



**BWII**  
Building and Wood  
Workers' International  
[www.bwint.org](http://www.bwint.org)

# IN ACTION

## BWII in ACTION

*Actions for the  
Second Half of 2020*

*August 2020*



## Dealing with neoliberalism most brutal face-organizing and fighting



Oligarchies, the elites, and their governments have turned their backs on the people through their inequality dealing with the new coronavirus pandemic and its economic, social and environmental consequences. As they protected their businesses, their companies and their banks, workers and general population were left to their own. While maintaining their own privileges, these groups imposed ineffective measures that failed to fight the pandemic and maintain worker incomes and the ability to support their families. With the exception of a few countries in which the level of organization and political influence of the working class has proved otherwise, Latin America has become the global epicenter of the outbreak, in terms of its spread and severity.

The neoliberal policies foundations – namely austerity measures and minimal state interference - were the most brutal face of a capitalist system that has already exhausted its capacity for accumulation before threaten people's lives and destroy

natural resources. The current system is incapable of promoting economic development that offers social inclusion, welfare policies and environmental sustainability, thereby jeopardizing the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

BWII promptly recognized this situation and reviewed its own policies, setting up new milestones in these times of resistance, organizing and activism, based on labor rights defense, the creation of safe and decent jobs, fair wages, a minimum income and social security benefits for the entire population. This includes workers who struggle to support their families in the informal economy, particularly migrants, people with disabilities, women in charge of households and young people looking for opportunities.

We must keep this in mind as we move towards our 5th Congress, with an eye towards expanding alliances, strengthening unity, improving our capabilities, updating our program, and fighting for a world that values the working class and the central role of labor, social justice, dignity and peace, without discrimination of any kind.

**Saúl Méndez Rodríguez**, *President of the Regional Committee*

# Building a better future: ORGANISING for resiliency in a time of adversity



During its first online statutory meeting, held in May and June 2020, the BWI World Board listened to its affiliated organizations from around the world and ultimately decided to choose a new, more inclusive and

equitable road to recovering jobs and industries in the construction, building materials, wood and forestry sectors that contribute to a socially and ecologically sustainable future.

This is the challenge that lies ahead of us after the radical change to economic activities and the impact on human lives caused by the new COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Board has considered the complexity of the crisis that is taking shape to formulate this declaration, which offers trade unions a united way forward that can be taken nationally, regionally and globally in eight areas:

- **Making** work safer by prioritizing occupational health and safety.
- **Protecting** wages and securing jobs
- **Advocating** for the economic, political and labour rights of migrant workers
- **Promoting** gender mainstreaming in the response to the crisis and gender equity in the recovery as well as taking on gender-based violence as a worker issue.
- **Leading** stewardship in forestry and its value chain.
- **Holding** multinationals accountable for working conditions and jobs as well as requiring corporations to make significant contribution to recovery.
- **Championing** global solidarity and international cooperation to address sovereign debt and global recovery.
- **Building** the post pandemic future – a future that is green and provides social justice.

This is our path forward in the coming months until we reach the 5th World Congress. We invite all our affiliates to contribute to fully preparing and implementing the plans.

**Ambet Yuson, Secretary General**

## GET READY for the new challenges

BWI's regional and global leaders pointed out the need to revise their agendas in order to deal with the new challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts. After a number of online consultations with statutory bodies and collaborating international organizations, in addition to direct contact with most of our affiliates, the Action Plan was revised and reformulated, in order to meet trade unions' urgent needs. Protecting people's health and promoting solidarity remain our priorities, as well as the exchange of information and trade union training for the new challenges. **Get involved! Make your union stronger! Make BWI stronger!**

**Nilton Freitas,**  
*Region Representative*





# ACTIVITIES scheduled for July- December

The **BWI Strategic Plan** approved at the 4th World Congress in Durban, South Africa, is a set of actions that BWI workers and trade unions have outlined as a global strategy. It defines the activities to be carried out by BWI in order to support our affiliated organizations to become stronger, and to defend and fight for new rights for workers in the construction, building materials, wood and forestry sectors. The **Regional Action Plan** approved at the 4th BWI Regional Conference of the ICM, in Santo Domingo translated the seven global agreements, called as “Convergences” in the Strategic Plan, and made them a reality according to the needs of our region.

