



## BWVI Affiliates Call for Protection and Creation of Jobs During the Economic Crisis

Global unemployment in 2009 could increase over 2007 by a range of 18 million to 30 million workers, and more than 50 million with the situation likely to deteriorate, the International Labour Office (ILO) said in its annual Global Employment Trends report. "The ILO message is realistic, not alarmist. We are now facing a global jobs crisis. Many governments are aware and acting, but more decisive and coordinated international action is needed to avert a global social recession," ILO Director-General Juan Somavia said.

This prediction has become a reality for various industries and many countries throughout the world, with varying intensity and has far reaching socio-economic implications on the labour force and mobility.

Not only are the real economies of the industrialized countries are being impacted but the crisis has spread to emerging and developing countries, where millions of low-income workers have been dramatically impacted by the rising food and fuel costs. As per World Bank estimates, the price surges will add 100 million to the number of extreme poor in the world, which the Bank recently adjusted upward to 1.4 billion before the food and financial crisis.

Although it is difficult to determine the full extent of the impact of this current economic crisis, the BWVI sectors - building, wood, forestry, and building materials are one of the severely affected industries. Besides a major shrink in employment, fears of wage cuts, layoffs, retrenchment, and declining working and safety conditions have thrown a big challenge to the BWVI Affiliated Unions. Information compiled from BWVI affiliates indicate that several construction companies have put expansion projects on hold due to rising costs and high interest rates attached with stringent lending conditions making it difficult for the companies to raise funds for ongoing and future projects. The sharp increase in cost of building materials, in particular - cement and steel has grossly undermined project budgeting and projections. In addition, due to a fall in demand, the cement industry has resorted to curtailment of production and freezing any expansion plan in production.

In an effort to address this economic crisis which began as a result of the U.S. housing debacle and the credit crisis, trade unions have been discussing and strategizing nationally, regionally, and globally to present critiques, recommendations, and alternatives to employers, national governments, and financial institutions to ensure that workers and their families are not further impacted by the growing crisis. During the G20 meetings that were held in Washington, D.C. last November, the Global Unions which includes BWVI presented the "Washington Declaration" which was designed to be a "comprehensive trade union plan to turn around the global economy."

The key points of the Washington Declaration were the following:

1. Initiate a major recovery plan to stabilize global capital markets, move economies rapidly out of recession, stave off the risks of a global depression and get back on the track of creating decent work.
2. Ensure that a financial crisis on such a scale never happens again. To do so would mean that there must be no more piecemeal approaches to reform.
3. Establish a new structure of economic governance for the global economy which goes beyond the financial markets or currency systems to tackle all the imbalances of growth and capital flows that contributed to the crisis.

4. Combat the explosion of inequality in income distribution that lies behind the crisis to ensure a more balanced growth in the global economy between regions, as well as within countries, between capital and labour, between high and low income earners, between rich and poor and between men and women.

At the regional level, BWVI affiliates have been actively engaging with their governments to ensure that the government expenditure on public infrastructure projects (schools, hospitals, clean water & sanitation, roads and public transportation) is not curtailed and continues to promote employment. Additionally, affiliates should demand political accountability and transparency to maintain social and economic order and allow decent work to prevail at all levels.

Earlier this year, members of the six construction unions affiliated to the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions took to the streets calling on the Hong Kong government to protect and create jobs for construction workers. Recently, the government announced that it would implement one of the union's recommendations which called for creation of more public housing and thus providing not only jobs for construction workers but more importantly affordable housing for workers. Similarly in South Korea, the KFCITU has petitioned government officials where a number of construction companies have either gone bankrupt or are inching towards bankruptcy. A recent KFCITU survey indicates that at least 30% of construction projects have shut down resulting in job loss.

BWVI and its affiliates will continue to work aggressively to urge Governments, employers and international financial institutions to include trade unions in developing appropriate international regulatory frameworks of the financial sector and coordinate national regulatory reforms. It will also work with all the stakeholders involved to develop and implement construction solutions to address the issues arising out of the current financial crisis and its implications to the millions of workers.





## Rights-Based Approach to Labour Migration

The trade unions have played a significant role in various international forums to discuss migration and development. Last year, BWI along with other Global Unions emphasized the importance of trade union participation at the 2nd GFMD to ensure the incorporation of a framework of human and trade union rights to underpin all migration policies.

