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No right shall be removed

Ricardo Patah, president of União Geral dos Trabalhadores - UGT

Trade union centers are united in the struggle to defend the rights of the working class and consider it inadmissible that the government, through proposals entitled "Reform", seeks to benefit groups of investors, banking institutions and businessmen, even if they harm the working class and society.



We recognize that there are many challenges to be faced in order to get Brazil back on the path of economic growth, with a focus on the social development of its population, but it is not by removing the rights achieved by the population that this goal will be reached.

The Brazilian population is the engine that stimulates, drives and nourishes the economy of this country and, by proposing changes that directly affect the lives of people who survive the minimum wage, by hardening their affiliation to social security programs that aim to help the working class in times of job loss or when one needs to get out of work and seek for their retirement, the government is promoting a disservice to the entire nation.

It is inadmissible to remove rights of the working class, which pays high taxes and depend on the services that are offered by the state, such as health, education, transportation and security, among others.

This way, the proposals that were presented for social security and labor reforms are perverse to society and especially to the poorest strata of the population.

Ten reasons to be against the proposal of Social Security reform

1. It destroys the concept of social protection as a universal right.
2. There's no deficit in the Social Security budget. Social welfare is not responsible for the fiscal imbalance.
3. Minimum retirement age of 65 years old, associated with increasing a 25 minimum contribution period for men, women, rural workers public servants and teachers.
4. It does not recognize the market inequality among men and women.
5. It hampers retirement for rural workers.
6. Reduction of initial amount of retirement and pensions.
7. It hampers and reduces the amount paid for disability and special retirement.
8. It prohibits accumulating retirement and pension, regardless of the amount.
9. The transition rule leaves aside a major part of the current contributors
10. Public servants and the Special Social Security Policies.

UGT holds its 25th meeting of the national board

The 25th Meeting of the **National Board of Executives of União Geral dos Trabalhadores - UGT** took place on February 20 and 21, in Brasília (DF), bringing together representatives from all the states of the federation. Its main objective is to broaden the debates on the social security and labor reforms, as well as to outline fight strategies of the trade union center to 2017.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, recalled that in the last meeting, the plenary session emphasized that the center, by defending a model of civic, ethical and innovative unionism, is a reformist entity. "UGT defends reforms, but in our view, the government has reversed priorities, as we believe that fiscal and state reforms are a priority to contribute to the creation of jobs and income for the population," said Patah.



The leader from UGT emphasized that the political reform, which is contemplated in the proposal of State reform, meets one of the biggest demands seen during the demonstrations of 2015, which is precisely the moralization of the Brazilian political system.

As for the proposal of a labor reform, Patah was firm in arguing that it is necessary to be aware of the representation of workers in the workplace because, the way it was presented, it will weaken the representativeness of the trade union movement. "It will be like putting a fox to take care of the chicken coop, since this representative can be indicated by the bosses," Mr. Patah explained.

There were many proposals to expand the action of UGT, especially at this time of unfavorable working class scenario with constant threats of loss of rights.

On the second day of the meeting, Patah emphasized that the meeting was productive and showed the unit of fight of the trade union center. "It is a fundamental moment to draw up strategies to strengthen UGT," said Patah. (Fábio Ramalho - UGT Press)

UGT discusses Social Security Reform

Roberto Santiago and trade union officers discuss social security reform



On February 21, **Roberto Santiago, UGT's vice-president**, was in Brasília in a meeting with Rodrigo Maia, president of the House of Representatives, and representatives of trade union centers to discuss issues related to the social security and labor reforms. The subject was also discussed this morning (22), during the inauguration ceremony of the Femaco board of directors (photo), elected for the 2017-2021 period in São Paulo.

Roberto said that he is against the measure, since it harms the most needy. "More than hindering, it will 'prohibit' the right to retirement and social protection for millions of workers, especially the humblest, women and rural workers," he said.

Santiago explained that the Bill 287/2016 was drafted without the effective participation of the trade union movement and referred to the National Congress as a matter of urgency, being approved in haste by Commission of Constitution, Justice and Citizenship (CCJ).

"Unfortunately, union representation in Congress has been reduced by about 60% in the 2014 elections, which is extremely worrying, especially in a strong environment following employers pressure on labor, union and social security rights," he explained.

"The minimum retirement age is 65 for men and women, and the minimum time of contribution increases from 15 years to 25 years. In practice, this means that the worker will have to contribute 49 years to ensure a full retirement. This happens because the minimum contribution time of 25 years will give right to only 76% of the retirement, due to the calculation of the benefit," he added. To Santiago, one of the most serious points of the Government's proposal is the equality between the retirement ages between men and women. "Everyone knows that the situation of women in society is different from men. Women have much more responsibility at home, face discrimination at work and discrimination in income," he explained. (Femaco Press)



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Defending Brazilian women

One of the most compelling reasons for UGT to oppose the intended Social Security Reform is because this proposal does not recognize the inequality of the labor market between men and women.