In this sense, all scheduled actions are guided by this plan, which was democratically developed and defined by our affiliated organizations.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic brought dramatic changes to our region, changes that demanded an innovative approach from our organizations. BWI and its affiliated trade unions have defended workers exemplarily by promoting actions to fight back the pandemic without losing sight on the world of work that we work towards, all of which has been defined by the Regional Action Plan.

Below, we present a summary of the more than 80 activities planned for the second half of the year, clear evidence on, despite everything, the trade union movement remains active, determined, and continues fighting.





## CONVERGENCE 1 – Rights for all

- **Support to for unionization, organization at workplace and collective bargaining campaigns:** to face neoliberalism and fascism attacks by organizing, mobilizing and negotiating for workers' rights; strengthen and increase trade union representation.
- **Digital Communication Tools Training for trade union leaders – Platforms such as ZOOM, TEAMS, WhatsApp and others:** to promote easier communication between statutory members and trade union leaders; to continue organizing, bargaining and mobilizing in times of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Organize national coordination meetings with BWI affiliates in Brazil, Peru, Argentina and Colombia (Intergremial):** to promote the exchange of information and share experiences on topics of organization and collective bargaining; trade union training and solidarity.
- **Digital Activism Webinar:** to strengthen trade union action on social media; improve communication and have a larger political and social influence; expand the impact of digital campaigns promoted by BWI and its affiliated trade unions against dangerous infringements on rights, against anti-union practices, as well as child labor, racial and gender discrimination, for decent working conditions and the increase of solidarity campaigns.
- **Protect and organize migrant workers:** to fight against the impacts of COVID-19, against discrimination and exploitation, unionize and guarantee rights, strengthen trade unions in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Honduras, Mexico, Haiti, Brazil, Panama and Costa Rica.
- **Promote decent work agenda in BWI sectors in Colombia:** to promote educational activities for women and young trade union members; Intergremial meetings; social dialogues with the business sector and government; strengthen trade union representation and collective bargaining initiatives.
- **Permanent Forestry Trade Union Forum in Chile:** to establish a permanent dialogue and communication space on forestry and timber activities for affiliated and non-affiliated organizations, along with BWI, researchers, NGOs and other parties; strengthen trade union organization, social dialogue, collective bargaining practices and sustainable development.
- **Solidarity campaigns and complaints in defense of trade unions and workers' rights:** to oppose governments and companies attempts to take advantage of the COVID-19 crisis to undermine trade unions, by forcing them to disregard rights and weaken collective bargaining practices: Panama, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala and others.
- **Regional solidarity with Cuba campaign against the blockade:** to deal with accusations, clarifications, and to exchange information.
- **Online Workshop "Unionizing Informal Workers in BWI Sectors in Brazil":** strengthen affiliated trade unions based on existing experiences of expanding union representation; combat informality and precariousness at work.







## CONVERGENCE 2 – Safe Work

- **Online Workshop on “Health and Safety Issues in the specific context of COVID-19 – Impacts, challenges and trade union actions in BWI sectors”:** to promote the exchange of information and experiences; to develop safety protocol proposals and draft clauses for collective bargaining initiatives related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Support affiliated organizations as they resume their activities in the context of the new COVID-19 pandemic:** Argentina, Brazil, Bermuda, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala and Panama.
- **Study program, development and launch of an Occupational Health and Safety Protocol for COVID-19 in Brazil:** to be released to affiliated organizations and public authorities; to be introduced to sector companies.
- **"25 Kg, No More!" Campaign for cement bags:** updates and follow-ups in Brazil, Peru and Colombia.



## CONVERGENCE 3 – Youth in Unions

- **Courses, seminars and workshops for trade unionist young activist members:** to strengthen unionization and promote greater youth participation within trade unions; to support the creation of youth structures in trade union organizations; to train young leaders for trade union work, to promote solidarity campaigns and defend rights.
- **Professional training for young construction workers in Guatemala:** cooperation agreement with SINCS-G and the University of San Carlos to hold professional training courses for young people.







## CONVERGENCE 4 – Gender Equality

- **Workshop on “Gender and Unionism:** Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Lives”: to strengthen the organization of female trade union members in the fight against gender-based violence at workplace and feminicide.
- **Support to affiliated trade unions in their campaigns against femicide, macho-culture campaigns and for ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work ratification:** Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Curaçao, Suriname, Jamaica, Ecuador, Mexico, Chile, Panama and the Dominican Republic.
- **Promote trade union activism to fight gender-based violence in Brazil:** regional webinar, leader training and engagement of affiliated unions.



