

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

DOCUMENTS

- 1. Agenda & programme**
- 2. Presidential address**
- 3. General Secretary's report**
- 4. Annexures I & II**
- 5. Report on activities**
- 6. Special discussion paper on
"Cadre Development in Trade Union Movement"**
- 7. Condolence resolution**
- 8. Information Document**

**December 28 - 30, 2005
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

AGENDA

1. Condolence Resolution
2. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of the CITU Working Committee held at Agartala on December 3-5, 2004
3. Presidential Address
4. Report of the General Secretary
5. Finalisation of the special discussion paper on "Cadre Development in Trade Union Movement"
6. Resolutions
7. Any other subject with the permission of the Chair

PROGRAMME

28.12.2005

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 11.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. | Flag hoisting
Homage to Martyrs |
| 12.00 noon to 01.30 p.m. | Inaugural session
Presidential address |
| 03.30 p.m. to 05.30 p.m. | Condolence resolution
Introduction of General Secretary's report |
| 06.00 p.m. to 08.00 p.m. | Debate on General Secretary's report |

29.12.2005

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 09.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. | Debate on General Secretary's report |
| 12.00 noon to 01.30 p.m. | - " - |
| 03.30 p.m. to 05.30 p.m. | - " - |
| 06.00 p.m. to 08.00 p.m. | Finalisation of the special discussion paper on
"Cadre Development in Trade Union Movement" |

29.12.2005

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 09.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. | Summing up
Resolutions
Credential report
Adoption of reports |
| 12.00 noon to 01.00 p.m. | Concluding address by the President |
| 03.00 p.m. | MASS RALLY |

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dear Comrades,

Since our last Working Committee meeting at Agartala, several significant developments have taken place in the national and international arenas. These developments have long-term impact on the trade union movement not only in our country but all over the world. It is therefore, extremely important for us to take them into account so that we can review our activities and chalk out programme of action in the forthcoming period.

The volatile rise in oil price has certainly affected the developmental activities in the world. The international oil prices, which were hovering round \$20 per barrel, began to rise due to increase in the world demand for oil since 1999 and in the beginning of 2005 it reached \$60 per barrel. Many developing countries, heavily depending on import of crude oil have suffered most since a sizable portion of their national resources were utilized for oil-import. The Trade and Development Report 2005 has noted, "Oil price shocks have repeatedly had a negative aggregate impact on global economic activity. The reason for this has to be mainly sought in the response of economic policy in countries affected by an oil price shock."

The UN publication "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2005" has admitted, "One of the universal weaknesses of the world economy continues to be slow growth of employment and the persistence of high rate of unemployment and underemployment in most developing countries. Unless improved economic growth is reflected in increased employment, it will prove difficult to reduce poverty." The situation is further likely to deteriorate in the forthcoming period.

The so-called discussion about the longer-term global development agenda to achieve the millennium development goals of reducing poverty by 2015 clearly indicates that the objectives are not likely to be achieved. The above report further notes, "Progress is being made in increasing official developmental assistance, but the total is only around one third of the target of 0.7 percent of the gross national income of the developed countries and falls short of the amount deemed necessary to achieve the Millennium Development goals. Further progress in raising Official Development Assistance needs to be accompanied by enhanced debt relief for all developing countries that are confronted with unsustainable external debt burdens and by further progress on measures to prevent and resolve financial crisis."

However, developed capitalist countries are adopting policies totally opposite to that which is resulting in adding to the poverty of the developing countries. During 2002, 35 developing countries showed decline in their per capita GDP growth. The number during 2003 was 28 which shows how the poverty is increasing in developing countries due to the policies adopted by the advanced capitalist countries.

CONTROL OF TECHNOLOGY BY MNCs

The total number of MNCs in the world is estimated to be about 70,000. Out of them 700 largest R&D

spending firms account for half the world's total R&D expenditure and two thirds of the world's R&D business. The leading MNCs like Ford Motor, Pfizer, Daimler Chrysler, and Siemens are spending \$6 billion every year. 80 per cent of the 700 largest spending companies come from USA, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom and France. More than half of the R&D spending is in IT hardware, automotive and pharmaceuticals/biotechnology sectors. Thus the new technology is being controlled by the MNCs who instead of using this technology for elimination of poverty are doing so to augment their profitability. This in turn results in growing pauperization of the people all over the world. More, they transfer only their outdated technology to the developing countries which prevents them from competing with them despite cheap labour available in these countries. The MNCs have been exploiting the cheap labour available in developing countries to earn more profits

Despite rapid advance in production technology the production in advanced capitalist countries does not show any sizable growth. The forecast of production growth during 2005 was estimated to be 3 per cent in North America, 2.25 per cent in Western Europe and 2 percent in Asia and Oceania. The average growth of production in all the advanced capitalist countries in the world is estimated at 2.5 per cent, which clearly shows that the new technology is not being utilized for the benefit of the poor in the world. So long the control of technology is in the hands of MNCs the talks of elimination of poverty in the world is going to be a mere pipedream.

The Human Development Report 2005 has observed growing inequality at a global level in the recent past. "For most of the world's poor countries the past decade has continued a disheartening trend: not only have they failed to reduce poverty, but they are falling further behind rich countries. Measured at the extremes, the gap between the average citizen in the richest and in the poorest countries is wide and getting wider."

The major cause of growing global inequality is the unequal trade relations. The WTO is giving an upper hand to the advanced capitalist countries and transfers values and resources from the developing to the developed countries. This fact has been admitted by the above report when it states: "...trade is a driver of global inequality as well as prosperity. For the majority of the countries the globalisation story is one of divergence and marginalisation."

IMPERIALIST POLICY IN IRAQ

The bankruptcy of the US imperialist policy in Iraq has come home to roost. Despite intensification of US attacks on the people of Iraq and use of Napalm bombs the resistance of the freedom fighters in Iraq has increased rapidly. The farce of National Assembly elections on December 15 under US army occupation has not evoked any positive response from the Iraqi population. The claim of the Bush administration to grant full constitutional powers for 4 years carry no meaning when US imperialism remains in real control of power in Iraq. The so-called US trained 140 battalions of Iraqi army and police cannot contain the growing discontent of the Iraqi people.

The increasing US casualties in Iraq has been resulting in adverse reactions among the people of USA, who are openly coming out in larger number demanding withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. The defensive arguments advanced by President Bush and his cohorts justifying the existence of US army in Iraq are having fewer takers in USA. The opinion polls clearly indicate that over 60 per cent of the US population does not support the Bush government's Iraq policy.

The farce trial of Saddam Hussain is being exposed after killing of two of his defence lawyers by US hirelings. The pro-US judge trying Saddam Hussain has no locus standi to undertake such a trial. The

entire proceedings are undertaken with watchful eyes of US imperialism determined to impose death penalty on him.

A confidential report published in Newsweek magazine notes that the new constitution of Iraq is a "model for the territorial division of the state". As noted by the journal, Iraq is likely to be divided into three different states around Basra, Baghdad and Mosul cities. A separate Kurdistan state is already in the offing. US is clearly attempting to perpetuate its domination on the soil of Iraq to control its rich oil resources.

The exposure of secret US prisons and new disclosures about torture of Iraqi prisoners has evoked worldwide protests against US imperialism. On September 24, 3 lakh people in Washington protested against continuation of war in Iraq with banners "Stop the war on the poor from Iraq to New Orleans" "Bring troops home now," Make levees not war. Similar rallies were held in other major cities in USA marking growing anti-war feelings just under the nose of President Bush.

The aggrandizement of US policy was clearly seen on the question of Iran when in IAEA the US was pressing for referring the issue to UN Security Council. The US intervention is to prevent any development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Keeping an eye on the rich oil resources in Iran, US is trying to find an excuse to intervene in Iran on the plea that Iran was developing nuclear weapons. The same USA is keeping mum when Israel is developing nuclear weapons and posing threat to West Asian countries.

Government of India's vote with US imperialism in IAEA on September 24 was a clear testimony of its succumbing to US blackmail and to adopt a servile policy towards US imperialism. When China and Russia remained neutral on the question and did not support US imperialism India could have remained neutral during the voting. This pro-imperialist stand has tarnished the image of the country among the non-aligned countries all over the world. It was an attempt to give up India's independent foreign policy. This pro-US tilt in Government's foreign policy evoked strong opposition from the people of India. It also adversely affected India's friendly relations with Iran and is likely to pose some problems for the smooth development of Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline which is extremely important to India's energy requirement.

The Bush administration continues to threaten Syria on the plea that it was aiding Iraqi insurgents. It also used the UN investigation teams report on former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri's killing, which indicated that it was organised by Syrian and Lebanese security officials. The report also accused Syria of not cooperating with the investigating team. Though Syrian government challenged the report of the investigating team, the US and France pressed for sanctions against Syria. Russia however, opposed to any move to impose sanctions against Syria. China and Algeria have also expressed their opposition to impose any such sanction.

US imperialists have also an eye on Syrian oil and want to interfere in the internal affairs of Lebanon. Since Syria is helping Palestine freedom fighters, US imperialism is also keen to attack Syria. Border clashes have already taken place on Syrian-Iraqi border between US and the Syrian troops and frequent US statements threatening Syrian government are appearing on behalf of several spokesmen of US government.

The US encouragement to Israel to continue occupation of vast chunk of territory in West Bank is creating obstacles in the solutions of the problem of the people of Palestine. Though Israel has vacated illegal settlement of Jews in Gaza Strip the West Bank territory is still occupied by Israeli settlers and

they are determined to continue their occupation. US imperialists want to handover only a small portion of West Bank territory to Palestine and impose a truncated solution on the people of Palestine. Moreover US has openly opposed the proposal to make East Jerusalem as capital of Palestine. Thus, in reality US is not prepared to honour the UN resolutions on Palestine which amounts to denial of the right of the people of Palestine to have their home-land.

Under these circumstances the elections announced in Palestine in January next year will only be in the areas where the government of Palestine has effective control.

The struggle for liberating the territory, still occupied by Israeli forces, is facing difficulties due to reprisals by Israel in the Palestine territory. Repeated crossing of the Israeli army into Palestine is creating a reign of terror in the Gaza Strip. Despite this, the people of Palestine are heroically fighting for the liberation of their homeland. The US imperialists are opposing every effort to accept the legitimate aspiration of the people of Palestine.

SITUATION IN NEPAL

The repressive measures by the King Gyanendra in Nepal are continuing unabated. Democratic rights of the people are curtailed. Freedom of the press and civil liberties are torn asunder. The King is receiving armed assistance from abroad to suppress the civil liberties though it is coming in the name of containing Maoists. US imperialism is taking full advantage of the situation to increase their influence in that landlocked country.

Despite these brutal repression mass movement is growing to oppose the arbitrary monarchy. Big rallies and demonstrations were held recently all over Nepal to condemn the autocratic regime and to demand restoration of democracy.

The unity of several political parties along with Maoists about the abolition of monarchy and other progressive measures is a positive development that will immensely strengthen the democratic movement in that country. The democratic unity achieved in Nepal will unleash a powerful movement against the autocratic regime and lead to the defeat of all machinations of the king of Nepal in collaboration with US imperialism.

