



November 2013

(VOL. VI, Issue No. 11)

New Delhi

## **WFTU Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting Port Dickson (Malaysia), 25-26 October 2013**



Participants in the Asia-Pacific Regional meeting held in Port Dickson (Malaysia) on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013



**Com. Solomon presenting a Memento to Com. George Mavrikos**

*[Please Download and Circulate this to Other Unions]*





Inaugural function



A scene from the cultural programme

## A Note on Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting— Malaysia 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013

— H. MAHADEVAN

### ■ Enthusiastic Response

This meeting is the best Regional Meeting in APR held so far both on participation as well as logistics and arrangements. NUBE, the host organisation did a tremendous job in organising this meeting. On the 25<sup>th</sup> Oct., night a colourful cultural programme was also organised.

While 15 countries participated (2 Observers each one from Sudan and Argentina), the notable absentee being Pakistan and Australia who expressed inability to attend.

■ On the 24<sup>th</sup> a meeting of the young workers was organized where the History of WFTU was the subject, dealt with by the General Secretary of WFTU .

■ There was a special Session on “Right to Livelihood” at the end on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day which was addressed by the following eminent persons:

1. Bro. P. Arunasalam, Former Deputy Secretary General of Malaysian Trades Union Congress and General Secretary of Electronic Industry Workers Union.

2. Dr. Irene Fernandez, Director and Co-Founder of Tenaganita.

3. YB Dr. Michael Jayakumar Devaraj, Member of Parliament and Central Committee Member of Socialist Party of Malaysia.

### ■ Important Declaration and Resolutions:

At the conclusion of the session a Declaration was adopted, placed by the In-

charge of Asia-Pacific office and adopted unanimously (separately published). The background Paper (22 pages) prepared by H. Mahadevan, Dy. General Secretary was the resource material for the participants, besides Com. George Mavrikos inspiring inaugural address.

The following Resolutions were adopted:

1. Malaysia Declaration (which also decides Solidarity Action against the dismissals of NUBE leaders).

2. Resolution on the anti-workers policies in Kazakhstan

3. Resolution on Maruti Workers Struggle in India and continued detention of hundreds of workers in jail.

4. Resolution on the disastrous accident in Dhaka, at the Rana Plaza Garment Industry.

5. Resolution on Solidarity with the workers and the peoples movement in Colombia. Signature Campaigns by all unions were made.

◆ Apart from NUBE, 5 more new unions have sought affiliation with WFTU in Malaysia. Thus WFTU has entered Malaysia in a big way.

◆ The next meeting of the Asia-Pacific Region will be held in Nepal during next year; Indonesia also proposed to hold the next meeting thereafter.

# Malaysia Declaration

*Adopted in the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting  
on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at Port Dickson (Malaysia)*

This historic meeting of the WFTU-APR held on 25-26 Oct 2013 in Port Dickson, Malaysia, attended by 132 Union leaders of affiliated and friendly Trade Unions present throughout their most populous region of the globe, including major fighting organizations such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Iran, besides P.R. China (Sudan & Argentina as observers) and a number of Sectoral Trade Union Internationals such as TUI – Finance, TUI – Construction, TUI – Public Services, TUI – Energy and others, having analyzed the very important issues concerning the “Right To Livelihood” of the people – working people, and having identified the pro-capitalist and anti-workers role of the International Financial Trio, WB – IMF – WTO and other instruments of finance capital and MNC’s, and having thoroughly examined the neo-liberal globalization policies pursued by most Governments in the region, notes that:

- *“the capitalist economic system, had once again failed and unable to meet the basic needs and aspirations of the people, in particular the toiling masses.*

- *the youth unemployment and under employment on the increase year after year*

- *atypical forms of employment such as casual, contract and the like are on a steep rise while the permanent employment is coming down drastically every year.*

- *the labour laws have been flagrantly violated by the capitalist governments and employers, coupled with several unfavourable judicial verdicts also against the working class in different countries.*

- *the vulnerable sections – women & children, having been subjected to multiple exploitation, without protection, inspite of statutory provisions in many countries.*

- *the migrant workers within the region, as well as going out of the Asia-Pacific countries have been subjected to untold miseries and exploitation in the receiving countries facing the unhelpful attitude of the Govts., both sending and receiving.*

