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## In Defense of our Jobs and our Achievements

**Ricardo Patah, national president of União Geral dos Trabalhadores**

Brazil, as predicted by several economists, has entered a recession. A recession that we call a "technical" one (because it is the result of two consecutive quarters of decline in the Gross Domestic Product - GDP), but more than that: it is not a simple cyclical adjustment.

An evaluation shows that it is a mild recession - it should be lower than 1%, much lower than that of 6% recorded in the sum of the fourth quarter of 2008 and the first of 2009. But while the Brazilian economy quickly recovered from that recession, this time the recovery should take long.



**The good news is that the recession is not accompanied by a fall in employment: only in the industrial sector employment is waning, but it remains strong in the services and commerce sectors.**

This is essential for the preservation of our achievements in recent years, a raise in wages in real terms - especially in the minimum wage - and the formalization of jobs. But these achievements need to be defended against the corporate greed.

There are large companies, especially in the industrial sector, which are firing their employees or putting them on leave (layoff) or mandatory vacations. But companies are still profiting: a survey made by the newspaper Valor showed that the net profit of 271 publicly traded companies increased 56% over the same period last year, totaling R\$ 16.2 billion.

These companies had an increase of 11.9% in their net revenue, a sign that sales increased in this period. For the newspaper, however, the increase in profits was due to the appreciation of the dollar in the period. This means: financial gains.

And this is the major problem of the Brazilian economy. The high interest rates in our financial system allow companies (and people) to profit without producing anything, just with their financial investments, only "lending money" to the government.

This brings us back to the great task workers and their trade unions, the task of choosing a large bench of workers in the national Congress. This is only action that will guarantee that we maintain our labor achievements and especially our jobs. And not just that: a great bench of workers will allow us to advance in the agenda of workers, whatever is the outcome of the polls in October.

As noted in the last newsletter, business sectors are mobilized to attack our achievements. The National Confederation of Industry has a list of 100 measures it would like to be adopted, against all workers, as the colleague **Canindé Pegado, secretary general of UGT**, emphasized in the seminary of May Day.

And more than that, in recession times, bankers and businessmen want, above all, a violent increase in interest rates, which is low for them. This would deepen the recession and destroy our jobs and wages. These are issues that are at stake in the upcoming elections.

## The financial system works as a bird of prey

In these circumstances, due to the economic and electoral conjuncture we are experiencing, we transcribe the speech of Ricardo **Patah**, **president of UGT Brazil** and of the **Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo**, during the 102nd meeting of ILO in Geneva, Switzerland, in June 2013.



### Speech in the 102nd ILO meeting

"The conference of the International Labour Organization is the adequate form to promote the necessary social dialogue of all parts that are involved - governments, businessmen and workers. The crisis does not reach everyone in an equal way and we know who suffers the most: workers and the productive sectors.

To UGT, we must create multilateral policies and actions to place production and labour above financing and to guarantee the full work of the social protection network, built with a huge effort of everyone.

We, as workers, do not accept any regression as for the achievements that were toughly acquired. We cannot accept that the current crisis is used as an excuse to undermine labour and social rights to solve problems that generated this crisis. This moment demands an alternative that values production, decent work, the social protection network, quality of life and the transition to a sustainable economy, with green and decent jobs.

The creators of the crisis, especially those of the financial sector, are theoretically prostrated, though politically they act with great aplomb to mercilessly break the public coffers to save their finances. The result of this action of prey is a minimum State for a privileged minority. It might be understood why rivers of money put in major financing institutions do not reactivate economies in crisis, do not change into credit to producers or consumers and why economies remain stagnated and employment with a balance of 27 million unemployed people in the European Union, 19 million of them in the Euro Zone.

Recovering from the crisis demands a set of measures that stimulate investments in infrastructure, financing for production and for strategic social areas: education, professional qualification, health, basic sanitation and income distribution.

One of the solutions would be promoting, under the responsibility of the UN, a World Conference for the Production and Employment (CMPE) aiming at harmonizing international monetary and financial flows with the productive and employment needs of all countries.

Workers, governments, productive business sectors and the world banking sector should promote the regulation of international finance capital, channeling public and private savings into productive investments. We are favorable to the imposition of the Tobin tax, an international fee charged in financial transactions to enable the international monetary stability.

The states that have received financial support from multilateral institutions should be required to adopt a National Agenda on Decent Work based on the pillars established by the ILO, and eliminate distortions in the economic exchanges among countries.

In the 102nd Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), once again we see the attempt of some sectors to undermine the historical model of tripartism of the ILO, seeking to open textual and interpretive gaps in the documents adopted by this body to reduce the strength of the representation of legitimate and exclusive representative of employees in labour issues. We reject the nomenclature of 'social interlocutors' when dealing with labor issues. We are trade unions organizations of workers, and we have the prerogative of representing millions of workers worldwide, both in this space and in national spaces of negotiations of labor policies.

Therefore, I reiterate our position that we will not leave this BIG WORLD TRAP by sacrificing the working class".