13th SAARC SUMMIT

The 13th summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was held in Dhaka in the first week of November after several postponements. The summit could not come to any agreement on establishing South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) while the declaration of terrorism was merely an expression of intention. On the question of poverty alleviation in the region the SAARC summit could not advance much except institution of fund and mechanism to work collectively.

Afghanistan has been included as the eighth member of SAARC while the summit agreed in principle to include China and Japan as observers.

India has taken over the leadership of SAARC and hence it should be our country's sincere efforts to make SAARC more meaningful so that the regional cooperation of South Asian countries will help in accelerating the economic development of these countries.

15th CONGRESS OF WFTU

The 15th Congress of WFTU was held on 1-4 December 2005 at Havana (Cuba). Over 600 delegates from more than 80 countries participated in the conference. On behalf of CITU, 17-member delegation attended the conference and played an active role in the conference.

The congress was participated by large number of delegation from all American countries. Every delegate in his speech congratulated the people of Cuba for their valiant struggle against US imperialist machinations. The overall tenor of the Congress was clearly directed against the global designs of imperialism and strengthening of the united class struggles against the policies of imperialist globalisation.

The Centre of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) took great interest in strengthening the WFTU and giving it a class based orientation. There has been change in the leadership of the WFTU and the Headquarters will be shifted to Geneva. A senior official of the CTC would also join the WFTU headquarters to strengthen its activities.

A total number of 60 delegates from India attended the WFTU congress. Sukomal Sen, General Secretary AISGEF, has been included in the presidential council of WFTU.

LATIN AMERICA AT THE FOREFRONT

The resounding defeat of US President George Bush's proposal about the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) on November 4 at the American Summit in Mal del Plata, Argentina has brought that continent in the forefront of the struggle against US imperialism. The recent victories of the Left in several Latin American countries have roused the masses in that continent against imperialist machinations. The massive 3 hour march of above 80,000 participants against Bush and his imperialist project of domination on the eve of the summit culminated in a big rally addressed by Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez.

"There is no option," Chavez thundered amidst applause, "given that in our region there is more and more poverty and hunger everyday thanks to the neo-liberal capitalist model, which has castigated the people mercilessly."

There is no wonder that President Bush cut a sorry figure at the American summit and had to go back empty handed due to the opposition to his policies by majority of the Latin American countries. Despite US blockade for decades Cuba is advancing due to the solidarity support it is receiving from the people of Latin America.

Spectacular victory won by the Left and progressive forces led by Chavez in Venezuela in the recent legislative elections showed the growing support the popular opinion is giving to his progressive and anti-imperialist policies. The Venezuelan court has convicted some TU leaders for sabotaging the oil industry causing huge loss to economy. Now the reactionary trade unions have raised a bogey of human right violation totally ignoring that these TU leaders were working in close collaboration with CIA and US imperialists. The working class in Venezuela is however endorsing the firm action taken by the Chavez government against such anti-national elements.

In the recent UN General Assembly on November 8 a resolution was adopted once again calling upon the US government to end the economic and commercial blockade on Cuba. Of the 191 countries

represented in the Assembly, 182 voted in favour of Cuba and only US, Israel, Palau and Marshall Islands voted in favour of US. This isolation of US imperialism was most glaring this time.

Incidentally, the Third International Cuba Solidarity Conference of the Asia Pacific Region is being held at Chennai on January 20-21, 2006. We are a part of it and we should do everything to make this conference a grand success so that a firm regional solidarity can be expressed to the struggle of the Cuban people against US imperialism.

UNJUST COMPROMISE IN WTO

The WTO Ministerial Conference held at Hong Kong from December 13-19 2005 failed effectively to address the concern of the developing countries. The advanced capitalist countries manipulated to impose their economic agenda on the developing countries by offering extremely minor concessions but sticking to their main points.

The agreement on elimination of export subsidies by 2013 was a longer period while G 110 Group wanted it to be done earlier. Moreover export subsidy account for only 2 per cent of the total subsidy given to the agriculture by the developed countries. Moreover, duty free access is given to only 3 per cent of the agricultural products. The poor and marginal farmers will continue to suffer by the WTO pact. Kamal Nath, India's Commerce Minister has played a leading role in arriving at a compromise. Though the 90 countries opposed the earlier draft India failed to stick to the joint proposals and did not adhere to unity of the developing countries. It should be noted that Cuba and Venezuela categorically opposed these proposals.

Kamal Nath gave the national interests a go bye when he signed a deal on service sector. India agreed by giving "commitments" on enhanced levels of foreign equity participation. This commitment will be leading to acceptance of FDI caps in financial services like banking insurance, etc.

The compromise ensures that Foreign Service providers will have to be given the same regulatory treatment as domestic ones. This will give an advantage to foreign capitalists who have better financial resources and adversely affect the Indian service providers. The compromises under Non-Agricultural Marketing Access will entail substantial cuts in industrial tariffs for developing countries but no concrete commitment has been obtained for the removal of Non-Tariff Barriers by the developed countries.

Thus the Hong Kong compromise on the whole will go against the interest of the developing countries and give an upper hand to the advanced capitalist countries. The warning given by the Left parties to the government was untended by the Commerce Minister of India, which has led to such a disadvantageous position for the developing countries including India. Such servile approach of the UPA Govt in the WTO meet arises from its neoliberal and surrenderist economic policies. The struggle against the UPA government's economic policies must be carried further with more determination.

WAVE OF STRUGGLES WORLDWIDE

In the wake of globalisation, attack on working class has been pervading and almost globalised, the issues involved are remarkably identical and the resistance movement, coming in waves, is also being organized all over the globe.

Waves of strikes are literally sweeping the world in the last few years. The strikes in Austria, Germany, France and in many other countries are part of history now. In countries like Austria strike has taken

place after decades.

Barely a week after the general strike in India, France came to a standstill. At the call of French trade unions the entire country was immobilized by a strike action on 4th October 2005 as hundreds of flights were cancelled, Railway service went haywire with hardly 30 per cent service on run, buses were stranded because the staff did not turn up. The impact was similar even in schools, hospitals, universities, and other public services. And in mid September 2005, the port & dock workers of France struck work against privatization and the striking workers snatched away ship sought to be operated by the management in the Corsican Port during the strike and carried it to the mid-sea.

Greece has witnessed two major strikes in 3 months. Workers' anger was ventilated when the government refused to grant a compensatory holiday on 11th May 2005 as 1st May coincided with a Christian Holy day. The trade unions called a general strike on 11th May that collapsed the entire road, air, and water (maritime) transport. All schools, offices, insurance companies, municipalities banks remained closed. Workers from industries walked off their work place, even the journalists stopped their work. On 26th July 2005 again more than a million workers struck work against the government's policy of increasing working hours and reducing overtime payment.

Belgium workers have organized their first general strike on October 7, 2005 after 12 years against the economic and labour policies. The country was completely paralysed. The General Strike in Belgium was preceded by the Hospital workers' strike on 3rd October.

In Italy, a general strike paralysed the country on November 30, 2004. The strike was called by the three trade union confederations to protest against the Berlusconi government's economic and financial policies. Metalworkers' nationwide strike on 30th September 2005 in Italy which paralysed the steel plants in Milan, Naples, Reggio Emilia, L' Aquila, Torino and Taranto. And in November 2005, Italy witnessed another countrywide general strike and millions of workers flooded and paralysed all the major cities through militant processions.

Semiconductor workers in Germany also went on strike on 30th September 2005 against retrenchment move by the management. Copper mining workers of Arizona and Texas in USA went for multiple days strike action in July 2005 braving prohibitory orders.

Colombia witnessed biggest ever countrywide general strike on 12th October 2005 against the trade agreement with USA and also against repression on trade unions.

In South Korea workers, peasants, and government (public service) employees went for a simultaneous strike in November 2004. Peasantry supported the strike actively. Again on 1st April 2005 there was 4-hour strike by industrial workers against employment of temporary workers with reduced wage.

On 27th June 2005 millions of workers struck work in South Africa at the call of COSATU against job loss, high rate of unemployment and poverty.

Again on 3rd October at the call of COSATU workers went on strike in Eastern and Western Cape provinces. They have decided to organise a series of strike, if necessary one day in every week.

Port and dockworkers staged four-day general strike from 14th September 2005 at International Port of DJIBOUTI. In protest of the vindictive action by the employer against the striking workers, the Djibouti Port workers again went on strike on 24th September with two hours notice to the management.

More recently, on December 20, 2005, the transport workers in New York went on strike on wages and pension demands, resulting in an unprecedented disruption of the road, rail and metro transportation in the city, affecting seven million commuters.

Some distinct features are seen during the preparation and organising the strikes. Almost everywhere be it in India or in any other country it is observed that thousands of people have come out in the streets. They led processions, blocked thoroughfares and protested angrily. Governments, almost everywhere, are on the dock and are standing face to face with their own people. In the global war between super profit and people, people have started asserting themselves challenging the inevitability theory of neoliberal imperialist globalisation.

WHITHER RESOURCE CRUNCH?

When the government of India is crying hoarse about the non-availability of the resources for the social sector and revival of sick industries the private sector companies are minting money enjoying the concessions given to it through the budget and other policy measures. A study conducted by The Financial Express of 704 major private sector companies shows that the rise in net profits of these companies shows a remarkable growth during April-September 2005 compared to the corresponding period in 2004. The study pointed out the rise in profits of the following sectors _ Automobiles-30.7%, IT sector-32.6%, pharmaceuticals 85.2%; shipping-84.9%; sugar-115.7%, and Textiles 128.4% (Oct 29, 2005).

Though the textile industry is posing about facing a crisis, the big business houses in this sector have earned the highest rate of profit due to the concessions given by the government. The sensex has crossed 9000 mark in December while it was around 4000 when the UPA government came to power.

While the non-payment of taxes by the private sector has reached Rs 1 lakh crores and the non-payment of bank loans by them (NPA) has exceeded one lakh 30,000 crores, it clearly shows how the UPA Govt is boosting the private sector. The remuneration of CEOs of giant corporations has reached colossal levels. The Reliance Chief Mukesh Ambani's annual remuneration exceeds Rs 21 crore, while the lowest income of the top hundred CEOs is more than Rs 50 lakhs. Yet when the employers in India talk about the high cost economy they mainly mention about the wages of workers.

Union Finance Minister P Chidamabram does not see the high profitability of the private sector and foreign capital. He does not have any idea of raising resources for social sector and revival of sick industry by taking a share out of their super profits. He only sees disinvestments of profit making public sector undertakings as the source of funds to meet his budgetary requirements.

Though due to the firm stand taken by the Left parties the UPA government was forced to stop disinvestments of Navaratna companies, it is still pressing for disinvestment of profit making public undertakings some of which are running even better than navartana companies.