Ambet Yuson, Regional Representative of BWI Asia Pacific Region and Khalid Atan, General Secretary of the Timber Employees Union of Malaysia, along with 40 other trade union delegates at the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society Days, that was held in October in Manila Philippines, called on national governments to adhere to a rights-based approach to labour migration. This was adopted and incorporated in the final report that was presented to governments prior to their meeting by Sharon Burrow, Chair of the 2nd GFMD Civil Society Days and President of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Prior to the GFMD, over 200 delegates representing 60 trade unions, 20 national centers, and 10 Global Union Federations participated in a series of activities and events parallel to the GFMD, most notable the Global Unions Forum on Migration and the TradeTrade Unions and Civil Society Forum on Migration.

Since migration is an integral component of BWI's work, BWI will continue to monitor the developments and planning of the next GFMD which will be held in Greece to ensure that the recommendations from the 2nd GFMD are incorporated in future discussions and strategy development.

## 21 INDIAN WORKERS STRANDED IN MALAYSIA FOR 7 MONTHS



Twenty one Indian workers from Tamil Nadu were cheated by an agent in Malaysia with a promise of employment in Australia. They were found stranded in a community hall in Batu Caves, Kuala Lumpur by Tenaganita, a well known civil society group actively engaged in migrant worker issues in Malaysia.

The nightmare began when the workers were put in transit in Johore Bharu while waiting for their visa application to be processed to work in Australia. The agent took their passports in his possession and demanded Rs.175,000 from each of them. After collecting the money he disappeared. Seven months passed during which numerous attempts were made to contact the elusive agent. BWI was informed of the stranded workers by Dr. Irene Fernandez of Tenaganita.

From hereon, the BWI took up the challenge and forwarded the letter of appeal with relevant documents to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu through the BWI affiliates in Tamil Nadu. Without much delay, on the 25th of December 2008, BWI succeeded in their mission of repatriation of the workers.

## DECENT WORK SUSTAINABLE CITIES



It is important to incorporate core international labour standards in public contracts and procurement policies of local governments; ensuring decent work for construction workers, particularly migrant workers; and recognizing that city mayors and local government are indeed "agents of change" in ensuring the protection and promotion of decent work for construction workers.

For the first time, BWI in conjunction with the ILO and UN Habitat coordinated a special session entitled, "Decent Work in the Urbanized World," where Anita Normark, General Secretary of

BWI gave the key note address entitled, "Local Governments: Agents of Change for Improving Labor Standards through Procurement Conditions, Migration, and Labor Clauses in Public Contracts." Respondents included Marie Kruse representing the Mayor of Copenhagen, Peter Woods of the United Cities and Local Governments, and Edmundo Werna of the ILO.

In addition to the special session, BWI also sponsored a networking seminar entitled, "Builders of Cities: Building Networks" to show case new approaches and initiatives by trade unions to ensure sustainable and harmonious urbanization by creating networks with communities, environmentalists, and international institutions. Speakers at this session included Norbert Ewald of IGBAU, Lim Seoung Chol of the KFCITU, Edmundo Werna of the ILO, and Julie Vilorio of the World Bank.

The seminar provided a good opportunity to evaluate these network strategies as well as promote a common action agenda that included the promotion of innovative ways to build energy efficient buildings while at the same time ensuring stable secure employment; skills training is key to better employment and quality building; and cooperation with various community sectors to promote solidarity toward decent work.



## **BWI RAISES THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE**

To be at the centre of debate on climate change, last October in Hong Kong, the BWI Asia Pacific Regional Committee has adopted a resolution calling, among others, to bring back the heart of the climate change debate in the realm of sustainable industrial development and management by encouraging affiliates to engage social partners to pursue a development policies and programmes that are promoting decent work and sustainable industries.

Likewise, days before the November 2008 BWI World Board Meeting in Geneva, a working group from BWI, EFBWW and NFBWW had been created to come up with common policy stance on Climate Change reflecting both interest and agenda of the construction and building materials and wood and forestry sectors of the three international federations. The document will serve as one of the basic reference materials of BWI official delegation to 2009 COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

BWI has been joining various regional and international program on Climate change. On November 26th to 28th BWI joined the ITUC Asia Pacific Labour and Environment conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. Bro. Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr., BWI Asia Pacific Regional Education Officer, presented a paper on Climate Change and Decent Work during the Conference. Highlighting the vital role of Sustainable Forest Management to combat climate change, he highlighted that “incentive packages as a trade off for ‘locking up’ forests under carbon offset programs are not sustainable and will not, on their own, be successful. We know that these approaches lead to hidden deforestation activities. Successful reserving systems only arise in conjunction with other environmental measures, sustainable and local industry development and comprehensive social policy and program developments”.