## Trade unions x climate

Next October, trade unions around the world will be mobilized once again at a World Day for Decent Work. Keeping in mind that this year's motto is Climate Justice, we transcribed parts of the document of **the International Trade Union Confederation** on this issue.

### Climate changes is a trade union issue

There are no jobs on a dead planet.

WE know the science is unequivocal: The world's temperature is rising, current trends will lead us to a 4°C average increase or more in this century and without urgent, ambitious action we will face irreversible changes in our climate.

Climate-related catastrophes such as cyclones, floods, drought, fires, melting glaciers, season changes and more are increasing and hurting working people now. Their impacts will only become stronger within 15 years – this will destroy more communities and jobs.

We demand to be part of the industrial transformation with universal access to breakthrough technologies that will make our industries and our jobs sustainable for workers everywhere.

We can avoid climate related poverty, disease, unemployment and death.

Climate action means an alternative economic model, grounded on people's needs, on solidarity, on economic democracy and on a fair distribution of wealth, whereby all citizens can see their human rights fulfilled, whilst ensuring the preservation of our planet for future generations.

The historical mission of the trade union movement to ensure jobs, rights and social equality requires that we embrace the cause of a just transition towards sustainable development – a transition that must start now.

We will work with all movements willing to join us from environmental, women, indigenous, youth, ethnic and religious communities for the planet we all belong to.

We demand a profound transformation of all economic sectors and industries. We demand , the greening of current jobs and the investment to generate millions of new green jobs – decent jobs.



## 'Mujerazo' in Chile

The trade union Lider successfully held a major protest of women, which he called "mujerazo".

On August 14, the trade union inter-companies Lider (SIL) held a protest that was attended by Michelle Bachelet, president of Chile.

Nearly 500 trade union officers attended the event planned to advertise the gender department of this union.

In her speech, Barbara Figueroa, president of CUT Chile, made an overview on the current political moment right before expected labour reforms, ones that our people have been fighting for over 30 years.



"We would like you to perceive us as a trade union movement in a wider perspective, as a movement that serves the labour class, but it also aims at contributing towards a more democratic country".

President Bachelet spoke afterwards and recognized the work of the trade union officials, "what you do everyday is a huge work, and I would like to recall that it is a triple task, as workers, trade union officials and housewives".



People's Climate March, September New York



Dossiê Mulher  
2014

## Violence against women in Rio de Janeiro

A report points out that one woman is raped every two hours in the State of Rio

In 2013, in the State of Rio, 4,872 women were raped, which means 13 women attacked everyday. or one case every two hours. These statistics are part of the Women Brief 2014, publicized today (August 22), by the Institute of Public Security (ISP), linked to the State Security Department, and only concerns cases that were officially recorded in police departments.

In total, including cases of male rape and a small percentage in which the gender of the victim was not informed, the crime was recorded 5,885 times last year across the state. The statistics showed a slight decrease compared to 2012, when 6,075 cases were recorded in total. In 2010, cases of rape were 4,589 and, in 2011, there were 4,871 reported cases.

According to the brief, almost half of rape cases are committed by people that the victims know, which corresponds to 46.6% of the authors. Parents or stepparents are responsible for 17.7% of crimes, followed by relatives (10.6%), acquaintances (10.1%) and partners or ex-partners (8.2%).

## 36 hour shifts for street cleaners

Fenascon (National Federation of Urban Cleaning and Conservation Workers) is launching a campaign all over Brazil. This campaign has the goal of reducing working shifts of street cleaners and drivers of garbage trucks down to 36 hours per week.

With this campaign, Fenascon wants to mobilize trade unions that represent service of urban cleaning, which encompasses dustmen, street cleaners and drivers, to step pressure on the Senate and get the law project 1,590/11 approved. This project, written by federal deputy Roberto Santiago, has already passed in the house of representatives. Roberto Santiago is vice-president of UGT..



To **Moacyr Pereira, president of Fenascon and finance secretary of UGT**, "the achievement of 36 weekly hour shifts without a reduction in salaries will mean a significant improvement in the quality of life of workers of our class, who work in unhealthy environments, with huge efforts and physical wearing out.

[More information here](#)

## Bank workers celebrate their day

The trade union of bank workers of Franca, an institution affiliated with UGT, organized a huge party on August 30, at the head office of its country club to celebrate the bank workers day, which is celebrated on August 28.



The celebration of this date had beef in the stick, which is already a tradition among bank workers of Franca and its surrounding area, and nearly a thousand people filled the facilities of the club to party, lavishing joy and relax. The enthusiasm of the night was provided by the duo Felipi & Carboni and by DJ Karlin. As a souvenir of the party, guests took home a mug with pictures that made reference to this event.

The UGT Global is the Newsletter of International Information of the União Geral dos Trabalhadores do Brasil.

The UGT union is an organization formed to defend the Brazilian workers across a broad trade union movement, national, ethical, supportive, independent, democratic and innovative.

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