



UGT proposes mobilization to make advances in the fight for an African-American inclusion

The president **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** approved the **Racial Equality Statute** on July 20. The statute, approved under the congress last month, foresees guarantees and the establishment of public policies to valorize African-American people.

Magno Lavigne, national secretary of UGT's Human Diversity Department, said that the exclusion of quotas and other topics considered important by the Brazilian African American Movement in the Racial Equality Statute should not lead to depression.

"We are calling out all affiliated institutions, other trade union centrals, the Brazilian African-American movement, the democratic and progressive political forces to remain mobilized in order for the fight for inclusion and equality of opportunity in our country advance", he stated.

According to him, this is the way that it will be possible to change the co-relationship of forces in the Congress "that allow us to achieve measures of a higher content and range to the Brazilian African-American population and that make dreams of Freedom, Equality and Democracy come true", he added.



To **Magno Lavigne**, the changes in the text of the Statute, under a process of following legal channels since 2003, moment in which it was presented by the Senator Paulo Paim (PT party-RS), were caused due to a "tough resistance of oligarchic and rural sectors and the attack of conservative sectors that, in the XXI century still do not accept to pay a cursed debt, inheritance of over 350 years of slavery and 122 years of post-abolition racism".

Magno participated in the ceremony that enacted the Statute, at Palácio do Itamaraty, representing **UGT, the third largest trade union central of Brazil**, and said that he was quite impressed by the speech Lula gave while enacting the project. "The president considered the Statute as part of a context of changes, advances and achievements to the Brazilian African-American population over the last years", he stated.

The **Racial Equality Statute** defines a new order towards the rights of Brazilian African-American people, that account for 90 million people. The document has 65 articles and aims, according to the Department of Policies to Promote Racial Equality, towards the correction of historical inequalities regarding opportunities and rights of slave descendants in the country.

"We must invest, with all of our forces, in the inclusion of topics that were left outside of the Statute, enlarging the defense of affirmative actions in education, in the job market and spheres of power, turning the inclusion of the African American share of population in every space of citizenship into reality", he stated. He added that in a country that intends to become, in the next five years, the fifth highest economy in the world, this goal will not be reached if the African-American population is not included and fully integrated to enjoy the benefits of progress and economic development. It is time to make advances", he ended.

Three years of UGT, a foundation based union central

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT

In July, we celebrate the three year anniversary of UGT. We also celebrate our three year anniversary of action in the History of Brazil, aggregating, organizing and mobilizing millions of workers that are represented, on this very date, by almost 800 unions that are affiliated with UGT. We are the union central that grows the most in Brazil.

While evaluating our inclusion in the History of Brazil we have a lot to celebrate and many challenges to overcome. Because ever since the 1st Foundation Congress, that took place from July 19 to the 21, 2007, UGT is engaged to make its motto come true: ethical, innovative and towards citizens unionism.

We reach our third year. We account for a thousand affiliated unions, in 2010. And we are getting ready for the 2nd UGT Congress, which is expected to take place next year, as determined by our statutes.

We have general elections ahead of us, from which a new president will be elected (either a man or a woman), and the strategies adopted to manage and overcome this terrible financial crisis that threatened our economy will mature.

Education is the priority of everyone

Our top ideal in favor of the future of Brazil, of our children and future generations is stimulating a revolution in education

That was why, while formalizing our positions towards the main presidential candidates, we take this moment to mobilize what is best about Brazil in order to build our future. And we know that since education is a point that might damage our future, it also turns into a political consensus to mobilize the living forces of the nation. Because UGT is, this way, up to date with Brazil and Brazilian people, a central that was born out of the combination of plural points of view and union practices, and it only grows this much because it respects diversity, cultures, ethnicities, religions and regionalisms.

Women are still a minority

Women are still a little over 21% of candidacy requests at TSE

Women represent 21,3% out of the 21,672 requests of candidacies registered at the Electoral Justice. They are running for State Deputy (2,9 thousand), Federal Deputy (1,2 thousand), Senator (35), Governor (18) and President (2). Men are still a majority at all levels of dispute, according to data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE).

TSE also measures the level of schooling of the candidates. More than half - 53,73% - is either going to college or has already graduated from college.

Among the registered candidacies, 86,2% are waiting for approval, 13,6% have some sort of impugment and 0,1% has already shown to be unelectable. Candidacy evaluations will begin in August, after the recess of the Court. Among the candidacies that were already considered unqualified, 46% were canceled. In 51,9% of these cases, there were resignations of the candidates themselves. And from the total amount of requests received by TSE so far, 3% were already overruled. *(Priscilla Mazonotti) (Agência Brasil)*

Panama: Union mission proves repression

During a visit of a union mission to Panama, held on July 16 and 17, **Víctor Báez (picture), General Secretary of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**, qualified Ricardo Martinelli, president of Panama, as a "Changuinola butcher". The adjective was given in response to the acts of repression practiced by the Panamanian police in the Changuinola region, against workers and unionists, that repulsed the Law 30, recently approved by the government.