NO TO FDI IN RETAIL TRADE

Dr Manmohan Sigh's announcement in Kuala Lumpur in ASEAN meeting that India will permit FDI in retail trade within 6 months is fraught with dangerous implications. It will destroy the source of livelihood of lakhs of small shopkeepers and hawkers and strengthen the control of MNCs over the Indian economy. Despite left parties well argued note the government is going ahead to implement the dictates of the World Bank and damage our national interests. The working class of India will have to plan a countrywide

movement along with small shopkeepers so that these dangerous steps are not allowed to be taken by the UPA Government.

GROWING ATTACKS ON WORKING CLASS

The UPA government is going ahead non-challantly with their agenda to modify the labour laws to suit the interests of the capitalist class. In the name of Labour market flexibility they are trying to introduce hire and fire policy and permit more and more contract workers. The labour laws are already not being implemented while in the name of abolition of inspector raj they want to abolish inspection altogether. The self-certification by the employer will be accepted as a proof of compliance with labour laws.

In case of the Bill regarding Small and Medium Industry, the government is not prepared to grant credit facilities from banks at concessional rates, restore de-reservation of 85 commodities for the small scale sector and stop imports of goods under OGL which are produced by small scale industry. However, the main thrust of the Bill was on making inspection of undertaking meaningless and connives at violators of the labour laws on the plea of promoting small and medium industries. All trade unions objected this provision.

The 16-point charter of demands formulated by Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions has received wider acceptance of the working class. Even the INTUC and BMS unions are not raising objections to them. We have already seen the widest ever response to the 29th September strike which underlined the growing discontent among the working class. The massive demonstration on 8th December has also shown the preparedness of the unorganized section of the working class to go in for direct action to protect their living conditions and trade union rights.

Several sectoral actions are planned by different trade unions in the country and new sections are also coming forward for local and regional struggles. The Sponsoring Committee has to give lead to these movements so that they are properly organized and receive solidarity support from other sections of the working class. The Government is refusing to consult the trade unions on industrial relations matter and openly advocating all proposals given by the employers' organizations.

Under these circumstances we must prepare ourselves for bigger and bigger class actions to resist the onslaught of the capitalist class. Since all the key position in the government are held by the advocates of the World Bank-IMF philosophy the attacks on the working class are bound to become more and more ferocious and we have to be prepared to meet those challenges.

All CITU cadres have to rise to the occasion and become more workers in direct action programmes to oppose the forthcoming draconian policy measures.

We are bound to get more and more active support from the working class since all sections of the workers are bearing the brunt of the attacks.

Let us march forward with confidence to lead the workers in their struggle against the policies of neoliberal globalisation and to defend their rights and livelihood, working and living conditions.

We are bound to win because we are right!

M K Pandhe
President, CITU

GROWING ATTACKS ON WORKING CLASS

The USA government is going ahead non-chaotically with their agenda to modify the labour laws to suit the interests of the capitalist class. In the name of labour market flexibility they are trying to introduce laws and the policy and get more and more contract workers. The labour laws are already not being implemented while in the name of abolition of inspection they want to abolish inspection altogether. The self-certification by the employer will be accepted as a proof of compliance with labour laws.

In case of the Bill regarding Small and Medium Industry, the government is not prepared to grant credit facilities from banks at concessional rates, restore de-reservation of 85 commodities for the small scale sector and stop imports of goods under OGL which are produced by small scale industry. However, the main thrust of the Bill was on making inspection of undertaking meaningless and convincing all industries of the labour laws on the plea of promoting small and medium industries. All trade unions objected the provision in the Bill which was to abolish inspection. The Bill was also objected by the Congress and the opposition. The 16-point charter of demands formulated by the Sponoring Committee of Trade Unions has received widespread support of the working class. Even the INTUO and BMS unions are not raising objections to them. We have already seen the widest ever response to the 20th September strike which underlined the growing discontent among the working class. The massive demonstration on 8th December has also shown the preparedness of the organized section of the working class to go in for direct action to protect their living conditions and trade union rights. The Bill is a direct attack on the working class. Several sectoral actions are planned by different trade unions in the country and new sections are also coming forward for local and regional struggles. The Sponoring Committee has to give lead to these movements so that they are properly organized and receive solidary support from other sectors of the working class. The Government is refusing to consult the trade unions on industrial relations matter and openly advising all proposals given by the employer organizations. The Bill is a direct attack on the working class. Under these circumstances we must prepare ourselves for bigger and bigger class actions to resist the onslaught of the capitalist class. Since all the key positions in the government are held by the advocates of the World Bank/IMF philosophy the attack on the working class is bound to become more and more vicious and we have to be prepared to meet these challenges. We have to be ready to meet the challenge of the capitalist class. All CITU cadres have to rise to the occasion and become more workers' district action programmes to oppose the forthcoming draconian policy measures.

We are bound to get more and more active support from the working class since an abolition of the workers are bearing the brunt of the attacks. We have to be ready to meet these challenges.

Let us march forward with confidence to lead the workers in their struggle against the policies of neoliberal globalisation and to defend their rights and livelihood, working and living conditions.

We are bound to win because we are fighting for the rights of the working class and the people. We are bound to win because we are fighting for the rights of the working class and the people. We are bound to win because we are fighting for the rights of the working class and the people.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

Report of the General Secretary

Dear Comrades,

We are meeting in this Working Committee of the CITU after the last meeting of the General Council held at Alappuzha, Kerala in July last. The address of the President has covered the international and national developments of the intervening period. I shall, therefore, confine in this report to make a brief reference to some of the important developments.

2. The US administration has been increasingly stepping up its militarist offensives throughout the globe, despite meeting stiff resistance of the people in the occupied Iraq. It is targeting Iran and Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It aids and abets Israel in the latter's aggressive pursuits against the Palestine. It is continuing its subversive measures against Cuba and Venezuela. Utilising the present uni-polar world order, it is pursuing its attempts to bring the whole globe under its hegemony, by making use of the international financial and trade institutions.

3. The present UPA government in their National Common Minimum Programme committed to "pursue an independent foreign policy, keeping in mind its past traditions" and to "seek to promote multipolarity in world relations and oppose all attempts at unilateralism". Unfortunately, we have seen more of this commitment being violated than being followed.

4. The Government of India supported the US imperialists against Iran on the nuclear related issues in International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This stand has tarnished India's image and undermined our non-aligned foreign policy. This also has caused immense damage to the mutually beneficial Indo-Iranian friendship, cultivated over the past decades.

5. The Bush administration in the USA has publicly opposed the India-Iran pipeline through Pakistan for supply of gas. The UPA government has not been asserting boldly to go ahead with this most beneficial project, which will be a landmark in development and cooperation between our two countries.

6. The government is following in the footsteps of the NDA regime by continuing its 'strategic' cooperation with the USA. The ten-year military framework agreement entered into between India and the US and the joint Indo-US military exercise held in the midst of countrywide protests, clearly demonstrate the refusal of the UPA regime to pursue an independent foreign policy.

7. This is accompanied by its relentless pursuit of the imperialist driven neoliberal economic policy. It enjoins upon the working class movement the task of widest mobilisation of the masses against such pro-imperialist drift in foreign policy of the government.

8. The nineteen month long rule by the UPA coalition has, by and large, failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people who decisively rejected the earlier BJP led NDA combination both on account of their aggressive communalism as well as the anti-people economic policy measures. No doubt, under

intense pressure from the Left parties and the mass organisations, the government has since legislated the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Act. This is, perhaps, the only pro-people legislation passed by the parliament in the post-globalisation years. The government is yet to notify the Act for implementation. The trade union movement must step up pressures on the government to ensure that the NREG Act is taken up for swift implementation.

9. The BJP, the main opposition party in Parliament, had been making vain bids to rake up non-issues and in the process stall the functioning of the Parliament. The BJP itself faced a crisis of sorts within. The RSS leadership openly called for L.K. Advani to step down from the post of president of the party, after his infamous remarks on 'Jinnah the secular'! The mercurial Uma Bharati is proving to be an irresistible embarrassment for the BJP leadership. Its staunch ally Shiv Sena also is going through successive internal strife, besides suffering some electoral reverses.

10. In this situation, the BJP had some grist to its mill in the form of Volcker Committee report on involvement of politicians in Iraqi 'food for oil' programme during the Saddam Hussein regime. The Manmohan Singh government as usual vacillated. It failed to nail the Volcker report itself as something of a bid by the US administration to show the 'food for oil' programme itself in poor light and claim 'evidence' of illegal activities of Saddam regime. The Iraqi government had the right to its oil revenues and use them to break the US leveraged sanctions. For fear of displeasing the USA, the government refrained from questioning the purpose and authenticity of the Volcker Report. The government also failed to defend the good relations India had with Iraq under Saddam Hussein. When the BJP seized the issue to demand the resignation of Natwar Singh from the Union Cabinet and Sonia Gandhi from the National Advisory Council, it wilted. This led to ouster of Natwar Singh from the Cabinet. This is yet another instance testifying to the pro-US shift in the country's foreign policy. Moreover despite the Left parties repeatedly pointing out to a major private sector oil company viz., Reliance Petroleum Ltd., having been one of the beneficiaries, the government is refusing to investigate the same. The terms of reference and the scope of the enquiry ordered in this regard also seem to be extremely selective and narrow.

11. The ruling coalition suffered yet another setback in Bihar. As the leading party of the UPA coalition, the Congress party is expected to play its role to isolate the communal forces on the political front. Unfortunately, it failed to display foresight and commitment to rally secular forces during first round of the Bihar assembly elections, which ultimately ended up as a fiasco. The damage caused has proved to be so intractable that the much-discredited NDA has been handed the reigns of power in that State. This clearly is the result of the division in secular votes. Yet another disquieting facet of this episode is the breach in the unity of left forces as well. This has ominous portents for the secular forces and the democratic movement in general.

12. In this backdrop, the role of the working class movement both in championing the cause of toiling people as well as isolating the communal forces assumes immense significance. The 29th September strike has already issued a warning to the UPA government to mend its ways on the economic policy front.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

13. There is no notable change in the economic situation in the country, since the last general council meeting. The hype and euphoria resorted to by the reforms lobby over buoyancy in growth rate in manufacturing during first half of current fiscal, it could not hide the maladies plaguing the economy. This is reflected in low growth in country's capital goods sector. On the other hand, whatever growth is

claimed, it did not reflect any notable improvement in employment situation. The phenomenon of jobless growth, which kills more jobs than it creates, is re-asserting.