- *the ILO Conventions, including the Core Conventions, either not ratified or not enforced under their statutes, in letter and spirit, thus still allowing “comodification of Labour”.*

- *the off loading, outsourcing, sub-contracting and such other measures causing discriminations and deprivation, of service conditions are on the steady increase.*

- *the agricultural labourers and small peasants live in miserable conditions, and in some countries in the region have resorted to mass scale suicides.*

- *the economic and labour policies of most Governments, being more and more pro-rich, pro-corporate, pro-MNC’s and anti-labour, result in a situation of “rich becoming richer and poor becoming poorer.”*

- *Even formation of Trade Unions is sought to be curtailed / disturbed and the genuine trade unions are non registered / recognized, denying their vast number of members their ‘Right to Association’ and ‘Right to Collective Bargaining’!*

- *that the development pursued by most Governments continues to be anti-people, anti-poor, anti-nature, anti-gender, anti-children /young people.*



■ *that most human employment is not organized around social usefulness, but around financial profit, without meeting the needs of the common people, but on over fulfilling the greeds of the capitalists and MNC's.*

■ *that the number of "working poor "has enormously increased over the years on account of increasing magnitude of unemployment and under employment"*

■ *that while the annual growth increases on account of labour productivity to real wages grew only by a fraction of the former*

■ *that the attacks on the working class and its leaders, by way of dismissals, retrenchment, layoff and all forms of victimization against legitimate trade union activities on account of the barbaric policies of the employers, aided and abetted by the concerned Govts are growing.*

■ *that in Malaysia, in relation to NUBE, formation of Capital Government sponsored unions in violation of Collective Bargaining Agreement and the law of the land and also the sacking of two trade union leaders for legitimate trade union activities.*

This meeting also notes with a sense of satisfaction, though not to the fullest extent, that the working class in many countries retaliate these offensive attacks on them by organizing independent and collective struggles towards achieving unfettered trade union rights against joblessness, diminishing social security and social protection, growing atypical forms of employment, ineffective and indifferent labour administration, increasing precarity, denial of civil rights, towards empowerment of women in general and working women in particular, unsafe and hazardous working conditions resulting in serious loss of lives, limbs and job opportunities amongst others, as recently occurred in Rana Plaza in Dhaka killing 1500 workers.

This meeting is of the considered conviction that all trade unions must seriously pursue the agenda of Social change and end of exploitative system as its so called measures pursued by the capitalist governments in the name of "humanising globalisation" is no answer. WFTU reconfirms that the struggle against exploitation, following the Socio-political path, equality for men and women and all spheres of working life are some of the basic principles of the class based trade union movement. We present our alternate model of development sans social and economic deprivation as the answer.

This meeting is of the firm view that the global economic and financial crisis underscores the fundamental flaws of capitalism and the urgent need for radical transformation towards a new social order based on the principles of economic justice, equitable development, working peoples participation in the shaping of the progressive economic policy, food and energy sovereignty, universal access to all essential needs namely "food, water, housing, education and health" amongst others.

In pursuance of the above lofty principles, the Malaysia Declaration hereby gives a clarian call to the working men and women of the Asia Pacific Region to campaign, organize and agitate to achieve the following:

**COMMON CHARTER OF DEMANDS**

i) Full employment for all, aiming towards eradication of poverty, with need based salary and wages and with full security including statutory pension for all.

ii) Ratification and implementation of ILO Core Conventions including Right to Organize and Right to collective bargaining; unfettered trade union rights for all workers.

iii) Stop privatization and dismantling of Public sector / public services.

iv) Stop sub contracting, out sourcing

and off loading;

v) Protect sovereign rights of nations as against imperialistic hegemony/market driven policy under WTO, WB, and IMF dictates.

vi) Stop unjust imperialist interventions in Syria, DPR Korea, Iran, Afghanistan etc; Respect self determination of political system and self-reliant economic growth without the intervention of imperialists, financial and multinational economic institutions.

vii) Ensure women empowerment through various progressive policies and extend maternity / benefits to all working women; provide equal wage for equal work without gender bias.

