



TITLE OF THE RESOLUTION: 18. BWI Political Action Fund and Campaigns in Latin America

SUBMITTED BY: UOCRA (Argentina) and Brazilian Unions CONTICOM CUT, FSCM CUT, STICC POA, SINTRACOM Curitiba, SINTRACONST Espirito Santo, FETRACONMAG, SINTEPAV CE, SINTRAICCM, SINTRACOM Bauru, and SINTRAMOG

The 'pink tide' of left-leaning governments that came to power in Latin America throughout the 90s and into the 2000s offered much needed hope and inspiration to workers and their organizations around the world. After decades of organizing, fighting and challenging the underlying logic of neoliberalism, it looked as though some real alternatives to this hegemonic model of capitalism were possible. Progressive governments across the continent came to power based on popular discontent with the consequences of neoliberal policies including privatizations that worsened already existing unemployment.

The basic substantive gains of poor and working-class people in many Latin American countries were remarkable. Millions benefited from progressive social programs gaining access to housing, employment, income support, health care and education at all levels for the first time. Reductions in child labour, informal work and the gap between rich and poor were all significant.

Left-leaning governments were temporarily accommodated by traditional holders of power including holders of finance capital. This fragile acceptance was inherently unstable and constantly challenged. More recently, progressive governments have been systematically removed from power using every means possible; both democratic and methods with questionable legal legitimacy, as in the cases of Paraguay, Honduras and Brazil. The return of the political parties of the elites to power has resulted in rapid, aggressive and direct attacks on the poor and working classes. These patterns are continent wide: labour reforms that reduce workers' rights and weaken unions, increasing the barriers to access social security systems including a dignified retirement. These 'reforms' are imposed without negotiation. Tripartism and good-faith negotiations are abandoned.

Conservative governments devalue regional integration processes and economic stimulus strategies. Investments in infrastructure projects are reduced or frozen, thus dramatically worsening unemployment in the areas of construction, construction materials, wood and forest products.

WHEARAS a continent wide economic crisis has led to immediate and widespread increases in unemployment, both formal and informal;

WHEARAS governments across the continent are responding to economic crisis with the same regressive attacks on workers' and trade union rights including firings and an increase of violence against trade unionists and social movement activists;

WHEARAS members of BWI affiliated trade unions are suffering the unemployment consequences of ongoing corruption scandals and investigations that have brought massive infrastructure projects to a halt

WHEARAS BWI affiliates are on the front line of resistance against austerity, leading mass mobilizations and protests in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Columbia and Peru and national general strikes in Argentina and Brazil;

RECOGNIZING BWI's global leadership in the development and coordination of innovative trade union strategies;



THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BWI affiliates in Latin America and the Caribbean are supported in the creation of an action fund for a regional campaign to restart stopped construction projects and appeal for new investments in the areas of infrastructure and housing.

This regional campaign will:

- require as a premise that all existing and future construction projects are realized on the basis of the principles of decent work and transparency;
- focus on strengthening local trade unions and their organizing efforts;
- focus on the development of young and women leaders;
- focus on the development of career paths for related professional service providers including engineers.

SIGNATURE:

The above resolution was endorsed by BWI Congress in Durban South Africa.