cause wage gaps between men and women. In addition, we demand improvement of systems and measures such as paternity leave, short working hour, to support workers with family responsibilities and establishing measures to prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

Gender Equality Forum

The 8th UI ZENSEN annual Forum on Gender Equality was held in May 2010, attended by 82 male and female members who were in charge of gender equality in our affiliated unions. The theme of the forum was "reconciliation of work and family life".



Active participation during the Gender Equality Forum

As major family responsibility falls on women in Japan, it is not easy for them to continue their work. 70% of women workers who give birth leave their jobs after the first child is born even though maternity and childcare leave systems in general have been improved in the recent years. The participants discussed what measures are necessary for their members and what the unions can do so that workers can enjoy both their work and family life.



Lively engagement by participants at the Gender Equality Forum.

"This Time for Africa"

Decent work decent life: Improve collective bargaining for women.

SACCAWU organizes in the Wholesale, Retail, Hospitality and Allied sectors, which comprise mostly women, in particular young women. Formed in 1975, the Union has from its inception taken on board the interests of women.

SACCAWU has recognized the challenges posed for women members to balance maternity and family responsibilities with work. The Union has done ground-breaking work on maternity leave and later extending this to parental rights under very trying conditions of apartheid.



Active women workers on International Women's Day 8 March 2010.

Parental Rights, which includes comprehensive maternity leave, are fundamental to our campaign "Decent Work, Decent Life" for women.

SACCAWU believes this to be a central rallying cry for gender equality and the emancipation of women, and that it is the yard stick by which we measure societal response and commitment to promoting gender equality. Thus the Union already has negotiated Parental Rights Agreements at major South African based multi national companies for example Pick'n' Pay and Shoprite Checkers.

Company Based Gender Coordinators

To ensure and increase the participation of women in the collective bargaining process, SACCAWU elects company based Gender Coordinators



who sit as additional members on the collective bargaining teams. Company based Gender Coordinators are charged with ensuring that gender issues such as sexual harassment, parental rights and safe transport when working extended working hours are negotiated. We have since achieved success at some companies, for example Elleries and Makro.

National Gender Conference

SACCAWU is convening its National Gender Conference from 19-21 August 2010, to evaluate progress made with regard to the representation of women and develop strategies to increase their participation especially in the Collective Bargaining process.

Patricia Nyman-Appols, National Gender Coordinator, SACCAWU.

The Gender Struggle in Brazil

The National Confederation of Workers in Commerce and Services (Contracts-CUT) ensures the issue of gender in their political standing. In Brazil commerce is a major employer of women who often work more than the statutory 44 hours.

According to DIEESE (a labour driven research institute), women are paid less than men and equal pay only occur in places where incomes are very low. In 2009, women received 88.5% of men's income.

Women still face discrimination, sexual and psychological harassment. Underemployment and the increased use of casual/part-time workers undermine women's historically gained rights.

New Women's Secretariat

In search of empowerment of women, Contracts ensures participation of women in leadership through a quota of 30% depending on status of CUT and Contracts. In 2005, we created the Secretariat for Women to give more emphasis on gender category of commerce and services.

Among the priorities of Contracts is the struggle to strength the organization of domestic workers - a group composed mostly of women (93%) - with events like the National Meeting of Domestic Workers which took place last April.

The confederation works for the or-

ganising and strengthening of women as a collective in Contracts, guiding the creation of secretariats and collectives in trade unions and federations affiliated.

To work in a concrete way with the gender issue, Contracts holds regular seminars with the participation of all members. To ensure support and participation, the secretariats and collectives are being organized around a collective regional representative in a collective national confederation. All groups should develop a regional work plan that contributes to the strengthening of policies to advance women's worker rights in Commerce and Service, life, work and the Labour Movement.

Contracts actively participates in the national collective of women of the CUT, the Decisions for Life Project of DIEESE and the network Women UNI Brazil. Besides being present in the activities at the International Day of Women, World March of Women and the 25th of November - Day of Non-Violence against women.