14. The unemployment rate (persons unemployed per 1000 persons) for urban females was highest at 165 and for rural females at 31, as per a recent report published by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) on the trends of employment. A similar trend was seen for urban males, which had the rate of unemployment of 87 compared to 42 for rural males. In both rural and urban areas, unemployment rate among the educated youth (defined as persons above the age of 15 with education level of secondary and above) was higher than that among those below secondary level. The unemployment rate among urban women above higher secondary level is 305, and at below secondary level is 268. Unemployment rate among educated male is 147 and 101 for urban and rural areas respectively. According to the Report, amongst all categories, the unemployment rate stood highest for educated youth (for each sex and sector) (The Financial Express, 22-11-2005). A disaggregated scrutiny of the unemployment situation reveals more glaringly the job-killing feature of the present policy regime and its incapacity to generate productive employment even for the skilled and experienced workforce. The NSSO report depicts that layoff, closure of units or loss of earlier jobs were reported as the reason for unemployment by about 29% of the urban male unemployed and 17% of the urban female unemployed. The proportion of men without work due to lack of work in enterprise was much higher than women in both rural and urban areas. For the urban males, this proportion was 16%, which was marginally higher than their rural counterparts (14%) (Business Standard, 23-11-2005)

IT SECTOR – GROWTH VIS-À-VIS EMPLOYMENT

15. The government is all songs and praises for IT sector and its role in country's economic growth and employment creation. No doubt, IT sector's contribution to GDP and country's export is increasing. As per NASSCOM estimates, the size of the industry is at \$22 billion, comprising \$4.8 billion of domestic revenues; \$12 billion of software and services export revenues and \$5.2 billion of revenues from exports of IT-enabled services and business process outsourcing (BPO). Placed in the context of the economy as a whole, revenues of this sector now amount to 4.5 per cent of GDP. This makes it an important segment of the non-agricultural sector. By way of comparison, the gross revenues from IT services was in 2004-05 i.e. about 20 per cent higher than the GDP generated by the construction sector and almost three times as much as the GDP in mining and in electricity, gas and water supply. In terms of value addition as a percentage of GDP, contribution of the IT sector is more than double the contribution by textile sector. But, its contribution to employment does not at all match with its role in the generation of income and foreign exchange. As per NASSCOM estimates, the employment in IT sector is around ten lakh in 2004-05. This represents only around 0.21 per cent of the non-agricultural workforce and 0.08 per cent of the total workforce in the country. When compared to other sectors of economy, for example, IT sector employment is merely 3.4 per cent of the total employment engaged in textile production.

16. This mismatch between employment generation and contribution to gross revenue and GDP of the IT sector is not merely due to its technology savvy character but mainly due to the tutored shift in the IT-policy of the government towards software services and away from hardware-manufacturing. Originally, the emphasis of India's IT policy was on generating an indigenous hardware industry, with focus on domestic production of mini and microcomputers. But, the process of liberalisation and the experience of 2000 onwards saw a shift in emphasis away from hardware to software services, with hardware imports having been gradually liberalised to make available cheap imported equipment for the growing software and services export industry. As a result, the share of revenues from hardware sales fell from 44.4% in 1995-96 to 17.8% in 2004-05 and this trend continues. In the hardware sector,

the domestic producers like PCL, DCM and ECI have been marginalised - rather almost vanished - and the MNCs like HP, IBM, Compaq, Epson and Samsung etc. have monopolised the domestic market.

17. Further, absolute dependence of the domestic IT sector mainly on service exports that too dominated by one country - the USA, makes this sector extremely vulnerable to external shocks and raises doubt on its sustainability. Moreover, even within the domestic service providers, concentration of 61 per cent of the export revenues within the top 20 players (out of total around 415 plus firms) along with the overcrowding by numerous small firms with low turnover, low margins, which in turn leading to comparatively low wages reflects a very high range of income inequality, uncertainty and extreme fragility of the service conditions among majority of the IT sector workforce. This is quite contrary to what is being showcased by the advertisement blitz on the IT sector by the media.

18. This phenomenon is reflected in the extremely fragile working condition in the IT/ITES (IT enabled services) sector. What is being advertised is only a smaller section of the IT segment. In the larger section of the ITES sector, prevailing conditions are: long working hours (without any compensation for the extra hours), almost no leave or holidays, strenuous work environment, close surveillance on employees, no right to collectively represent or complain et al. The relatively attractive pay is not accompanied by any social security provisions except for a few firms. This also is not the case for the entire workforce, particularly in the 350 plus smaller firms operating as subcontractors of the bigger 20 BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) units,. A study on the BPO units made by V V Giri National Labour Institute has described the surveillance prevalent in ITES (BPO) as comparable to 19th century Roman slave-ships. This is not an exaggeration.

RURAL ECONOMY

19. There is no sign of improvement in the rural economy either; rather there is a disquieting feature. Both non-agricultural rural employment and agricultural employment are declining and incidences of suicides of cotton farmers owing to crop-failures are on the increase. Agricultural sector has grown to the tune of 2.2 per cent only. This clearly signifies that the announcement on additional fund-allocation for rural sector made by the government in the last budget is yet to reflect in the actual outlays and hence the distress of the rural masses has assumed epidemic proportions. The recently enacted National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is yet to be notified even, not to speak of implementation.

20. The co-existence of rising prosperity for the few along with aggravating poverty of millions is the main distortion witnessed in the economy. The Maharashtra Development Report, released recently, shows that while the State ranks first in the country in industrialisation, there is a ballooning fiscal debt, increasing unemployment, deteriorating governance, high environmental pollution and huge regional disparity in poverty, education and health. The Report could not hide the ground reflecting "islands of urban prosperity in a sea of rural poverty", and "villages, where the overwhelming majority of her disadvantaged communities live, have no share in the prosperity." The Report also commented that the Maharashtra success (?) in achieving high rates of growth has been tarnished by its inability to reduce poverty, ignorance and disease, and such skewed regional development means that in some districts, up to 50% of people live below poverty line. (Times of India, 10-11-2005) Situation in other low-growth states in the country can well be gauged from the experience of Maharashtra itself. Elsewhere, it is more precarious.

21. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh - considered an industrially advanced and developed state - features existence of backbreaking poverty and destitution among the major section of its populace. Farmers'

suicides reported from the state has already drawn everybody's attention. A recent report published by an international agency (ICN and ILRF) reveals that about 1,00,000 children work for 13 hours a day for a measly Rs 25 a day in the cotton-seeds farms in the state; it further says that the high incidence of child labour with such low pay is due to abysmally low procurement price paid by the seed-MNCs like Bayer, Monsanto, Syngenta as well as Indian seed-corporates like Nuziveedu, Rassi and Ankur Seeds (Times of India, 4-11-2005). This is a sequel to virtual stoppage of procurement by the state government as per dictate of DFID and other international lending agencies.

DISTORTIONS: GROWTH WITH POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

22. Even in the case of some of the high-growth industries, the pattern of growth reflects the same distortions. The steel industry recorded high growth in profitability during last two years. This is accompanied by a sharp reduction in permanent workforce in the industry and phenomenal growth in contract workers, who are paid less than one tenth compared to regular workers. The textile is another sector, which is on the high profit curve in its entirety. But this prosperity is accompanied by sharp decline in quality of employment throughout the industry and decline in earning of the mass of the grass root level producers. The handlooms workers are in deep distress although handloom products are fetching high returns and intermediaries are reaping benefits owing to dismantling of the policy patronage by the government. Many major textile mills claiming to be sick are resorting to outsourcing and contractorisation spree and the downstream workers are getting a raw deal. As for example, in the state of Tamil Nadu, around 1803 textile mills are operating with a workforce of around 3.5-lakh workforce, of which hardly 15 to 18 per cent are regular workers. On the other hand, the export oriented units mushrooming in the textile sector under liberal government patronage have been minting huge profit but paying much less than the statutory wage rates to the workers of the industry concerned. Similarly, contract workforce with low wages and fragile working conditions drives the growth in the high-profit earning automobile sector. Same is the situation in the growing service sector where exploitation of labour is also quite high owing to low level of unionisation.

23. All these denote only the tip of the iceberg. But, these are enough to indicate the declining standards of living, falling purchasing power and aggravating poverty among the mass of populace; on the other side of the spectrum, there is hefty rise in profit by the big corporates, both domestic and foreign. This twin-phenomenon reflects the aggravation of the process of transfer of resources and earnings from the masses to handful of rich under the neoliberal regime.

WTO MEET - ISSUES OF CONCERN

24. Another crucial issue affecting the economy and the people deserves special attention. The WTO ministerial meet was held at Hong Kong from 13th December 2005. This meeting has dealt with various crucial issues of concern viz., 'Agreement on Agriculture', 'Nonagricultural Market Access (NAMA)', 'General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS)', 'Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)', etc. There is gross inequality and asymmetry that is built into the WTO and its negotiating structures, which favour only the rich industrialised nations and multinational companies. It is, therefore, natural that the governments of the developed countries were expected to continue their efforts to compel the developing countries to sacrifice their interests in the name of further liberalising trades and services and opening their economy for unbridled exploitation by the MNCs.

25. The 2003 Ministerial meet at Cancun ended in a failure owing to strong united resistance by the developing countries against the designs of the rich and industrialised countries. But subsequently this unity got diluted, and the role of India joining the team of five interested parties (FIP) along with

USA, EU and Brazil, in bringing about 'July framework Agreement 2004' formulated at Geneva, marked the weakening of the resistance and beginning of succumbing to the rich countries.

26. The "July Framework, 2004" brought back on the agenda the same draft proposal on Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), earlier rejected by all the developing countries at the Cancun meet. The Left parties had cautioned the government of the impending danger through a detailed note on all the issues coming up before the Ministerial meet. The trade unions and mass organisations had also organised countrywide campaign on the issues through state level conventions and other programmes in order to restrain the government from surrendering at the Hong Kong meet. On 13th December 2005, the day of commencement of the Hong Kong meet, demonstrations were held in many parts of the country including the national capital.

27. The outcome of the six-day Hong Kong Ministerial meeting has only confirmed our worst apprehensions. Even a cursory view of the text of the declaration released leaves nothing to cheer.

28. The apparent commitment of the developed countries to eliminate export subsidies to agriculture by 2013 means practically nothing for the developing countries. The export subsidy constitute mere 3.5% (or even less) of the total agricultural subsidies doled out by European Union and around 2% by the developed countries as a whole. Hence, more than 96% of the agricultural subsidy in developed countries will in no way be affected. But, at the same time the developing countries have to agree for tariff cut in respect of agricultural imports. Some safeguards and provision for special dispensation have been provided but such safeguards and special provisions can only selectively be applied and not generally. The tariff cut agreed in agriculture will ruin the small and marginal farmers.

29. Under NAMA, the Hong Kong declaration has extracted commitment from the developing countries for tariff cut on a wide range of industrial goods, while there is nothing to constrain the developed countries in resorting to non-tariff barriers to block or restrict flow of exports from developing countries to their market. This obviously a one-sided outcome favouring the rich nations, The most retrograde part of the Hong Kong outcome is the commitment extracted from the developing countries for wide opening the service sector to foreign capital without any restriction.

30. In totality, the Hong Kong Ministerial meet is a total disaster in so far as the interests of the developing countries are concerned. It marks a retreat from the position of advantage gained by the developing countries at Cancun. Although towards the end of the Hong Kong exercise, developing countries attempted to pull together through formation of G-110, they could not succeed owing to vacillation by some, particularly on the issues of services and NAMA. Though the G-90 countries opposed the initial draft, negotiators from India failed to stick to the joint proposals and to preserve the unity of the developing countries. It should be noted that Cuba and Venezuela categorically opposed these proposals.

31. Kamal Nath, the chief negotiator on behalf of India, claims that 'less than full reciprocity' by the developing countries in respect of tariff reduction (as compared to the developed countries), as an achievement. But, in reality the developed countries extracted much more than what they had expected and conceded practically nothing for the developing countries.

