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Brazil is in a hurry

Ricardo Patah, national president of União Geral dos Trabalhadores

Among gifts and parties, Brazilians anxiously await for 2015. Huge challenges must be overcome this year. Especially in the reduction of income, gender, race, work and propriety inequalities among others. We must not forget regional inequalities as well, to guarantee a pattern of life of national quality to all Brazilians, regardless of where they live or work.



Brazil needs to grow back quickly.

With the GDP growth next to zero, employment and income might decrease if there is no growth and policies of social inclusion are in serious danger, since the State cannot collect taxes to keep them.

What we, workers, want for this year of 2015 is progress, not recession, as we can read and listen around.

Brazil is in a hurry for a quick elimination of social deficit in the areas of housing, sanitation, health and education. In this sense, our country urgently needs to universalize high quality education, since childhood, for the full development of our civic rights. Brazil is in a hurry to perform a tax reform, since the weight of taxes in our country falls upon consumption, and not upon income, damaging workers and the less fortunate people.

Brazil is in a hurry to perform a political and electoral reform that increases democracy, guarantees a higher popular participation, strengthens political parties and institutions. This reform should be aimed at the valorization of dialogue, favoring all public action focused on the collective service and on the common good.

Brazil is in a hurry so that the financial speculation comes to an end and productive investments are valued, especially in new technologies and innovation, for this is the only path to achieve a sustainable and socially fair economy.

Brazil is in a hurry to promote decent work and fight against slavery and all sorts of precarious work.

We also want labour rights to be kept, and not be removed, as some neoliberal policies that are very common these days preach. It should be emphasized that president Dilma Rousseff always assured us that this will never happen - the removal of workers rights.

Brazil is in a hurry to make a reform in the job market, to end - or at least decrease - the high turnover of professionals in almost all economic sectors, creating insecurity for workers. Wide sectors of economy had their payrolls exonerated by the federal government, as an incentive to development. I allow myself to suggest that the counterpart should be a higher stability in employment.

At last, Brazil is in a hurry so that there is more transparency in the public management, so that every form of corruption is tackled and those involved in scandals are punished as established under the law.



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Note of UGT:

And pigs flew against workers

UGT expressed its concern that the impact of the measures announced by the government will bring major harm to workers, in order to curb the cost of employee benefits, just in times in which we expect high unemployment, due to the economic weakness of the country.

The beginning of the year is the worst time for the adoption of these measures. In this period there is greater worker vulnerability of trade and services, activities that were still dynamic and creating jobs, the consequences can be harmful.

The increase in the contribution period to be eligible to achieve the unemployment insurance and the limitation of aid to fishermen - most of the unions that represent this class are affiliated with UGT, will surely bring enormous damage to workers.

This concern increases as cutting the benefit is announced in a period of high inflation, of threatening unemployment and when workers need it the most.



During the election campaign president Dilma Rousseff stated that if re-elected, she would not make changes in the law to harm workers not even "when pigs fly" ("nem que a vaca tussa"). With the Provisional Measure announced once the lights of 2014 were turned off, it appears that the pigs flew.

It is now up to the workers to try to rescue these flying pigs. And the most appropriate procedure at this moment will be stepping up pressure on Congress to put it to a vote and overturn the presidential veto on the End of the Social Security factor. It is around this and other measures that workers will be united in defense of their rights.

União Geral dos Trabalhadores

Workers fear regression

With the lowest trade union delegation in Congress since 1988, when 44 unionists were part of the Representation in the Legislative body, according to a survey of the Union of Public Federal Servants (Sindsep), workers fear the retraction of rights achieved over the past years.

The number of representatives in the legislative body dropped by half, according to the results of the polls in October, and from the current 83 parliamentarians it will decrease to 46 this year. On the other hand, the business bench defending interests of various sectors remained significant in the composition of the House of Representatives and of the Senate, despite losing more than 50 representatives in the next legislature. The number of businessmen representatives will drop from the current 246 parliamentarians to 190 on 1 February the 1st.

All numbers in Congress may change with the definitions of the government regarding positions on the executive power, but even once names are listed, the balance of power is unlikely to be achieved. Along with trade unionists, there are other sectors that are considered vulnerable such as indigenous movements and the LGBT community (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transvestites).

With the results of the polls, specialists from the Inter Department on Parliamentary Counsel (Diap) concluded that the new composition of Congress is the most conservative since 1964, due to the number of elected officials linked to military segments, to the police, to religious segments and to landowners. Antonio Augusto de Queiroz, political analyst from Diap, expects that with this composition the trend is that "some achievements, such as the guarantee of human rights, are interrupted or even regress."

A survey made by Diap showed, for example, that while none of the applicants who self-declared Native American was elected to the House of Representatives, the landowner bench has grown. Numbers of the Agriculture Parliamentary Front reveal that representatives of this sector will go from the current 14 senators and 191 deputies to 16 senators and 257 deputies.

This new scenario could mean the return of matters that harm the rights of workers and the postponement of propositions to vote in defense of workers, Native Americans and of the LGBT community. (Agência Brasil)



**From DIAP:
Poder
Legislativo:
como é
organizado, o
que faz e como
funciona**

"There must be more discussion..."

Interview of Canindé Pegado to the newspaper O Jornal de Hoje from Natal

Francisco Canindé Pegado, natural of the State of Rio Grande do Norte and secretary general of UGT, one of the most important trade union centrals of Brazil, with 1,300 affiliated trade unions, 52 affiliated federations and representing more than 5 million workers, gave an exclusive interview to the newspaper 'O Jornal de Hoje', after attending the inauguration of president Dilma Rousseff.

