

IG BAU National Congress
Berlin, 10 October 2017
Solidarity Message
Ambet Yuson, General Secretary, BWI

Robert Feiger, Dietmar Schaefer, members IGBAU Board, delegates and guests, it is an honour to address your Congress.

Where there are migrant workers... in Qatar or in Germany, IGBAU is there;
Where there are child labourers ... in Nepal or India, IGBAU is there;
Where there are workers fighting political change in Tunisia or in Brazil, IGBAU is there;
Where there are workers on strike against multinational companies... in Chile or in Ukraine, IGBAU is there.

IGBAU is always there; with workers; and around the world; fighting side by side with the international trade union movement. I would like to thank the members of IGBAU for bringing solidarity around the world; and for being the leading trade union in BWI --- Building and Wood workers International. On behalf of more than 12 million members of from 130 countries, thank you IGBAU.

I'd like to talk about three key topics that are familiar with all of you: football, workers rights and politics.

1. Football. I'm sure that you are already predicting that Germany will win the 2018 World Cup in Russia. As you cheer for the German team, remember that workers have lost their lives to build the stadiums that will host these Games. To date, 20 workers have died in the construction of the world cup stadium in Russia. Let's show FIFA the power of trade unions by calling on them to take more action to stop the deaths.

In Qatar, the host of the 2022 World Cup, the BWI together with IGBAU concluded an agreement with the Qatari to conduct joint safety inspections in the eight (8) World Cup stadiums. With several union inspectors including IGBAU health and safety inspector, we have improved the health and safety condition of more than 20,000 migrant workers in Qatar. Thank you IGBAU for your support.

However, the fight is not over. Migrant workers in Qatar continued to be exploited by employers and recruiters, paid low wages for long hours of hard work, and live in indecent living facilities. We need to continue the fight to support migrant workers to organize, and take back the power to lead their own struggle for labour rights and human rights. I hope we can continue to count on the support of IG BAU.

The exploitation, discrimination, and injustice migrant workers face in Qatar is also prevalent in Europe and here in Germany. Many of you have heard the reports on the construction of the shopping center here in Berlin; migrant workers are receiving wages below industrial standards

or not paid for months and unacceptable living accommodation. Despite the rise of hate and anti-migrant rhetoric, I commend IG BAU from not wavering in its support for migrant workers' rights, stop social dumping, and ensure equal pay for equal work for all workers.

2. Workers Rights. Globalization has resulted in multinational companies wielding enormous global power and clout while they aggressively chase profits without any morals. Immediately following the election of Donald Trump the global cement company announced that it expected to profit from the building of the wall between Mexico and the United States. Later, they announced they will not bid for the project. This is due to the ardent outcry expressed by IGBAU standing up for justice and humanity against multinational companies.

Multinational companies follows where there can get bigger profit; taking advantage of weak labor laws; and weak trade unions. We need to counter this power by building a strong international trade union movement and by negotiating global framework agreement. BWI has recently concluded a global framework agreement with the biggest cement company LafargeHolcim. Now, BWI would like the help of IGBAU to negotiate a global agreement with Heidelberg.

Hochtief is global player in the construction industry and Hochtief has a global agreement with BWI. It's a good news that Hochtief finally signed a collective bargaining agreement with IGBAU. And early this year, Hochtief also signed an agreement with the building union in Chile. With the help of IGBAU, we should ensure that Hochtief is ensuring that international labor standards are implemented their construction projects and joint ventures in other parts of the world particularly the workers in Hongkong and Australia whose having serious health and safety violations.

In this struggle, I hope we can count on the continued support of IGBAU to take back the power against multinational companies.

Companies in the wood and forestry sector benefit from the FSC certification label to obtain access to markets; and IGBAU is the leading player in the FSC in Germany. We have seen violation of workers rights in the forestry and wood companies in Fiji, Turkey and Malaysia where FSC certified companies refuse to recognise the right of workers to form trade unions. This is not acceptable. We call on the FSC to adhere to the international labour standards; and this should override any national law that violated workers' rights. In this continued struggle within the FSC, I hope we can count on the continued support of IG BAU.

3. Politics. The current state of world is both troubling and challenging. We cannot ignore the rise of populism and nationalist right-wing political parties and movements. We cannot accept Donald Trump's vision of America First....and Germany second? This is not something that is only happening in the United States, Germany, or other parts of Europe. It is happening in my own home country, the Philippines where the President is enflaming lawlessness and refusing to take political responsibility for the deaths of more than 13,000 people in his so-called fight against drugs.

History has shown that in times of conflict and struggle, the only real movement that can effectively fight for genuine political and economic democracy, justice, human rights, and labour rights is the trade union movement and the people's movement. In less than two months, more than 800 delegates of BWI including many representing IGBAU will converge in Durban, South Africa for the 4th BWI World Congress, where we will take back the power to build a strong, inclusive, and dynamic global trade union movement.

Take back the power. Power to the People. This is the call of Nelson Mandela to the people of South Africa, the former President of South Africa - Amandla which means Power to the People. This is also the call of BWI to the workers of the world - Amandla - Power to the workers!