Marianne at the Barricades
Unia - Swiss interprofessional trade union

In the services' sector 50% of the members of Unia are women

With a membership of 200,000, Unia is the largest trade union in Switzerland. It is present in the following sectors: construction, industry and services. 20% of the whole membership is female. But in the services sector 50% of the affiliates are women. A focus on gender issues is therefore a must. Unia's priorities lay on equal pay, family-friendly employment conditions and the battle against precarious work. Furthermore, women are granted 33% on the Board of directors and in the Congress which is the highest controlling body.

Equal pay

On average, women in Switzerland still earn 20% less than men. Yet the Swiss Constitution declares that men and women must receive equal pay for the same or equivalent work. Unia's strategy is to improve women's pay and raise low wages especially in the female



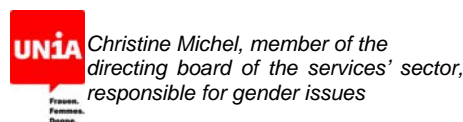
dominated services' sector during pay negotiations with employers. Unia supports law suits against pay discrimination and leads a public sensibilisation campaign for equal pay.

Family-friendly employment conditions

Since responsibility for child-care still generally falls on women, this doubles their work load or makes them accept low paid part-time jobs or even jobs with hourly wages. The introduction of the compulsory maternity insurance in 2005 after a battle of over 50 years was a significant success of female affiliates of trade unions. Unia campaigns in collective bargaining to extend the maternity leave to 18 weeks, to introduce a several weeks' paternity leave and to extend child-care facilities.

Women's mobilisation in the streets

Together with women's organisations and other trade unions Unia campaigns also in the streets: on the 8th of March for the international Women's day, on the 14th of June in commemoration of the big women's strike in 1991, and for example together with the "Marche Mondiale des Femmes" last spring (see picture).



Swedish Handels Struggles on all Fronts

As a trade union we work locally trying to improve women's conditions of employment by focusing on reducing part time work and temporary employment, stressing the importance of fulltime work and permanent employment to reduce gender inequality. Most of this is work is connected to working with active measures on gender equality at workplaces. Handels stresses that gender inequality in working life and gender inequal-

ity in family life is intertwined. For women to be able to fully be a part of the labour market there has to be a better balance when it comes to responsibilities in family life.

Handels has made it a profile issue to stress the importance of coordinated wage negotiations within the labour trade unions (LO). In this we have had success, resulting in stronger coordination on raising women wages. This by focusing on raising minimum wages and by making sure that female dominated sectors gets more money in actual raises (in difference to relative raises). The aim is to redistribute money between male dominated and female dominated sectors as well as between men and women in same sectors. In short the result in retail is that women now earn 95% of men's wages, in 2006 women earned 93,4% of men's wages.

Another important focus for Handels is to form political opinion regarding gender equality.

In our political work we focus on delivering statistics and reports in the public opinion and more specifically to the political parties, especially to the labour party with which we have a regular interaction. This way we try to establish the conditions of our members as a picture for politicians of what is important policy issues regarding gender equality to work on. As well as we take part of policy work groups between LO and the labour party regarding labour market-, welfare- and gender equality policies. Being the biggest trade union in the female dominated private service sector makes our points of view hard to neglect, even though we do not always get what we wish for – especially not this last period with a rightwing government.

Over all, Handels view is that the Swedish welfare system, built on a big public sector, providing a range of welfare services when it comes to care for elderly, children, disabled etc, is of great importance for gender equality. The obvious reason is of course that without welfare services women has less access to the economic independence full participation in labour market guarantees. Another important reason is that with a big public sector, supplying close to half of the female working force with employment with relatively good conditions, there is less risk that the

private service sector falls too much below the working conditions and wages in the public service sector. So strategically for Handels the working conditions in the public service sector is of great importance.

You can read the full article at the Commerce website which includes PPT and further brochures on Handels' work on the gender issue.



Linnéa Björnstam, research officer, Handels.

UNI Europa Commerce places Gender in EU 2020 Strategy

In a 5 pages long common contribution by the social partners to the new initiative by the EU Commission called "EU 2020: A European strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", gender was highlighted as an area of particular concern. The common contribution pointed out that the commerce sector is characterised by its young and female workforce, and therefore asked the E.U. institutions and bodies for an improved cooperation regarding labour inclusion policies with them.