viii) Ensure working rights and social security for all migrant workers, as per UN charter. Abolish 'bonded labour' in any form and guarantee alternate employment to them; ensure protection of migrant workers by Governments.

ix) Introduce comprehensive law for social protection, to protect the rights of informal workers including agricultural workers.

x) Stop degradation of environment in the name of development and protect natural resources for the benefit of mankind.

xi) Ensure occupational safety, health, environmental protections of the workers and community; MNCs/TNCs should be subjected to implement the Code of Conduct strictly.

xii) Stop job cuts, closures, layoffs and all atypical forms of employment including part time employments.

xiii) Abolish child labour and guarantee free, quality education to all children.

xiv) Fight against communalism, religious fundamentalism and their pernicious methods that divide the working class.

xv) ILO should shed its partisan attitude and treat all International Trade Unions

judiciously".

Struggles, more struggles, militant struggles and consistent struggles uniting the broader sections of the toiling masses, youth, unemployed, women and other vulnerable sections of the society shall be the silver line in our future movement.

In this regard, this meeting calls upon the Unions at the unit, area, national and regional levels to conduct continued campaigns and resolve to launch all appropriate forms of actions as deemed fit. This meeting declares that the following International Days will be observed to strengthen the unity amongst the various sections of the working class:

<i>8<sup>th</sup> March</i>	<i>International Women's Day</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> May</i>	<i>International Workers day</i>
<i>12<sup>th</sup> June</i>	<i>Child Labour day</i>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> October</i>	<i>International Action day, as decided by WFTU centre</i>
<i>18<sup>th</sup> December</i>	<i>international day to protect the rights of migrant workers</i>

This meeting also declares that will be observed by all trade unions in the Asia Pacific Region as DEMADS DAY by conducting demonstrations, marches, rallies, public meetings etc on the day.

As regards the immediate attacks being faced by NUBE, Malaysia, the meeting decided as under:

a) WFTU and all its affiliates will address letters to the Prime Minister of Malaysia seeking to intervene to vacate the attacks.

b) All affiliates to meet the authorities of Malaysian Embassy Offices in various countries in a delegation at the earliest and submit a memorandum.

c) To organize protest, demonstration in front of Malaysian Embassies by our affiliates in respective countries.



Com. George Mavrikos, addressing the Young Workers Meeting on 24th Oct. 2013

## Inaugural Speech of the WFTU General Secretary George Mavrikos in the WFTU Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

***Dear comrades, Dear friends,***

I salute you on behalf of the WFTU Secretariat and the 86 million working people that our class-oriented organization represents in 120 countries of the world. It is an honor to be here with you in this All-Asia and Pacific trade union meeting under the generous hospitality of NUBE here in Malaysia. I want to underline that this meetings and the frequency and consistency these meetings have, is a great step forward for the WFTU. It shows:

The important and stable steps of the WFTU the past years. It shows the great potentials, the abilities that the WFTU and the class-oriented trade union movement have, if they work with strategy, with specific tactics, with determination. It proves that the WFTU has presence and action for the contemporary problems of the working people in all continents. And finally, it shows that we must continue in the same path but intensify our efforts. We must overcome difficulties, weaknesses,

problems. We must deepen the collective work and jointly rise at the level of expectations, placed before us by reality, by the anti-labour attack of the monopolies and the governments for the future that the working class deserves.

We are here, first and foremost, to discuss the basic problems of the working people in the Asia-Pacific region, to analyze how these problems increased and how these problems are blocking the improvement of the quality of life of the workers and of the People. A quality of life that is realistic based on the productive and technological achievements of our times.

The leadership of WFTU needs to hear and learn from you the facts, your experience, the picture that you get from the contact with the members of the base. The more we know, the better we become in our positions and action. You, of course are fully aware of the situation in Asia. The picture shows difficulties in the lives of the working people. It is clear to all

of us, that the majority of the working people are struggling to survive and cover their basic needs. Millions of workers survive with wages that are below the \$2 per day. We see salaries from \$30 per month for the workers in the garment and retail industry in Bangladesh. \$60 to \$100 is the average basic salaries the Asian workers are getting. For us this is called modern slavery. When your salary does not cover your basic needs this is slavery in modern terms. In some countries, such as Nepal there is even bonded labour. Old slavery still exists as a phenomenon.