Canindé Pegado talked about he last measures that were adopted by president Dilma Rousseff which, according to him, were harmful to Brazilian workers, besides mentioning issues of local politics. On the measures of the president, he stated: "they will bring difficulties, especially for those who are looking for their first job", said the unionist, illustrating the case of the unemployment insurance in which workers must work legally for at least 18 months in order to be eligible to ask for this benefit.

O Jornal de Hoje – How is the trade union movement in Brazil?

CP - It presents a very good action. It has performed activities that correspond to the interests of workers. In the national sphere it has organized movements to approve the agenda of the working class. (...)

JH – And what is the action of UGT, where you work as secretary general?

CP - It has a specific agenda that is systematically brought to the government and to the National Congress. This agenda has been reached in several moments. They are objective demands of classes affiliated with UGT. Through this we attend all federal counsels in which we have the possibility of presenting our demands that were approved under the Congress and in plenary sessions of UGT.

JH - And what about the measures that Dilma Rousseff announced after she won the elections?

CP - We do not like the way they were announced. There must be more discussion with key interlocutors who are the trade union centrals and businessmen. These are measures that will bring difficulties, especially for those who are looking for their first job. Other measures, such as the one related to unemployment insurance, have changed: now the employee will have to formally work for 18 uninterrupted months in order to request this benefit. This is an unpleasant measure. (...)

JH - What are the advances and setbacks of the PT cycle in the government?

CP - A key step for the workers was the appreciation of the minimum wage. The unemployment insurance is paid based on the minimum wage. This led the Congress away from the useless debate on increasing the minimum wage in which the government and the opposition pulled to each other side. It was a real politicking. The government setback was not having tackled corruption systematically.



In defense of artisan fishermen

Among measures that were announced by president Dilma Rousseff two days before her inauguration, one might be emphasized: the proposal that reaches the rights of artisan fisherman. They have a strong representation in UGT, especially those from the following States: Maranhão, São Paulo, Ceará, Santa Catarina, Paraíba, Sergipe, Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte.

If the proposal is approved, a fisherman shall work three years without any kind of aid and benefit, before applying for aid-closure, benefit paid by the government during the period when fishing is prohibited due to fish reproduction.

Since 1991, the Ministry of Labour and Employment extended the unemployment insurance benefits to traditional fishermen, who perform their activities individually or with their family, or even organized in fishermen colonies.

The aid - closure is not simply a welfare measure, it is a measure of deep environmental range, providing conditions for a self-sustainable fishing activity.

UGT and trade unions / fishermen colonies which it represents throughout Brazil will fight so that congressmen who will take office next February, reject the provisional measure if it is presented.



Read the full interview



Read about the 1st Meeting of Artisan Fishermen of UGT in 2011



UGT participates in secretariat of Alckmin

Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB party), governor of Sao Paulo State, and Márcio França (PSB party), inaugurated on January the 1st. It will be Alckmin's fourth tenure.

On the occasion, the governor empowered the new members of its secretariat. Roberto de Lucena, UGT's vice-president and federal deputy, took office as tourism secretary, and João Dado, who is also UGT's vice-president and federal deputy, took office in the department of employment and labour relationships.



Alckmin, who was accompanied by Márcio França, elected vice-president, made a compromise of tackling problems related to labour, union and solidarity. "I promise dedication, innovation and enthusiasm. Work, work and work. I believe in the changing force of Brazilians who live in our State", he said. "Sao Paulo is the sum and the syntheses of all origins, of all creeds, dreams and hopes of our country", he added.

Appreciation of the minimum wage heat up the economy

Dieese (Inter Union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies): 'Minimum wage appreciation creates dynamic effect on society'

Airton Santos, coordinator of Dieeses department on trade union technical service, said this in an interview to the Brasil Atual Radio Station, adding that the minimum wage appreciation policy is not only important for workers and retirees who receive it, but it is important for other wages as well.



Segundo o coordenador, o reajuste de 8,8%, em vigor desde 1º de janeiro, que elevou o valor do salário mínimo para R\$ 788, representa uma "razoável" massa de recursos injetada na economia e cria um efeito "dinâmico" na sociedade. "Um efeito multiplicador, porque esses recursos vão para as pessoas de renda baixa e voltam diretamente para a economia, como consumo".

According to the coordinator, the 8.8% increase, in force since January 1, which raised the minimum wage to R\$ 788, represents a "reasonable" mass of resources injected into the economy and creates a "dynamic" effect on society. "A multiplier effect, because these resources are destined at people of low income and return directly to the economy, through consumption, for example".

Higher education guarantees formal jobs

Higher education is guarantee of formal job, as a study of ILO points out

Higher education is a requirement for millions of young people in developing countries to find decent job, points out a study of the International Labour Organization (ILO) publicized on December 16. This report was made based on data collected in 28 countries in 2012 and 2013 and proves that higher education "works as an extremely reliable guarantee of formal jobs".

According to this survey, eight in every ten young people (83%) with qualification higher than high school (who went to college or other kind of professionalizing technical course) are in stable jobs. On the other hand, a decree in high school is not a sufficient guarantee to fund better conditions in the job market.

A positive highlight in Brazil is that the proportion of young people, in the age range that was researched, who do not have primary school degree is almost null, the lowest among countries who participated in this survey. However, only 6% of Brazilians with ages ranging from 15 to 29 have a college degree. In this sense, Brazil is in the 17th position in the list of 28 countries, along with Uganda and behind Colombia and Peru.



Is education the solution to decent work for youth?

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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