This is unacceptable in light of the current situation of Brazilian women. According to data from the UN Women, the average wage for men is 30% higher than that of women. The unemployment rate for women is about twice that of men, a difference that increases when white men (5.3%) and African-American women (12.5%) are compared.



If these numbers were not enough, women suffer violence, harassment and rape. The rate of femicide for women has doubled between 1980 and 2011, and today a woman is murdered every two hours, mostly by men with whom they share intimate relations, placing Brazil as the seventh country in the world with the highest rates of femicide. In 2012, the number of rapes was higher than 50,000.

Women have little power to deal with this situation. Brazil continues to occupy the 121st place in the ranking of women's participation in politics, with women occupying just over 10% of the seats in the National Congress. Women also govern only 10% of municipalities and represent 12% of municipal councils, despite compliance with the quota law (30%) first applied in the municipal elections of 2012.

UGT does not accept any removal of women's rights.

No rolling back on women's rights!

End violence against women, invest in the care economy, close the pay gap!

On International Women's Day the ITUC and its affiliates join human rights defenders, women's and feminist organisations in calling for the guarantee and respect of women's rights at work, in the home and in our communities.

The surge in populist misogyny threatens to reverse progress towards gender equality and women's autonomy – from austerity and privatisation of public care services to increasingly precarious and informal work, from a resurgence in patriarchal attitudes to attacks on women's reproductive and sexual health and rights.

It's time to organise. And women are rising to the challenge.

In Iceland and France thousands of women walked off their jobs to demand equal pay for work of equal value. In Poland, nearly six million women marched and won a reversal in proposed anti-abortion laws. Across Latin America, the region which gave rise to the Mirabal sisters and a UN International Day, women are demanding an end to gender-based violence. In Russia, women are resisting attempts to decriminalise domestic violence. And in January this year, women, men and children in over 600 cities worldwide stood up against misogyny, racism, bigotry and intolerance and for equality, peace, justice and freedom.

As trade unionists, we stand united around the many challenges that confront us: rising inequality, populism and nationalism, the changing world of work, climate change and the many wars and conflicts that are producing millions of refugees and displaced persons.

We remain firm in our determination to secure high quality, decent work for women and an end to the gender wage gap.

And we remain committed to ending the discrimination and violence that affects women's daily working lives.

The ITUC General Secretary, Sharan Burrow, says: "There can be no rolling back on women's rights. We demand a pay rise. We demand investment in the care economy. We demand an ILO Convention to end violence and harassment".

In organising for our rights, we celebrate our struggles. We celebrate women's activism in the labour movement and our victories for just wages and working conditions. We take inspiration from our history and our present.



ILO Convention to end violence and harassment



Women's International Strike



Carnival of protests against high interest rates

On February 21, União geral dos Trabalhadores - UGT and other trade union centers promoted a carnival of protests against high interest rates.

With banners and banners like "the masked wing of the Central Bank", unionists protested in front of this institution's head office precisely on the day that members of the Monetary Policy Committee (Copom) defined the new Selic rate index, which suffered a reduction of 0.75%, declining from 13 to 12.25%. This reduction does not meet the expectation of workers, since Brazil still figures as one of the highest rates in the world.



Survey on violence against trade unions

UGT's Department of International Relations requests the help of affiliated trade unions by filling the survey of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on violations of the rights to Freedom of association, to Collective Bargaining and to strike.

This information will be part of the ITUC reports on violations of labor rights in the world and will be presented at the International Labor Conference in June 2017. They will also be published on the ITUC website.

There are 35 questions covering topics such as:

Are unionists being arrested? Have the Trade Union Offices been attacked or occupied? Have employers and the government tried to influence union elections? Have strikes been banned or prevented?

Please, answer each question with yes or no. Besides, it is important to emphasize the need to put examples on the boxes below each question. After filling it, please forward the survey to internacionais@ugt.org.br by March 10, 2017.

Opportunities and Challenges of Telework

New ILO-Eurofound report shows that the use of modern communication technologies facilitates a better overall work-life balance but, at the same time, also blurs the boundaries between work and personal life.

The expanding use of digital technologies such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers for work at home and elsewhere is rapidly transforming the traditional model of work. It can improve work-life balance, reduce commuting time, and boost productivity, but it can also potentially result in longer working hours, higher work intensity and work-home interference, according to a new joint ILO-Eurofound report released today.

The new report **Working anytime, anywhere: The effects on the world of work** synthesizes research carried out by both organizations in 15 countries, including ten EU Member States (Belgium, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) as well as Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan and the United States. The study identifies several types of employees using new technologies to work outside the employer's premises, including regular home-based teleworkers, workers performing occasional telework and ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM).

"This report shows that the use of modern communication technologies facilitates a better overall work-life balance but, at the same time, also blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, depending on the place of work and the characteristics of different occupations," said the ILO's Jon Messenger, co-author of the report.

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

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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Survey on violence against trade unions



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