According to memos from unions and social movements, the repression towards protestors that were against Law 30 resulted in at least, 11 deaths and hundreds of wounded people, besides other people that were arrested or persecuted by the Panamanian police.

"The massacre perpetrated by repressive forces in the Changuinola region cannot be exempted from punishment", **Víctor Báez, General Secretary of TUCA** stated. To TUCA, the president Martinelli could only recover some sort of legitimacy if he order an investigation of the facts and punishment of the responsible people.



Violence against banana plantation workers took place once the Panamanian government imposed the Law 30, that goes against essential workers rights such as strike and union freedom. Another extreme measure of the government is called "Carcelazo" Law, that punishes workers that protested out in the street with 2 to 5 years prison sentences.

UGT, which is part of **TUCA**, is widely sympathetic with Panamanian workers and condemns repression in Panama.

International Labour Standard on HIV/AIDS

Representatives of governments, employers and workers gathered at the Annual Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted a new international labour standard on HIV/AIDS that is considered the first international human rights instrument dedicated specifically to this issue in the labour world.



The new standard was adopted by delegates that were present at the International Labour Conference after two years of an intense and constructive debate, by a vote of 439 to 4, with 11 abstentions.

The standard is the first internationally sanctioned legal instrument aimed at strengthening the contribution of the world of work to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support towards HIV.

It contains provisions on potentially life-saving prevention programmes and anti-discrimination measures at national and workplace levels.

The Conference also adopted a resolution on its promotion and implementation that invites the ILO Governing Body to allocate greater resources to give effect to the new standard, requesting that a Global Action Plan be established to achieve its widespread implementation and regular reporting from ILO member States.

Dr. Sophia Kisting, Director of the ILO Programme on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work said that "with this new human rights instrument we can harness the strength of the world of work and optimise workplace interventions to significantly improve access to prevention, treatment, care and support. We cannot do it alone but this standard will, I believe, provide a major contribution to making the dream of an AIDS-free generation a reality."

ILO started the implantation phase of the recommendation during the XVIII International Conference on AIDS that took place in Vienna from July 18 to the 23.

Participation in Sesi National Council



UGT has participated in national and state councils of the S System. **Laerte Teixeira da Costa (in the picture)**, one of our representatives at **Sesi National Council**, informs that the experience has been good, fully satisfying.

"At first, I believe, there was some apprehension from both parts. But after quite some time, we may observe that the presence of workers, at least in what concerns Sesi, was excellent to both sides". Laerte believes that workers were able to achieve more knowledge of the programs and noted the preoccupation the administration has with where the resources are applied.

Jair Meneguelli, president of Sesi, has offered full support to workers representatives. "We are willing to inquire and question. There is transparency in actions", **Laerte Teixeira da Costa, Vice President of UGT and secretary of Social Politics of TUCA** ended.

Commerce Workers Union of Rio celebrates 102nd anniversary

The **Commerce Workers Union of Rio de Janeiro**, an institution affiliated with **UGT**, celebrates on July 29 its 102nd anniversary. The date is extremely important, according to its **president Otton Mata Roma**, and should be dedicated to the fights of causes related to commerce workers and, in favor of excluded people. "I share my satisfaction to be together with this board of directors and ahead of this union", Otton says, he is also secretary of UGT's International Integration to the Americas Department.

For over a century of history, the **Commerce Workers Union of Rio** managed to achieve some advances previously unimaginable, such as in the industrial revolution era and prior to the Vargas era, a time in which workers didn't have a voice and their rights weren't preserved. The president reminds that many of the claims - that were expected to be achieved for so long - were reached, "but there are still many of them to come, since negotiating with employers was never an easy task.", **Otton** emphasized.

ILO analyses the challenges of gender and racial equality

"**Gender and Racial Equality at Work: advances and challenges**", this is the name of the book that was released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and by the Department of Policies towards Women (SPM).

The book release took place during the XI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Brasilia.

In the book introduction, Laís Abramo, director of ILO's office in Brazil, says that this publishing contains a set of studies and reflections that aim to handle advances and challenges in key areas to promote gender equality



In order to have access to the book in full, [click here](#) (portuguese)



"The General Union of Workers (GUW) reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just. " Ricardo Patah – UGT's President

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