32. We should campaign on these issues widely and mobilise people to defeat the policies of the government and defend our country's sovereignty.

33. Here we should emphasise a core aspect of dealing with the WTO related issues. One issue must be taken note of in this context. The Government of India has consistently refused to taken the Parliament

into confidence before entering into agreements in the international multilateral agencies like WTO. The agreement once entered into in WTO and other forums are presented as a fait accompli before the Parliament and the people of the country. Moreover, the government seeks to push its WTO related reforms agenda through, in the name of keeping up our international obligations. But in the matter of lowering tariff, liberalising imports, promoting unregulated play of the foreign companies in the most sensitive sectors of the domestic economy, withdrawal of quantitative restrictions on imports etc. the government actually transcends the terms of committed obligation. This is nothing but sacrificing national interests at the altar of the imperialist masters. On many occasions, even the developed countries - like USA and others - are blockading implementation of many international agreements by their country taking shelter that their country's Parliament has not endorsed them. In fact, the USA has been refusing to implement the core conventions of ILO, rather majority of the ILO conventions and on similar plea. There is absolutely no reason why India cannot take a similar stand. We must, therefore, demand that the government can enter into any international agreement only after obtaining the Parliamentary nod. We should mobilise people in support of this core demand to prevent any further capitulation by the government negotiators in the international forum.

FORTHCOMING CHALLENGES ON ECONOMIC POLICY FRONT

34. Despite the massive protest action through the countrywide general strike on 29th September 2005, the Government of India appears not to have taken any lesson and have been pursuing the same disastrous economic policies.

35. The government has announced the increase in the FDI cap for telecom sector. It is also pursuing the same path of airport-privatisation. Side by side, the move is afoot to allow MNCs in retail trade sector, with attendant disastrous consequences for the economy. It has also been pushing hard to get the Banking Regulation (amendment) Bill 2005 and Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill 2005 passed by the Parliament, in detriment to the interests of our financial sector.

36. Under pressure from the Left parties, the government has kept the proposal for further disinvestment of BHEL shares in abeyance. But, the Union cabinet has also decided to set up a "National Investment Fund" (NIF) to be funded through proceeds of disinvestments of the shares of the profit-making PSUs. The returns from this Fund will be utilised to meet social sector expenditure and also for revival of sick PSUs. Incurring social sector expenditure is a continuous obligation of the government and the Finance Minister is duty bound to raise budgetary resources therefor. The idea of funding the same through one time disposal of some shares lacks bonafide and manifest lack of sincerity of purpose on the part of the government. This is nothing but a cover up for the creeping privatisation of profit making PSUs, reneging even the commitment in the NCMP. We should expose this dubious campaign of government that resource-mobilisation to fund social sector expenditure and revival of sick PSUs can only be through disinvestments of profit-making PSUs. Unfortunately many even in the progressive camp are falling prey to such confusing campaign.

37. The government is moving fast on the creeping privatisation route in respect of 18 non-navaratna profit-making PSUs such as Shipping Corporation of India, Power Finance Corporation etc. We have to oppose this game plan tooth and nail.

38. The Union cabinet has also announced setting up of a 'Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)' for funding infrastructure through the public-private partnership (PPP) venture. The SPV, named as India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) is primarily aimed to provide government guarantee for the private sector partner for raising funds for the PPP ventures, with the private p'ayer exercising

greater control over the infrastructure created. This is another way of transferring public wealth to private hands.

39. The government is pleading lack of resources for revival of the sick but viable PSUs. But, the same government has no dearth of resources to fund the revival of Enron-owned Dabhol Power Corporation. The government has liberally allowed Rs 3200 crore to be spent by the Public sector financial institutions (with the government standing guarantee) for retiring the debt of the failed project with the foreign banks. Besides, the NTPC, GAIL and MSEB have been forced to cough up Rs. 10 - 12 thousand crore for such revival. The government also refuses to crack the whip on the corporates whose tax default and unpaid loans from the nationalised banks are in the order of Rs 1, 00,000 crore and Rs 1, 20,000 respectively.

ATTACK ON LABOUR RIGHTS

40. In line with its pro-rich and anti-people economic policy measures, the Government of India has embarked on an aggressive initiative to virtually erase the labour rights.

41. Non-enforcement of basic labour related statutes in respect of minimum wages, working hours, contract system, safety and social security is being consciously promoted by the governments at the centre and most of the state governments on the dubious plea of investment-friendliness. Inspection machinery is totally dismantled in most of the states leading to non-enforcement of labour laws. Simultaneously, the employers are allowed the right to self-certification on labour-law-compliance in many industries/sectors.

42. Even, in a vast segment of the organised sector, a state of virtual lawlessness prevails at present in respect of labour relations. The existing labour laws are being trampled underfoot by the employers. More than seventy per cent workers in the country are not getting even the statutory minimum wages notified by the respective state governments and also by the central government. As for example, the highly skilled workers of the export-oriented pit-looms at Panipat could not earn more than Rs 2000 a month for twelve to fifteen hours of work a day in the underground pits. And there are several such examples throughout the country. Also, many of the State governments in many of the States have not revised the statutory minimum wages for several years together, despite rise in inflation. There is no limit to working hours and 12 hours working without any extra compensation has become the normal practice in many workplaces. Social security provisions like provident fund and ESI etc. are not being appropriately implemented for the majority of the organised sector workers. The profit-hungry employers are desperately violating basic safety regulations.

43. A frontal attack is also mounted on right to organise and collective bargaining. The Trade Unions Act has already been amended making formation of trade unions more difficult. Application for registration of unions are gathering dust in the labour departments, owing to the employers-administration nexus. Even where trade unions are working, various dubious means are being adopted to curb the rights of the union to bargain collectively. In most of the multinational corporations operating on Indian soil, as also in some public sector units including some in petroleum sector, non-worker leaders of the union are not being allowed to take part in negotiation with management, which is a clear violation of the Trade Unions Act still in vogue.

44. The employers are subjecting the workers and their unions raising voice against such violation of labour laws to vindictive actions and dismissals. The law-enforcement machinery and police administration is openly colluding with the employers. Under liberalisation, the governments of the

day have crippled the labour-law enforcement machinery in the name of encouraging investment, as a prelude to wholesale changes in labour laws to usher in a total 'hire & fire' regime.

45. The incident of police brutality on the workers of Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) Ltd., at Gurgaon (Haryana) in July 2005 is a manifestation of this trend of administration abetting labour law violations. The workers were dismissed not for raising any demand but only for formation of a trade union to represent their interests. The dismissal was followed by undeclared lockout and mass scale suspensions. Workers were brutally beaten up for protesting against such thoroughly illegal action by the employer. The Honda management deserved to be put behind the bar for such violation of laws of the land. But the Government of Haryana, in league with the Honda management targeted the workers - the innocent victims of the illegal acts of the management - for display of its brutality. Same is the experience of the construction workers of the railway site at Banihal (J&K), glass-bangle workers at Firozabad (UP), Pharmacy workers at Haridwar (Uttaranchal), textile workers at Panipat (Haryana), cycle workers at Ludhiana (Punjab), auto-component workers at Tambaram (Tamil Nadu), Pan-parag workers in Assam only to name a few among thousands of such cases throughout the country. In many places, minimum initiative of forming a trade union under the law of the land is met with mass scale dismissals, lockout, closure and other means. As for example, the management of Rockman Cycle Co of Hero group at Ludhiana declared lock out in the factory on the very day the workers' union got registration after two years of persuasion (2-11-2005). In fact, of the total labour related disputes and agitations throughout the country, more than 90 per cent pertains to implementation or enforcement of labour laws in respect of minimum wages, working hours, safety provisions, rights to represent on grievances etc and nothing else. Almost every where, in the era of neoliberal globalisation, all the wings of the state machinery, the administration, labour department, police-force, sections of judiciary alike got completely domesticated by the capitalist lobby to promote labour-law violations and ensure unbridled exploitation— all in the name of promoting investment friendly climate.

46. Simultaneously, there is a hectic move to change the labour Laws totally in favour of the employers. Already two Bills are introduced in Parliament. The first one, the Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2005 is aimed at liberating the employers from their obligations of returns on implementation of almost all basic labour laws. The second one, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bill 2005 is designed to practically take away the workers of all small and medium enterprises from the purview of most of the labour laws. The size of the small and medium enterprises is so defined in the Bill as to throw overwhelming majority of the workforce outside coverage of any protection and rights. None of the Bills have ever been discussed with the trade unions, although the NCMP mandated the government to do so. Added to that is the anti-worker Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Bill, which has already been in Parliament for consideration, is aimed at blatant privatisation of the pension and entire social security sector, complete withdrawal of government responsibility in providing social security and pushing the pension and social security savings of the workers to the vagaries of stock market. All these are to be resolutely opposed and resisted by the working class movement.

47. Along with this the UPA government has initiated the process of incorporating pro-employer changes in the Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act. The Labour Ministry made a detailed presentation before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and thereafter sent detailed proposals to the central trade unions just on the eve of 40th session of the Indian Labour Conference, the agenda of which also included change in labour laws. It is heartening that almost all the central trade unions in the country, except INTUC, have rejected outright the proposals of the labour ministry through a joint communication.

40TH INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE

48. The 40th session of the Indian Labour Conference was held on 9-10 December 2005 at New Delhi. This was the first ever meeting of the apex tripartite forum after the UPA government took reigns. The Ministry of Labour, in its agenda note, placed its proposals for amendments in the Industrial Disputes Act, as part of its drive for labour law reforms. The proposals included: 1) increase in the employment level from existing 100 to 300 for the establishments for resorting to lay off, retrenchment and closure with no obligation to seek prior permission from the appropriate government; 2) change in section 9A of the Industrial Disputes Act facilitating the employers to unilaterally change the service conditions of the workers; 3) introduce enabling provisions for the government to declare any establishment, both in public and private sectors (besides those in Special Economic Zones/Export Processing Zones and export oriented units even outside those zones) as "public utility service" on a permanent basis with attendant negative implications for labour rights and 4) empowering both the central and state governments to exempt any establishment, including those in private sector and the establishments in the SEZ/ EPZ, Information Technology Park, export oriented units etc., from the purview of Industrial Disputes Act itself.

49. These proposals for changes in labour laws curtailing the rights of workers are flagged off in the name of 'flexibility in labour laws' for which the inspiration appears to have emanated from the Prime Minister's Office itself.

49. The Prime Minister himself, during his inaugural address, chose to echo the employers' plea for flexible labour market (read hire and fire) and spoke derisively of the 'inspector-raj'.

50. Despite this, all the trade unions resolutely opposed these proposals at the Indian Labour Conference. Many of the state governments also opposed these proposals. This, naturally, led to wide divergence and conflicting stances and the ILC ended without much substantive conclusion.