We must demand dignified salaries now. At the same time, the prices rise. The prices for basic food items are high. The rise has almost become a luxury item in India. The prices for onions, potatoes, corn are continuously rising. Complex and crucial problems for the working class such as child labour, discriminations against women continue to exist in high percentages. The statistics, during the international capitalist crisis with the extreme unemployment levels, might show a decrease in child labour but it remains in dramatically high levels.

In most countries of Asia, social security is not a right. When a worker is sick or injured he has to face a series of problems and difficulties to recover his health and continue working to survive. He has to face the multinationals in the pharmaceutical industry and the logic of profit which works against the public health.

We must demand Public Social Security for all. Under the assistance of the governments and the supervising of the multinational monopoly groups, corporations and companies put the lives of the workers in danger every day inside workplaces with no conditions of safety. The building that collapsed in Rana Plaza and took with it 1,129 workers is not an exception. This is the daily fear for many workers in Bangladesh, in Pakistan in many Asian countries. We must demand protective measures against earthquakes.

The low quality of life for the workers, the degraded states and the deliberate lack of welfare force the majority of the people to live in unsafe houses. The disasters caused by floods or earthquakes are a repeated scenario. The huge number of victims and homeless people in Pakistan, in Indonesia, in Philippines, in India after such disasters could be greatly reduced with specific measures that are not taken.

Millions of Asian workers migrate to Qatar, to Saudi Arabia, to Europe and leave their families and homes seeking for a better life only to face increasing exploitation and terror. And when the working people everywhere decide to organize, to resist, to protest, they are faced with terrorism by the employers and the authorities. There is lack of freedom of association. Militant trade unionists are being terrorized, threatened, fired, imprisoned and persecuted such as the trade unionists of NUBE, such as the coal workers leadership in India, such as comrade Ramendra Kumar, President of AITUC India and member of the Presidential Council of the WFTU, such as dozens of others. State violence and repression is used against the workers to stop their radicalization and the strengthening of the class-oriented struggles.

We must demand trade union and democratic freedom. This is the hard reality of the workers in Asia and Pacific. This is the reality for most part of the international working class. This is reality for the majority of the world population being exploited by a small minority that profits from their work. Multinationals transfer part of their production to the Asian countries, especially during the international capitalist crises to find cheap workers with no rights. But also the local billionaires who have spread internationally are not few. The owner of the steel-giant Arcelor Mittal, the owner of Reliance Industries, the owner of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Wipro and many others, to name few. \$19.5 billion is the profit from the garment and retail industry for Bangladesh, \$16 billion



for Vietnam, \$5.3 for Cambodia that are occupying the sector 4 million Bangladeshi workers, 1.5 million Vietnamese workers, 615,000 Cambodian workers.

For the WFTU it is clear: It is realistic, it is necessary for the workers to fight for their rights and fight for the right in livelihood. A decent life for the WFTU is a very specific thing.

Healthy, cheap, quality nutrition clean, adequate, public water supply Public, free and qualitative education and healthcare Public system of healthcare and social security, Safe and cheap housing for all. For these demands we struggle and we call in the struggle all the class-oriented trade union organizations in the world. This is what we did in the Action Day of the 3rd of October with great success. Thousands of workers took the streets, organized discussions in and out of working places around these demands.

Great struggles are being organized by the members of the WFTU in the region, struggles that leave a footprint and prepare the workers movement for the next big battles. A great example is the two-days strike organized in India on February with the participation of 100 million workers. Similarly, strikes, demonstrations, rallies are organized in Malaysia, in Sri Lanka, in Indonesia, in Pakistan, in Bangladesh and elsewhere. The new large demonstration being organized in India for December 12th, 2013.

The WFTU has made important steps with the collective work of all its members and friends and with the important work of the Regional Office in India headed by comrade H. Mahadevan.

However the action plan that was decided last year by this Asia-Pacific Meeting was not fulfilled in its greater extent. This brings us behind the needs of the class-oriented trade union movement of the region, behind the needs and expectations of our members. We believe that we must intensify the coordination and our collectivity in regional level and assist the

important work of the Regional Office of the WFTU in India. The creation of Sub-Regional Office in Africa and Latin America is a good experience that shows us that this way we have positive results in regional level, it can facilitate the better, more often, more direct communication between the affiliates and the Central Offices, it can help the organization and the coordination of our common action in the framework of the WFTU initiatives.