Similarly, BWI in cooperation with FES successfully concluded a two-day conference on Sustainable Forestry in Bangkok, Thailand from November 20-21, 2008. 20 participants from BWI wood and forestry affiliated unions and partner organisations from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Sweden participated in the programme, together with Yngve Daoson of the Swedish Forestry and Wood Union, Alan Smith of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), Ivanka Mamic of the ILO Office in Bangkok, Dian Sukmajaya, Natural Resource Unit, ASEAN Secretariat, as well as BWI representatives Ambet Yuson, Bob Ramsay and Apolinar Tolentino.

The conference succeeded in sharing experiences of unions in different countries on forest certification, with ongoing developments in regional and global level. At the same time, attention was paid to the effects of the current financial crisis and glooming economic recession.



## **HIV/AIDS A WORKPLACE ISSUE**

BWI Asia Pacific region recognizes the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a workplace issue because it affects the workplace and the local community. More than 25 million people have died of AIDS since 1981, and in some countries AIDS related deaths are increasing by the day. Young people under the age of 25 years account for half of all new HIV infections worldwide. In developing countries, 9.7 million

people are in immediate need of life saving AIDS drugs; of these, only 2.99 million are receiving the drugs.

Recognizing the rapid spread and the negative impact of HIV/AIDS, BWI has taken up the challenge of promoting the awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Thus, ensuring a safe, supportive working environment vis-a-vis HIV/AIDS in building and construction sector that largely comprises of transient and migrant workers. A baseline study has been carried out in South-East Asia and South Asia. Based on the facts and figures, BWI has chalked out appropriate activities to assist the workers and migrant workers in particular, in combating HIV/AIDS both at the sending and receiving countries in South East Asia and South Asia. In a unique initiative, the Child Labour Schools in India have also been roped in for HIV/AIDS awareness generation.

# SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO ACHIEVE GENDER MAINSTREAMING

BWI stands firm that gender issues are a priority in the region and is therefore committed to establishing strong, independent, autonomous, gender-fair and democratic trade unions in all countries. BWI envisages a world without poverty; where peace, social justice, gender equality and respect for trade union and human rights prevail. BWI believes that that gender equality can be achieved by ensuring that women are fully integrated in trade union work, and that barriers to their equal participation are addressed effectively.

To ensure this, BWI has embarked on a system where a gender framework is in place and its processes and practices in transforming unequal power relations by institutionalizing gender-responsive mechanisms, that would help facilitate change in attitudes about gender. This eventually will lead to having more women asserting trade union rights alongside their male worker counterparts. With the slogan "Visibility, Empowerment and Equality we profess for gender equality in the BWI."



## NON TRADITIONAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR CONSTRUCTION WOMEN WORKERS



The BWI feels that there is an urgent need to provide women construction workers the necessary skills to sustain their jobs in the construction sector which is booming now. For the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu India, there has been a positive move on the introduction of non traditional skills training specifically for women in painting by the TCWF (Tamil Nadu Construction & Unorganised Workers Federation) in which BWI is collaborating with the Builders Association to successfully implement this new skill.

This move has been made to upgrade the status of women construction workers by training them on male dominated jobs such as painting, welding, masonry and tiling. Statistics show that only 11% of the construction workers are skilled and none of them are women. The first batch of 14 women participated in the first training on painting which was implemented in Chennai from 29th September to 12th October 2008. As for Philippines, they have moved ahead by extending the training to carpentry as well. The next region targeted for non traditional skills training is Cambodia

## Cambodia Construction Unions Affirm Unification

The Executive Committees of the Cambodia Construction Trade Union Federation (CCTUF), affiliated to BWI, and the Cambodia Federation of Building Workers (CFBW), BWI partner trade union, convened the 2nd Unity Conference to deliberate and adopt the road map towards the formation of Unified National Federation of Building and Construction Workers.

Sister Chengglang Ken, newly elected President of CCTUF and co-convenor of the Conference emphasized "the historic importance of uniting the two federations to serve as a model to the Cambodian trade union movement which at the moment is highly fragmented and individual leaders' personal interest precedes collective interest of the members and the organisation".

The conference presented the results of the CCTUF and CFBW General Assemblies articulating approval to proceed with the unification of the two federations by 2009 as well as the adoption of the Joint Working Groups on reports on membership audit and integration, joint activities and draft statutes that will be consequently adopted during founding congress next year.



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# BWI APRO Regional Committee Passes Resolutions to Promote BWI's Regional Action Plan

Members of the BWI Asia Pacific Regional Committee passed five resolutions at the recent Regional Committee that was held in Hong Kong on October 17, 2008. These resolutions in many ways set the tone for the development and implementation of the BWI Asia Pacific Region's Action Plan for 2009 and onwards. In many ways these resolutions took off from the platform of organizing across borders, campaign to win, and education for action that were introduced by Ambet Yuson, Regional Representative of BWI APRO.