51. Though the agenda item included "social security for unorganised sector workers including agricultural sector workers covering their service condition, social security and other benefits", the approach of the UPA government was apparently a non-serious one. The central trade unions had, on more than one occasion, conveyed their unanimous recommendations on the provisions to be incorporated in the proposed Unorganised Sector Workers' Bill, whenever the government circulated draft bills seeking comments. In the agenda note placed before the ILC, four drafts were annexed without any effort to synthesise them into one single draft facilitating meaningful discussion leading to some conclusion. The ILC recorded as its conclusion for setting up of a tripartite committee to complete finalisation of a single draft within a definite time frame, a suggestion mooted by the CITU. The conclusion also incorporated a recommendation that the central government should shoulder the funding responsibility for floor-level social security benefits, as well as for the administrative and infrastructure expenditure for the initial period of five years. But these conclusions are more likely to remain on paper, unless trade unions mount pressure through sustained and united struggle.

52. We are appending to this report the CITU memorandum presented to the 40th session of the ILC as an information document. We trust that our state committees will take the contents of the same to the rank and file of the CITU and unleash an intensified campaign.

GROWING INTOLERANCE TOWARDS TRADE UNIONS

53. The Labour Minister of the UPA government made an announcement on the floor of Parliament last year to rescind the notification of the NDA government inserting in the Model Standing Orders a new classification of "fixed term employment workman". But, the government has gone back on this and the proposed notification has been withheld by the Ministry of Labour. Meanwhile the employers, even in the public sector, not to speak of private sector, have been indiscriminately resorting to such mode of fixed term employment.

54. The capitalist lobby is assiduously cultivating this trend of trade union bashing through their hired intellectuals and print and electronic media. The growing intolerance towards trade unions manifested by the print and electronic media reached a crescendo in the venomous editorials following the 29th September general strike. This is an integral part of the ideological offensive of neoliberal globalisation. A myth is floated in the society that trade unions and legitimate assertion of workers' rights are inimical to investment, development and progress. The intention is to legitimise the atrocities and onslaughts against the workers' life and livelihood and their rights to protest. Unfortunately, a section of the democratic movement is falling prey to such conspiracy. We must fight back such conspiracy resolutely by involving mass of the people in anti-globalisation struggle and also debunking the unscrupulous campaign against the trade union movement.

55. Such In this context, we should also take note of alarming drift of the Judiciary from semblance of justice to the lap of the capital. The Apex Court judgment, banning right to strike particularly for government employees, is well known. Thereafter, many more judgments are pronounced against the workers, which are marked by unscrupulous bias in favour of the employers. The Apex Court judgments upholding dismissal for much lighter offence like 'abusing' (read verbal altercation with) the manager or for being found sleeping on duty (Bharat Forge Co Ltd and Mahindra & Mahindra Co Ltd) are examples in hand. And the latest one crossed all limits of naked bias. In a recent judgment The Supreme Court turned down the ruling of Punjab & Haryana High Court, which upheld the principle of 'equal wage for equal work' for the contract workers. In another recent judgment, the Supreme Court observed that casual worker working in any establishment is not covered by the definition of workmen under Workmen's Compensation Act.

56. The above situation of all round attack on labour rights have to be boldly confronted by the trade union movement unitedly asserting their right to strike and struggle more vigorously. At the same time, we have to put forth alternative proposals for pro-worker changes in the labour laws and build up broadest mobilisation in support of those proposals.

29TH SEPTEMBER GENERAL STRIKE

57. The call for General strike of 29th September 2005 given by the major Central Trade Unions and industrial Federations has received a very good response from the working class all over the country. It has been the tenth countrywide general strike since the onset of the Fund-Bank dictated policy of economic liberalisation in the country in 1991. Around 4 crore workers and employees, both from organised and unorganised sector and across all sections of economy joined the strike action.

58. The strike call was given by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions to press for the 16- point demands, covering all sections of the working populace. This was the first strike action after the UPA Government assumed office at the Centre, which is seeking to push through the same policies of economic reforms, as was witnessed during the NDA regime.

59. The national leadership of INTUC and BMS did not join the strike, as in the past. But, this in no way

could impact the participation of the working masses in the strike action. In fact, there are reports of unions and workers affiliated to both the BMS and INTUC joining the strike. Thus the September 29 strike reflected a much broader unity at the grass root level.

60. The strike turned into a complete bandh in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. A bandh like situation emerged in Assam and Haryana and also in many districts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Orissa. Strike in all the 124 airports in the country brought the air-traffic to a virtual standstill. An overwhelming majority of around one crore employees, both in central and state governments, joined the strike. The entire financial sector covering the bank and insurance sectors witnessed almost a total strike. Strike by the telecom workers and employees under BSNL and MTNL was more than 70 per cent throughout the country. More than 70 per cent workers joined the strike in coalmines. Unorganised sector workers in brick-kilns, head-load, beedi, and mandi-workers took part in strike in a big way, and organised rail-roko and rasta-roko at various centres throughout the country. The public sector hub in Bangalore witnessed massive strike in all the PSUs. Plantation, Construction, Anganwadi, Transport, Oil, Electricity etc. sectors also witnessed a strike action, though partial in some areas.

61. The other mass organisations viz., AIKS, AIAWU, DYFI, AIDWA and SFI had called for action programmes on their own demands and mass scale picketing, rasta-roko and rail roko were staged throughout the country.

62. Another notable feature is that in some places of the country, the small traders' associations and small industries associations also joined the strike, in states like Karnataka, Jharkhand.

63. But, this strike was not without its grey areas and certain glaring weaknesses as well. The strike in Port and Dock was only partial, as some of the major unions stayed away from strike, notably the HMS affiliates. In Steel industry, participation in strike was not at all good. The strike was massive in Durgapur and Burnpur steel plants and in the iron-ore mines, while it had negligible impact in the steel plants of Bokaro, Salem, Rourkela, Vizag and Bhilai. In BHEL units, strike was total in Bangalore, above 65% in Ranipet and barely partial in other units. In NTPC there was no strike at all. In IT sector, which is mostly non-unionised, the impact of strike was negligible except in few places.

64. The message of the September 29 strike is that the masses are restive and their discontent is growing. As the UPA regime persists with its present stance of showering mere platitudes for the poor and conferring bonanzas for the rich, the resistance by the working class movement has to be further intensified. This enjoins on us the task of preparing for further struggles.

FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION

65. The resounding success of the strike countrywide warrants much more serious efforts on our part to ensure continuity of united actions, as there is no significant response from the government on the issues over which the strike took lace. With the government seemingly anxious to pursue its agenda of 'flexibility in labour laws' we must focus our initiative in the forthcoming should also be on labour rights and implementation of labour laws.

66. At the independent initiative of CITU, a massive Parliament March by the unorganised sector workers to press for a 15-point demands, including enactment of a comprehensive legislation, was held on December 8, 2005. More than 25000 workers from all over the country participated in this march. This campaign has to be carried forward through state/district level campaign and mobilisation of unorganised sector workers on the same demands in the coming months. We may plan to organise

programme of district level dharna and picketing by the unorganised sector workers, besides making efforts to go in for a united countrywide strike by this section of workers.

67. Besides, we should also seriously take up for implementation the following organisational tasks decided by the Second National Convention of Unorganised Sector Workers, held at Firozabad:

- The Sub-Committee on Unorganised Sector at the CITU Centre and the All India Coordination Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers should meet regularly and chalk out action plans for time bound implementation.
- All the state committees should discuss and decide priorities. State coordination committees should be formed wherever they are not formed. State level sub committees within the CITU state committees should be formed to monitor the functioning of the state coordination committee.
- Industry/ trade wise unions should be organised
- Survey/ study should be conducted on the problems of the unorganised sector workers in the prioritised industries and concrete demands should be formulated. State-wide campaigns give better results than localised actions
- Suitable cadre should be deployed for each industry/ trade wise organisation. Women cadres should preferably be deployed in industries where women work in large numbers
- Special attention should be paid to develop cadres from among the workers, train and promote them to leading positions
- Issues like social and gender oppression, literacy and residential problems should be addressed by the unions, besides the work place issues
- Intermediary organisational forms like self help groups/ savings groups/ credit groups etc should be considered to create confidence in the strength of unity among the workers in the unorganised sector

68. The well-attended meeting of the Coordination Committee of Public Sector Unions (CITU) held on November 24 - 25, 2005 at New Delhi laid emphasis on our taking initiative to organise contract workers in PSUs, involving the unions of regular workers and unleashing a campaign on the rights of the contract workers in a big way. In the face of alarming pace of contractorisation of regular jobs in various PSUs, we can ignore this important task of the day only at our peril. Moreover, the existing wage agreement is going to expire in December 2006 and we need to prepare for the ensuing fight for a fresh wage settlement. As an integral part of this wage issue in the PSUs, we must focus on the demands of the contract workers as well. The CITU will have to take the pioneering initiative. We are hopeful that the CPSTU - joint platform of PSU workers' movement - can be revitalised to undertake these tasks.

69. As noted elsewhere, with the compromising attitude exhibited by the UPA regime on WTO related issues, we have to take initiative to organise joint campaign and mobilisation on this as well.

70. We have also to take note of many sectoral struggles being organised throughout the country. The Medical and Sales Representatives staged a three-day countrywide strike on December 14 –16, 2005 at the call of FMRAI. In the telecom PSU - BSNL, all the nine unions - including officers' associations - have decided to go in for countrywide strike on 5th January 2006 against the anti-PSU decisions of the government like disinvestment in non-navaratna PSUs, hike in FDI cap in telecom sector etc. The central government employees are also preparing for countrywide united struggle on their demands, including the setting up of the Sixth Pay Commission and against policy of downsizing, outsourcing, winding up departments etc. The bank employees are also planning similar exercises for joint struggle against retrograde measures in the name of banking sector reforms. We must extend support and coordinate all these struggles and organise solidarity actions.

71. At the same time we, along with other trade unions, must carry on intensive campaign on the 16-point demands of the 29 September strike to prepare for further united mobilisations and action programmes. We shall make efforts for materialising some form of an all India level mobilisation around the next budget session of Parliament. We should also keep ourselves prepared to react and respond at short notice, both independently and jointly with others, to any anti-people anti-worker measures that may be taken by the government.

REDUCTION OF INTEREST RATE ON EPF

72. After the meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees' Provident Fund held on December 7, 2005, the Labour Minister announced that the interest rate for the year 2005 – 06 would be brought down to 8.5 per cent. The Minister had taken this arbitrary step of inflicting a further cut in the interest rate against the unanimous plea of all the central trade union organisations (CTUOs) represented in the CBT.

73. The CITU, along with other central trade unions, firmly opposed any reduction in the rate of interest on EPF and vowed to take the issue to the mass of the workers and continue the struggle outside the forum of the CBT, EPF”.

74. This issue was vehemently raised by all the CTUOs before the Prime Minister during the inaugural session of the Indian Labour Conference on Dec. 9, 2005. However, the Prime Minister vaguely assured to look into the issue in consultation with the Labour Minister.

75. But the stand of the Finance Minister, subsequently endorsed by the Prime Minister, that it is for the EPF organisation to find resources for paying the interest, is nothing but a bald rejection of the demand to restore the 9.5 per cent interest rate.