Take the floor. Make your suggestions for the functioning of Sub-Regional Offices in your region. Which countries, which unions have the ability to function regional offices?

We are already preparing the World Conference for Working Women. We need your preparation and your help for this important and historic initiative for the international class-oriented trade union movement so that we can have a successful conference and to elect a Women's Committee of the WFTU that will work in this sector. Which country could host this World Conference? The trade union educational work of the WFTU has been improved based on the decisions of the Presidential Council. We believe we can and we must organize Seminars together with our members, in all Asia-Pacific countries, around subjects that concern the working people and also around subjects that can help our trade unionists in their internationalist work (such as IT and languages). Make your proposals for the Seminars and the Trade Union Education.

During this meeting we also need to discuss how we will improve our work in sectoral level, how we will strengthen the Sectoral Organizations of the WFTU, the TUIs' so that they are worthy of the history of the WFTU, so that they have class-oriented positions, so that they have action and presence for all the problems of the working people. We need in Asia-Pacific region, a leader who will be responsible for all the TUI's in your region?

At the same time, we must not forget the financial condition of the WFTU. We need your fees, we need your support.



**WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS**

**Athens, October 30, 2013**

**WFTU Thank you Letter**  
**to the participants of 2013**  
**APRO Meeting—in Port Dickson, Malaysia**

***Dear comrades brothers and sisters,***

We would like to convey warm militant greetings to all of you and thank you for participating to the historic meeting of the WFTU- Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting on 25-26 October, 2013 in Port Dickson, Malaysia.

Your participation and involvement in the program made this year's Meeting a success from all aspects and it constitutes a new positive step forward for our movement and forces in the Area. Especially the foundation of the WFTU Asia Sub-Regional Office with seat in Malaysia will promote our positions in the area and will make WFTU's presence stronger and more efficient. It will effectively defend the interests of the workers in your area for good salaries, social security, collective bargaining, health and safety in workplaces, trade union and labor rights, democratic freedoms for all workers, for women, youth, informal sector workers and migrant workers.

Now, stronger and better organised, we move on forward to new struggles for the benefit of the working class and people of your countries. Your role must be a leading role.

From our side we will be always open to assist you and support your activities.

You can contact the headquarters at any moment; we are here to receive your further proposals and recommendations.

Comradely greetings,

**George Mavrikos**

**WFTU General Secretary**

Let me thank again NUBE for hosting this Conference. I want to thank VGCL for the moral and material support towards the WFTU. This is an important help, the flags, the T-Shirts, the caps that they prepared for the WFTU.

***Comrades,***

For all these issues we will discuss today and tomorrow and we will take collective, democratic decisions exactly the way has proven it does. We expect to listen from all of you your remarks, your criticism, your proposals.

This is the only way we will strengthen our common family, the WFTU. This is the only way we will deepen the internationalism in the trade union movement. This is the only way we will do our duty towards our members who need a strong, class-oriented, organized and determined class-oriented trade union movement that will put obstacles in the anti-workers' policy and a movement that will open the way for the labour and social rights up to the abolition of the exploitation of human-by-human and the capitalist barbarity.

## CONDOLENCE

### Legendary Vietnam General Vo Nguyen Giap Passes Away

Vo Nguyen Giap, the brilliant general who drove the French out of Vietnam to free it from colonial rule and later forced the Americans to abandon their offensive on the country died on October 4, 2013 at the age 102. He was the last of Vietnam's old-guard revolutionaries. Giap was a national hero whose legacy was second only to that of his mentor, founding President Ho Chi Minh, who led the country to independence.