- The resolution which centered on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) called for BWI APRO to work closely with its affiliates to promote greater engagement with the ADB to ensure compliance of international core labour standards in relations to infrastructure projects funded by the ADB.
- The resolution on climate change called for BWI APRO to center the climate change debate in the realm of sustainable industrial development and management by encouraging affiliates to engage social partners to pursue a development policies and programmes that are promoting decent work and sustainable industries as those promoted by ILO and other UN agencies.
- Recognizing that BWI APRO should play a more significant role in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a resolution which called for BWI APRO to join the ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC) as well as initiate dialogue with industry partners such as the ASEAN Constructors Federation and the ASEAN Forest Products Industry.
- In the area of labour migration, the nine largest countries of origin are in the Asia Pacific region, thus the Regional Committee called for BWI affiliates in the region to develop and implement pro-migrant worker policies that will focus on a rights-based approach to labour migration and to organize and integrate migrant workers into trade union structures.
- In BWI APRO's continual efforts to ensure gender equality the regional committee approved a resolution on Policy on Gender Equality that incorporated organizing campaigns, educational programs, gender equality campaigns, and sustainability.

## 2009 CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES, BWI Asia Pacific

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
<b>January</b>		
19-22	Mission to Bangladesh Project Advisory Committee	Dhaka Bangkok/ Chang Mai
<b>February</b>		
5 - 11	LOTCO Region Wide Project Evaluation-Planning	Delhi & KL
9-11	FES-ASEAN Mapping Workshop	Puncak, Indonesia
12-13	ASETUC Board meeting	Jakarta
14-20	Project Advisory Com & Evaluation	Jakarta
17-18	Global Forum on ILO procurement	Geneva
19-20	Mission to Japan	Tokyo
23-25	GUFs Mission to South Korea	Seoul
<b>March</b>		
5	CHILD LEARN Board meeting	New Delhi
6-8	Child Labour Project Evaluation	New Delhi/Agra
<b>April</b>		
26-27	Asia Asbestos Conference	Hongkong
28	International Workers' Memorial Day	
<b>May</b>		
1	International Labor day	
2-5	Annual ADB Governing Meeting	Bali
26	ITUC/GUF AP Coordination Meeting	Manila
27	ITUC/GUF (AP) Meeting with ADB	Manila
27	World Board Meeting	Geneva
<b>June</b>		
12	World Day Against Child Labor Mission to Mongolia	
<b>July</b>		
	SATURN & IAC meeting BWI Pacific Workshop Youth Organizers' Training	Chennai Auckland tba
<b>Aug</b>		
	Construction Network Meeting	
<b>Sept</b>		
9-17	BWI Auditors Visit	Delhi & KL
<b>Oct</b>		
7	Regional Gender Workshop	
18	World Day for Decent Work	
18-25	World Forestry Congress	Buenos Aires
<b>Nov</b>		
	GUF/ITUC/SSO Coordination meeting	Singapore
<b>Dec</b>		
6	International Women Committee	Lille
7	Regional Asia Pacific Committee Meeting	Lille
8	World Board / World Council Meeting	Lille
9-10	World Congress	Lille
10	International Human Rights Day	
10	BWI World Council meeting	Lille
18	International Day of Migrant Workers	

# Global Solidarity for a Sustainable Future

**BWI 2nd World Congress, 6-10 December 2009**



**BWI ■ BHI ■ BTI ■ IBB ■ ICM**



BWI is going to hold its world Congress in Lille, France, from 6 to 10 December 2009 with the vision that **“A World with strong, independent, and democratic trade unions in the building and timber trades, where all workers have equitable access to stable jobs, fair wages and safe and healthy working and living conditions.”**

Focusing the global solidarity for sustainable future BWI’s 2nd World Congress will adopt important strategic plans to improve working and living conditions in the building and wood sectors and promote sustainable industrial development.

BWI has formed various committees and subcommittees to success the congress.

## **BWI Strategy Plan 2010-2013**

- Promote and defend human and trade union rights
- Increase trade union Strength
- Promote a stable and high level of employment in BWI sectors
- Influence policy and strengthen the capacity of institutions and tripartite structure in BWI sectors
- Organising and Trade Union building
- Bargaining
- Influencing policy and improving institutional participation

## **Congress Venue:**

Lille Grand Palais – LGP, Congress Center in Lille  
 1 Blvd des Cites – Unies  
 59777 Euralille – Lille

A Google map with the hotels and the program venue can be viewed in this address.

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&t=h&hl=en&msa=0&msid=115176923816714652420.00045d0f184365f2d328a&z=15>

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