76. At the joint call of the AICCTU, AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS, TUCC, UTUC and UTUC-LS all sections of workers unitedly observed an All India Protest Day on December 20, 2005 by staging massive rallies, demonstrations etc. to protest the move to reduce the interest rate on EPF. They also demanded enhancement of the rate of interest on Special Deposit Scheme (SDS), where over 80 per cent of EPF corpus stand invested, enabling the EPFO to maintain the interest rate at 9.5 per cent”.

77. In case the government refuses to relent from the present stance, we need to take the united movement on this issue to further heights.

78. The government has announce to change the tax treatment on Provident Funds, small savings, insurance claims etc. by subjecting the terminal benefits under these schemes to income tax. There is

also a proposal to either reduce the benefits or increase the contribution from workers under the Employees' Pension Scheme. On another front, the Labour Bureau has moved arbitrarily to launch a new series of consumer price index, with 2001 as the base year, without addressing the concerns voiced by the central trade unions. We should highlight these anti-worker measures as well and prepare the workers for the impending resistance struggle.

ON MEMBERSHIP

79. The year 2005 is coming to an end. There is a need to review where we stand vis-à-vis submission of Annual Returns & Affiliation fees for the years 2003 & 2004. A statement showing state wise membership as per the Annual Returns received till date is given as Annexure I to this report. I would like to draw your attention to the following so that the State Committees can take necessary and urgent steps to do the needful. According to the Statement:

- 1) A.P., Assam, Orissa, Goa, Tripura & H.P. are the only 5 states which have completed submission of Annual Returns and Affiliation fees for both the years 2003 & 2004.
- 2) Gujarat, Haryana, J&K, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh are the states which have almost cleared the submission for the year 2003.
- 3) Other states particularly, Kerala as also Bihar, U.P., Delhi & Jharkhand have still to submit a major portion of affiliation fees and annual returns for 2003 while Rajasthan and Tamilnadu have to complete the submission for the year 2003. West Bengal sent Affiliation fees earlier without submitting Annual Returns.
- 4) For the year 2004 although Assam has submitted almost total annual returns but not the affiliation fees while Orissa is the only other State to have completed the submission for the year 2004 along with Tripura, H.P., AP & Goa.
- 5) Delhi, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal have to submit around 50% or above of the affiliation fees and annual returns for the year 2004. UP also has to complete the 2004 submissions.
- 6) This apart other remaining states including West Bengal & Kerala must see that the outstanding is cleared early.

80. The most revealing feature is the functioning of Gujarat & Jharkhand, which requires serious discussion.

81. The alarming part is that the central fund of CITU in terms of receipt of affiliation fees for the years 2003 & 2004 has been deprived of at least Rs.35 lakhs either due to non-collection or non-deposit by our State Committees

82. I hope, the State Committees will seriously review the position and urgently do the needful.

83. In the meantime, record verification by the labour department is currently on. We note that many of our unions are not responding to the 1st notice for producing records. We also note that many of our unions particularly from AP, Kerala, MP, Karnataka are making urgent request, for duplicate affiliation certificates. In spite of the fact, that for the last 2 years we have been regularly intimating our State

Committees requesting them to ensure that our unions are ready with all the records these urgent requests are coming at the last moment which is putting this office in a problem. The other States where record verification has not yet started our State Committees may please ensure that all our unions should be ready with all records including affiliation certificate.

P. RAMAMOORTI INSTITUTE OF TU EDUCATION & RESERCH

84. Trade Union education has always had the pride of place in all our documents and discussions on organisation. Indeed importance of trade union education is too obvious to require any further elaboration. While in all circumstances education is essential for development of trade union movement and strengthening trade union organization, in the present so-called "era of globalisation" which is characterised by a vigorous ideological offensive against trade union movement, proper education to equip our activists at all levels to effectively counter this offensive has assumed tremendous importance.

85. We have time and again discussed about centrally organising a system of education. As a part of Com. BTR's birth centenary programme, we organised central classes separately for three regions, namely South regions covering all four the Southern States, Hindi region covering all Hindi speaking states and Eastern region which covered Assam, West Bengal and Orissa. Except for this, no other steps have, unfortunately, been taken so far.

86. With a view to get over this weakness, we took a decision at the 11th conference of CITU, to start, as early as possible, a permanent trade union school in Delhi to be named after Com. P. Ramamurthy, our founder General Secretary. This was the long cherished dream of Com. BTR. Efforts to acquire land for the purpose have already made some progress and the drive for fund mobilisation is on.

87. The CITU Secretariat felt that Instead of exclusively serving the CITU, the proposed school should preferably be conceived as an institution catering to a wider section of the working class. We may think of associating our fraternal organisations both in the setting up and running of the school as well as structuring the classes. It is also proposed to undertake some research studies, keeping in view our objectives and requirements. As having the land and the building in place is bound to take a considerable length of time, the Secretariat was of the view that without waiting for the eventual infrastructure to be ready, we may start the schooling programme early, utilising our present infrastructure, as the need for the education today is most urgent.

88. Drawing on the experience of the BTR Centenary programme of education, holding the school separately for the regions seems to be an appropriate arrangement to be adopted for the proposed round of classes also. Our experience also suggests that we need to make elaborate preparation for it, which will of course take some time. But in the meantime, State Assembly elections will be held in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in 2006. It may, therefore, be considered if we should think of organising the first round of school for eastern and southern regions at some suitable time after the elections. However, one school for the Hindi region can be organised on some suitable date during the first half of 2006.

89. I am placing these proposals before this meeting of the CITU Working Committee for consideration and taking an appropriate decision, to enable us to work out concrete details and undertake the preparatory process.

90. The contributions, received in response to the call issued in this connection by the 11th Conference of CITU, are given in annexure II to this report. I urge the State Committees to expedite the collection

drive and complete the quota at the earliest.

Comrades,

The tasks before us are both immense and urgent.

- ◆ Campaign and mobilise the working people in the anti-imperialist struggles and fight for an independent foreign policy.
- ◆ Build a broad platform to resist the anti-people compromises on the WTO related issues and to defend national sovereignty and self-reliant economy.
- ◆ Continue the fight against the twin dangers of communalism and neo-liberal economic policies.
- ◆ Pay immediate attention to some of the priority issues confronting the trade union movement.
- ◆ Launch independent campaign against communalism and other divisive trends and equip the cadres and activists at all levels to undertake this in a systematic manner.
- ◆ Counter the increasing threats to the working class and the people from the UPA Government, particularly the high-voltage campaign to attack labour rights.
- ◆ Carry forward this struggle on the 16-point demands espoused by the September 29th strike, which broadly reflect the aspirations of the entire masses in our country.
- ◆ Make serious efforts to revitalise the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and the NPMO to organise massive mobilisations throughout the country.
- ◆ Pay more attention on the unorganised sector workers and pursue our campaign and struggle on the 15-point charter of demands of adopted at the Firozabad convention of unorganised sector workers.
- ◆ Mainstream the emerging struggles of the workers and employees in various sectors and industries.
- ◆ Organise campaign and struggle against attacks on existing social security benefits and fight for comprehensive social security for all.
- ◆ Take up the issues of the working women and build struggle at TU level.
- ◆ Initiate further actions as per decisions of the all India convention on "Right to Work".
- ◆ Strive to achieve the target of 40-lakh membership at the earliest, through consistent and vigorous membership drive.
- ◆ Establish the P. Ramamoorti Institute of Trade Union Education and Research in the near future. Organise trade union school for the Hindi Speaking States as a first step.

I am confident that the State Committees and affiliates of CITU throughout the country will take bold initiatives in the coming period to attain the movemental, organisational and ideological goals we have set for ourselves!

GREETINGS TO ALL OF YOU!

Chittabrata Majumdar
General Secretary

STATEMENT SHOWING STATEWISE MEMBERSHIP AS PER ANNUAL RETURNS RECEIVED TILL-20/12/2005

Name of the State	Unions Submitting Returns			Position of membership according to Annual Returns		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Andaman & Nicobar	9	7	7	2417(-)	2044(-)	2009(-)
Andra Pradesh	771	673	721	244477(40937)	221018(50567)	258520(64400)
Assam	81	81	75	58726(26083)	56218(25636)	59228(25859)
Bihar	20	2	3	23717(5061)	3806(21)	5198(4907)
Delhi	73	54	34	28308(1135)	16827(856)	9258(267)
Goa	7	7	7	1147(162)	1174(116)	947(67)
Gujrat	18	18		7599(1046)	8557(1033)	
Haryana	28	19	5	25321(9476)	29361(13538)	1600(-)
Himachal Pradesh	27	26	30	13242(6735)	12175(6468)	14714(6961)
Jammu & Kashmir	2	2	1	910(-)	6352(24)	204(19)
Karnataka	116	86	45	99090(52414)	87778(37243)	38741(17516)
Kerala	907	695	168	1021998(296599)	795508(226035)	177916(56208)
Madhya Pradesh	71	38	3	25220(3907)	10730(726)	730(3)
Maharashtra	70	50	34	63422(19390)	55066(5166)	46833(4925)
Orissa	69	53	50	31749(6010)	44899(12694)	57390(5981)
Punjab	81	71	67	32915(1255)	59943(2606)	22735(669)
Rajasthan	73	47	8	31840(2453)	20631(2244)	3850(69)
Tamilnadu	486	413	223	283056(34407)	226080(34453)	129843(16303)
Tripura	36	31	30	80363(16249)	98697(21824)	107575(35641)
Uttar Pradesh	105	58	51	24277(358)	12385(262)	9978(224)
West Bengal	998	702	16	1283870(142935)	558138(33785)	2011(99)
Uttaranchal	41	37	16	11704(516)	10648(2381)	5636(247)
Chhatisgarh	18	16	9	17968(1618)	15428(1151)	11889(1166)
Jharkhand	17	4	2	38181(3789)	15858(1123)	5952(836)
Meghalaya			1			1460(-)
Arunachal Pradesh			1			17900(-)
Total	4124	3190	1607	3451517(672535)	2369321(479952)	992117(242367)

Year	No. of Unions	Membership
1983	1854	1890993
1984	2005	1575655
1985	1717	1716457(132536)
1986	2412	1844273(209348)
1987	2350	1680884(206482)
1988	2618	1919280(264507)
1989	3114	2425000(247388)
1990	2934	2095550(245060)
1991	2783	2088218(291228)
1992	3343	2381012(321620)
1993	3156	2371405(306344)
1994	3198	2470131(261980)
1995	3523	2784050(358188)
1996	3645	2805127(435285)
1997	3804	2917200(506097)
1998	3502	2881478(483373)
1999	3929	3296808(550583)
2000	3754	3124996(646618)
2001	3777	3148920(600703)

Com. P.RAMMURTHY FUND as on 15.11.2005

CITU, Goa State Committee	Rs.1,206.00
CITU, U.P. State Committee	Rs.16,149.00
CITU, A.P. State Committee	Rs.245,399.00
CITU, Chhatishgarh State Committee	Rs.4,151.00
CITU, Tripura State Committee	Rs.10,000.00
CITU, M.P. State Committee	Rs.14,274.00
CITU, Karnataka State Committee	Rs.37,210.00
CITU, Kerala State Committee	Rs.1,022,143.00
CITU, Punjab State Committee	Rs.23,698.00
CITU, Tamilnadu State committee	Rs.643,000.00
CITU, J & K State Committee	Rs.1,240.00
CITU, Orissa State Committee	Rs.14,491.00
CITU, Haryana State Committee	Rs.40.00
CITU, Assam State Committee	Rs.10,000.00
2nd World Conference of Oil, Gas, Refinery Trade Union	Rs.700,000.00
I.E.L.Employees Union, U.P.	Rs.10,000.00
Central Zone Insurance Employees Association, Chhatishgarh	Rs.10,000.00
TOTAL	Rs.2,763,001.00

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

Report on Activities

The period between the Alappuzha General Council meeting and Bhopal Working Committee meeting has witnessed growing attacks against the working class by the UPA Government in different forms. Over and above, our experience is very bitter, as we have found that our continuous struggles and actions for the last two years to change the government policies even marginally in favour of the toiling masses in the factories and fields have been ignored or rebuffed. The UPA Government has stuck more firmly to the policies laid down by World Bank and IMF.