## CONVERGENCE 5 – Sustainable Industries

- **Online training on “Labor and the Environment – climate changes”:** to train trade union leaders for social dialogue and collective bargaining practices with companies in the forestry, wood, cement and building materials sectors, among others. Enhance trade union participation in national and international debates on climate change and sustainable development objectives.
- **Operations mapping and identify work-related risks at tailings dams:** to expand and strengthen BWI Network of Dam Workers; to promote better health and safety standards in the workplace.
- **Strengthen trade union networks in the forestry and wood sectors:** to promote meetings between trade unions in the Brazilian and Venezuelan Amazon regions; and meetings between unions from the extractive sector (planted forests).
- **Sustainability and Cement industry Trade Union Training:** to strengthen trade union organization, social dialogue and collective bargaining initiatives.
- **Regional webinar on FSC and PEFC forest certification systems:** to increase knowledge about audit processes and labor rights; to train unions to control sustainable timber production and to fight against slave and precarious labor in the sector; to contribute the improvement of health and safety conditions for workers in the forestry sector.
- **Regional training on International Financial Institutions (IFI):** World Bank, IDB and other institutions; to address issues such as risks and safeguards; control mechanisms and trade union participation; to increase knowledge and trade union capabilities in the heavy construction sector and engineering and infrastructure construction work.





## CONVERGENCE 6 – Fair Games

- **Decent Working Conditions during the construction projects for FIFA 2026 World Cup in North America:** map BWI's sectors in Mexico; study the construction blueprint; promote trade union affiliation and strengthen unions in Mexico.



## CONVERGENCE 7 – Organized Value Chains

- **Multinational companies in the region mapping - IKEA, Lamosa, ETEX, DURATEX and LafargeHolcim:** learn in order to organize, negotiate and fight for workers' rights and equal opportunities. To create international trade union networks that will contribute to the exchange of information and solidarity between workers of the same company, but living in different countries.
- **Meetings, trainings and the publication of bulletins from trade union networks of multinational and sectorial companies:** MRV Engineering, Argos Cement, Votorantim Cement, LafargeHolcim Cement, ETEX, Duratex, Lamosa, Arauco, Faber-Castell, Ceramic, Forestry, Wood, Dams.
- **Social Dialogue meetings with multinational companies:** Argos Cement; Faber-Castell; MRV Engineering; Artesco Peru (Staedtler).
- **Gemstone sector mapping:** to learn about the companies and trade unions.
- **Multinational companies mapping and International Framework Agreements (IFA) in BWI sectors in Peru:** to strengthen BWI's affiliated organizations in the country; to expand participation in international trade union networks; to promote IFAs implementation.
- **Trade Union trainings on International Framework Agreements (IFA):** to address capabilities and restrictions, social auditing, OECD Guidelines and ILO standards; to provide training to implement and promote framework agreements in the region; to increase the capabilities of international trade union networks; to provide training for a new area of union action and to promote class solidarity at an international level.
- **Chinese Multinational Companies Trade Union Network:** to spread studies and information about the Chinese companies in the region and to organize the Network (letter of affiliation and principles, etc.).





# Statutory Meetings

The statutory meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean were originally scheduled to be held on site during late October in the city of Cartagena, Colombia. Even though meetings were planned to be hosted by the Intergremial of Construction and Wood Workers of Colombia; however, due to social distancing measures and travel restrictions, meetings were changed into online events.

This new format involves several stages, which will begin on September 8 and continue until the Regional Committee meeting, on 29 October, 2020. Prior to the Regional Committee Meeting, a larger meeting has been scheduled for October 20, in order to address the international political situation in post-pandemic times, as well as trade unions survival.



Statutory Group / Meeting	Date
Group 28 – Central America	September 8
Group 29 – Caribbean	September 11
Group 25 – Andean	September 15
Group 26 – Southern Cone	September 18
Group 27 - Brazil	September 22
2nd Meeting of the Regional Youth Committee	September 24
13th Meeting of the Regional Women's Committee	September 29
Political State of Affairs Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean	October 20
BWI's 15th Regional Committee Meeting	October 29

Since these are statutory meetings, the organizations whose representatives are part of the statutory bodies must be up to date with their statutory dues. Substitute members of these bodies, members of the Regional Youth Committee and the Regional Women's Committee may be invited to attend the meetings of the Country Group to which they are linked.

We want to say  
thank you to our  
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