## WFTU–International Action Day– Observed in India and all Over



Com. Padmanabhan addressing the Delhi meeting; leaders of AITUC, CITU, AIUTUC, UTUC, TUCC, AICCTU and Com. H. Mahadevan are on the dais



## International Action Day, 3rd October 2013



Com. Chandrasekar Rao, President, AITUC AP  
addressing the meeting in Hyderabad



A view of the participants



International Action Day, 3rd October 2013



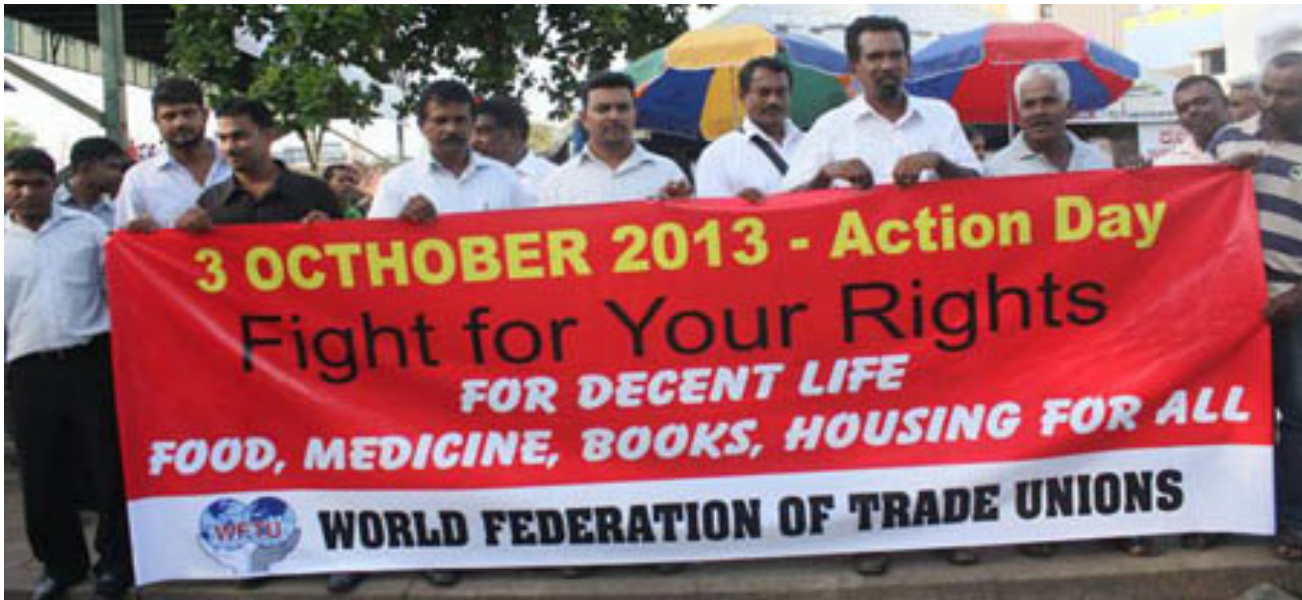
Demonstration in Visakhapatnam



Demonstration



Demonstration in Visakhapatnam



Another Procession



## International Action Day, 3rd Oct. 2013



Rally in Kerala

## Bangladesh





## International Action Day, 3rd October 2013 Nepal





# International Action Day, 3rd October 2013

## Greece



## Columbia



## International Action Day, 3rd October 2013

### Cyprus



### ***News from Pakistan:***

The CSC meets one of the main trade unions in Pakistan CSC (Confederación Catalan) met on Tuesday with the Trade Union Federation of Pakistan (APFUTU - All Pakistan Federation of United Trade Unions) to the national headquarters.

The APFUTU union confederation is a secular and progressive groups all the productive sectors of Pakistan and has a membership of nearly 500,000 members.

The meeting was attended by secretaries of international relations APFUTU and CSC in Sayed Zia and Ronnie Perello. During the meeting were discussed the situations in different countries especially severe energy crisis facing the Asian country has produced the closure of thousands of businesses, especially in the textile industry - 61 million increase in the number of unemployed . Currently 71% of Pakistanis live below the poverty line.

Referring to Catalonia, APFUTU expressed his sympathy for the independence process affecting the country as well as in Scotland where an important part of the process involved Pakistani community sovereignty. In relation to this point has criticized the Spanish legislation on immigration that is resulting in thousands of cases of abuse by trafficking networks against Pakistani citizens resident in the country. The CSC has offered its full support to assert social and labor rights of the Pakistani community in Catalonia.