Later on gender it clearly states: "Commerce in general, and retail in particular, provides an important entry point into the labour force for women who represent the majority of workers in many countries.



As stated in September 2006, by a specific tripartite meeting on the social and Labour implications of the increased use of advanced retail technologies held by the International Labour Office, the introduction of labour-saving technologies has traditionally affected women in commerce more than their male colleagues, particularly as the consequent work reorganization usually impacts on work functions with a high proportion of female employees. There is clearly a need for initiatives so that women workers in retail can share in reskilling opportunities that might be designed to support company or industry-level programmes to adjust to the introduction of new technology."

You can read the full text at the UNI Commerce website for social dialogue by clicking on this link:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/20090202_vhg3En

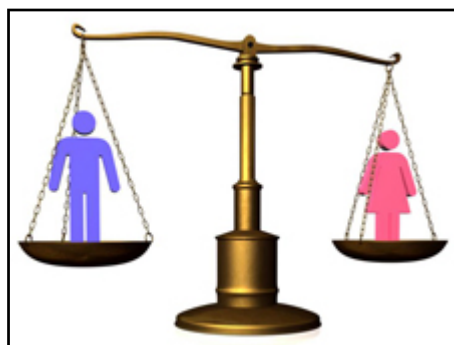
The European Commission and the database "Men and Women in decision-making"

As part of its commitment to promoting gender equality in decision-making, the European Commission established a database monitoring the numbers of men and women in key decision-making positions in order to provide reliable statistics that can be used to monitor the current situation and trends through time.

The database covers positions of power and influence in politics, public administration, the judiciary, and various other key areas of the economy. Figures are available for decision-makers at European, national and regional level (politics only) and currently cover 34 countries – the 27 EU Member States, the remaining EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), the three candidate countries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey) and one of the potential candidate countries (Serbia). The database is being updated every quarter in order to keep close to current trends. You can view the July update by following this link:

[http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?lang=en&catId=89&newsId=854&furtherNews=es)

[lan-gld=en&catId=89&newsId=854&furtherNews=es](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?lang=en&catId=89&newsId=854&furtherNews=es)



From the EU Commission's database on Equal Opportunity.

ILO and Equal Employment Opportunities

Over the past two decades, a wealth of experience, lessons learned, tools and resource materials have been developed to address gender concerns in various intervention areas of employment promotion.

The ILO provides technical support to the constituents through undertaking knowledge development and advocacy, tools development, capacity-building, policy advice, and technical cooperation projects for direct job creation, in particular, targeting poor women and men in the informal and rural economy and in post-crisis countries. See link below.



Links provided by Affiliates on the Gender Issue

www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/GAP

www.wageindicator.org

www.lrs.org.za

www.ilriqsa.org.za

<http://www.unia.ch/Frauen.822.0.html>

[http://www.unia.ch/Gleichstellung.939.0.html?](http://www.unia.ch/Gleichstellung.939.0.html?&L=1)

[&L=1](http://www.unia.ch/Gleichstellung.939.0.html?&L=1)

<http://www.unia.ch/Lohngleichheit.4356.0.html>

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/thm_20090123_khn4En

http://www.ilo.org/employment/Areasofwork/lang-en/WCMS_DOC_EMP_ARE_GEN_EN

Other Sector News

UNI America Commerce

On 21st July in Rio de Janeiro the 5th UNI Commerce Americas Steering Group meeting was held.

The meeting was presided over by the Sector's President Ricardo Patah. Natalia Duque and Juan Moreno from Wal-mart Chile, Olinto José Teonacio from Wal-Mart Brazil, José Luis Oberto, Eduardo Pérez de San Román, Ramón Fernández, William Pedro Ruiz and Gil Castro from Sentracos attended the meeting as guests. Ricardo Patah announced that he could not continue in his position as the President of UNI Americas Commerce Steering Committee and he proposed Otto Mataroma to take his place; the Committee unanimously approved the motion.

For further information contact Marcio Monzane on email: marcio.monzane@uniglobalunion.org

UNI Europa Commerce

The Steering Committee adopted a resolution on Sunday and night/late evening working hours which strengthen our position on the issue: "Late night and Sunday opening creates serious social problems for commercial workers and their families, and threatens cultural values and social fabrics of our societies, without bringing real added value, neither to the industry itself, nor to its workers and the consumers."

Read the full text on UNI Europa's website: http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/20090205_yeptEn

UNI Africa Commerce

On 21-22. September a first workshop on social dialogue in the MENA Region (Middle East North Africa) will be held in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop will be cross-sectoral with the participation of unions from the Graphical Sector and is financially supported by the Nordic Commerce Unions Solidarity Fund. Affiliates from across the region will take part

in the meeting which also will hear presentations from the ILO and EuroCommerce.

Launch of Shoprite Project

On 17-18 August the Shoprite project was launched. The project runs in 4 countries in the Sub-Sahara region and will support the work of the already established UNI Shoprite Union Alliance. The project aims at strengthen the capacities and capabilities of the target unions to work locally, nationally, regionally and globally and targets the unions of Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia. The new capacities are meant to make it possible for the target unions to continue their work so that in the future, they will be self-sustainable and ready to take on the struggle with national as well as multinational employers. The project runs until 2010. For more info contact Keith Jacobs on email: keith.jacobs@uniglobalunion.org.



The four unions in the project are NAFAU, SINECOSSE, CIAWU and NUZIWI. Present at the launch were also Michael Tau from SACCAWU which provides essential support. Present at the launch was also Lars Jönsson from Swedish Handels representing the project sponsor LO-TCO.

SACCAWU's International Work

SACCAWU consciously subscribe to the principle of working class internationalism. National issues have become international issues because of the increasing globalisation of the global economy with Multi National Corporations at the forefront of this development. In many instances, trade unions find themselves at the receiving end as a consequence. Well, since that is the case, it is imperative that workers should rise up to the challenge as the train of global commercial integration is leaving us behind.

Lisema Lekhoana is International Relations Officer, SACCAWU and he is doing an internship at UNI Commerce as part of the Diploma course at the Global Labour University.



The solutions may not be that of having to usurp state power and the means of production in the short term, given the permeated and entrenched command of the current economic system but workers need to respond through their numbers and solidarity.

Global agreements

I am of the view that Global Agreements are worth debating and giving a try but it is also important to state that as a consequence, trade unions in the south need to be at the forefront of the policy debate and occupy the policy making space and process.

Right now the Southern African Custom Unions and the Southern African Development Co-ordination/ Cooperation are entities which are not about workers rights and security at the workplace. A long term goal should be pushing for a coherent labour legislation regime in the region in an incremental process. This approach will also serve to prevent a race to the bottom, skewed distribution of investment, wealth and development in the region, as well as human capital migration because of the search for better pastures. A means to this end could be to form super unions which could be working regionally and cross-border and help enforce Global Agreements and other voluntary schemes that trade unions and MNC participate in. For South Africa and SACCAWU Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia are of crucial importance and much bilateral work is already taking place.

New member of staff

Prior to joining UNI Europa Commerce, I started with trade union at European level in the ETUC where I worked for 3 years as a project assistant on the European Social Dialogue. Following that I worked 1 year as a conference organizer on the "Civil Society Dialogue with Turkey" project. Of Belgian/Tunisian origin I speak French, English, Spanish and some Arabic. *Amel Djemail joined the UNI Commerce team in June. Her email is: amel.djemail@uniglobalunion.org.*



Forthcoming Events

1-2.09.2010: GSCP general meeting, New York, USA

3.09.2010: Meeting with INDITEX, New York, USA

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

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

21-22.09.2010: Building SD in MNCs in Africa & Middle East, Cairo, Egypt

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

29.09.2010: Meeting with HERO & LOTTE Management, Jakarta, Indonesia

8.10.2010: 2nd EWC Seminar, Berlin, Germany

19-21.10.2010: CICE CARREFOUR Plenary, Nice, France

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

29.11.2010: European SD Plenary, Brussels, Belgium

1-2.12.2010: CENCOSUD Alliance, Florianopolis, Brazil

Important information

As from 1st September 2010, the **union-network.org** domain name will no longer be in use.

All your old contact email addresses should now be changed and your email messages must be sent to:

firstname.name
@uniglobalunion.org

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