In the context of the above, resistance movement by the people has also been intensified in this period as evidenced by widespread activities by all sections of workers and employees all over the country. We must particularly mention about the 29th September 2005 strike as a historic and unique one because of the nature of demands and the broad spectrum of participation. Our preparatory activity preceding the strike, particularly the role of CITU committees at different levels, deserves special mention, which has helped to achieve the best ever, participation in the strike in the last one-decade or so. Another important feature is that there is a growing consensus that 29th September is not the end of a campaign but is a phase and we should continue our activities with the issues in the charter of demands through sectoral and centrally organized movements.

Already different sections are on organising movements. The unorganised sector workers, the anganwadi workers and helpers, the public sector employees, the government employees, the FMRAI people, the Bank employees are already in action or are planning for action in near future.

While we give below a brief account of our activities from July this year to date, we want to underline that the UPA government has treated our demands with contempt so far, and the people are already on the move and we are to firm up the programmes for the future in this working committee meeting.

ALL INDIA MOVEMENTS

All India general strike on 29th September 2005 by more than 5 crore people has created history. For three reasons this strike shall find its place in history which are, firstly, this time it was a call from the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, which subsequently became a joint call by industrial workers, government employees, defence employees in ordnance factories, financial sector employees, teachers, and unorganised sector workers in all branches of economic activity. The second important feature is that through this strike the working class and organized sector employees highlighted the problems and fought for the rights of agricultural and rural sector workers, unemployed and women employees and such issues were given highest priority in organising this massive protest action. Thirdly, this time organizations of government employees and defence production employees shared the same platform with trade unions to back up the strike call, and they joined the strike without reservation. Strike by government employees, synchronized with trade unions' call for strike on 24.2.2004 was primarily a matter of spontaneous reaction and expression of indignation against the Supreme Court judgement on the right to strike and the severe action taken by Tamil Nadu government against the government

employees and teachers. 29th September strike was a clear defiance by government employees of the Supreme Court ban on strike thrust upon the government employees. By this participation they have practically reconfirmed their right to strike, whatever may be the legal position.

The campaign for this strike was better organized, widely covered and more educative. Many issues were complex, some had only sectoral appeal and the canvas was quite large. Yet the participation proves that comrades took the issues to the masses to explain the real nature of the problems. This campaign can be said to be good and educative. Participation by a good number of INTUC and BMS supporters proves that point.

We refrain from giving detailed report on participation, state wise or industry wise, as it has elaborately been reported in November issue of Working Class. But it should also be pointed out that participation in some industries like steel, BHEL, Coal, Port & Dock, transport etc was expected to be better. We shall have to look into the weaknesses of our organisation in those areas and take corrective steps. Workers in these industries have registered big gains in the recent past but are going to suffer very big losses in terms of employment, PF, pension, social security benefits on account of the government policies. So a more militant response was expected from them. In comparison, strike in unorganized sector was far better on the whole.

TELECOM WORKERS STRUGGLE

On November 18, 2005 Telecom employees all over the country staged a day-long dharna and demonstration, wore black badges to protest against the government decision to raise the limit of foreign direct investment to 74%. Again the government has agreed to give liberal permission to private telecom operators to use BSNL/MTNL facilities and cables for their benefit. These steps will practically lead to handing over our telecom services to foreign multinationals, our national security will be in danger and MNCs will earn huge profit. One after another government has tried to give undue benefit to private telecom operators at the cost of BSNL/MTNL, yet BSNL/MTNL are extremely popular to the people and consumers in India. These steps will create extreme difficulties to both BSNL and MTNL. Practically, in due course of time, the infrastructure created by BSNL/MTNL will go into the hands of private operation ensuring them huge profits and BSNL/MTNL will suffer losses. All employees' unions and officers organisation have decided to go for a countrywide strike on 5th January 2006.

The employees are planning for bigger action.

DELHI MARCH BY UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS

On 8th December 2005 New Delhi has witnessed the biggest ever demonstration by unorganized sector workers at Patel Chowk. Around 20,000 workers from all over the country came to Delhi from all states including far flung Tripura, Assam, Kerala, even Arunachal Pradesh to demand immediate enactment of a comprehensive legislation on labour rights, service conditions decent wage and social security benefits for unorganized sector workers.

The main resolution reminded the government of its own commitment made in Common Minimum Programme to pass such a law. In last 18 months many a pro-employer, pro-monopolist, anti-workers laws have been passed or are before Parliament but the government avoids fulfilling their commitment to the unorganised sector workers. The demonstration demanded stoppage of atrocities and violence by administration and employers upon the unorganised sector workers. Leaders of AITUC, BMS,

HMS, UTUC (LS), AICCTU along with leaders of CITU and MPs of CPI(M) addressed the gathering.
ALL INDIA STRIKE BY MEDICAL & SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Under the leadership of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India (FMRAI), the medical and sales representatives all over the country observed 3-day strike from 14th to 16th December 2005. Their demands are: extension of Sales Promotion act to sales representatives/field workers of other industries, besides pharmaceuticals, recognition and implementation of 'sales promotion' as 'industry' under ID Act, against unfair trade and marketing practices by some companies and against victimization, etc. There were demonstrations all over on the days of strike before different establishments throughout the country. The strike was near total throughout the country.

Meanwhile, in a swift move Maharashtra government brought a bill withdrawing the coverage of sales promotion employees in MITU&PULP Act. Against this, the members of FMRAI resorted to Maharashtra-wide strike on 12th December 2005. They have decided to hold a massive demonstration on 16th December, the concluding day of countrywide strike before the Assembly now in session in Nagpur.

FCI

All India FCI Mazdoor Federation has organized a Parliament march on 17th August demanding departmentalization/regularization of FCI workers, strengthening of public distribution system, medical benefits to PDS employees and to stop privatization in the Food Corporation of India.

Ten thousand workers joined the march who started from FCI headquarters at Barakhamba Road towards Parliament Street. The workers came from West Bengal, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi, even from as far as Kerala and Tripura. They belonged to trade unions affiliated to CITU, INTUC and AITUC but all organized under the national federation.

WORKING WOMEN

In the recent period several state committees have made to organize the domestic workers. A state level convention of domestic workers was held in Maharashtra in Pune. More than 3,000 domestic workers from 10 districts participated in the convention. More than 35,000 domestic workers have been enrolled in around 10 district level unions in the state. Some other state committees including Tripura, West Bengal etc. have also made effort to organize the domestic workers.

The Voice of the Working Woman' has completed 25 years of publication in 2005. The January 2006 issue has been brought out as a special issue on the occasion. The circulation of the journal has increased to 4,700 copies. Keeping in view the increasing contacts with educated working women from banks, insurance, state government and central, government employees, lecturers, teachers etc. in various states, there is vast scope to further increase the circulation if all the state committees make serious efforts. Efforts should also be made by the state coordination committees of working women to renew the subscriptions every year.

IMPORTANT CONVENTIONS/CONFERENCES

The 2nd All India Convention of Unorganised Sector Workers was held at Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, on 3-4 October, 2005. A total of 345 delegates attended the convention from various states. This

convention was held in UP is a big achievement because the glass bangles and ceramic workers struggles have given us the base and strength to hold the convention. This convention and its success has given us the task to organise the vast number of workers in the broad-spectrum area commonly identified as unorganized sector. The charter of demands adopted has 15 specific demands covering enactment of central legislation, improving and ensuring payment of a decent minimum wage, implementation of all social security measures, etc. The convention demanded a thorough change in employer-employee relationship making it formal with all the attendant statutory benefits as well as observance of safety rules environmental and occupational health protection measures and medical facilities.

The convention also demanded a change in the policy framework to protect small-scale and tiny sectors and re-introduction of reservation system to stop MNCs and big monopoly houses from destroying jobs of millions of workers.

As reported earlier, this convention was followed by a Delhi march on 8th December. In coming days we shall have to concentrate on implementing the organizational decisions adopted in the convention.

5TH CONFERENCE OF AIFAWH

The 5th conference of All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AIFAWH) was held in Bangalore on 8-11 November 2005. 561 delegates from 20 states attended the conference. The 5th conference of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers was held successfully in Bangalore on 8-11 November 2005. 561 delegates and observers from 20 states participated in the conference. No delegates participated from Bihar, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat etc. should pay more attention to organize the anganwadi employees.

We have made impressive progress in this area as our present strength has crossed 2,30,000 membership which is 68% higher than that of the previous conference. We have the strongest presence among the Anganwadi employees.

The ICDS scheme is a unique organisation recognised by national and international agencies as its contribution to society in terms of child care, public hygiene, disease control, immunization, health awareness and nutritional education is commendable. More than that, CITU can be greatly benefited through this federation as its spread and penetration in society can build social awareness and organizational mentality among the people who are in remote and isolated areas may or may not be engaged in any formal type of employment. We shall have to pay more attention for the growth of the AIFAWH in future.

The major demands highlighted in the conference were to institutionalise ICDS under the HRD ministry, make better use of its potentials as ICDS can play a far better and key role in human development. Naturally the workers and helpers should be absorbed as regular government employees considering their remarkable service to the society. The conference called upon the member to develop intimate and stronger bonds with the common people, the actual beneficiaries, to achieve this goal.

An important seminar on "ICDS – Role of the government" was organised and addressed by HD Deve Gowda, Prakash Karat, Dharam Singh, Jayati Ghosh and others.

We give below a brief account of our movements, agitational activities in states from July 2005 to

ANDAMAN

Forest workers under the leadership of Vanvikash Karmachari Sangh sat for a relay hunger strike from 12th August demanding payment of wages unpaid since June 2005. The employees suffered huge loss due to Tsunami and thereafter wages remained unpaid, resulting in starvation to their families.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Nearly 17000 employees of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport corporation went on indefinite strike from 4th July 2005 demanding reduction of taxes on motor vehicle, on high-speed diesel, reimbursement of Rs 1350 crore due to APSRTC from the state govt, recruitment of regular workers in all cadres and interim relief to all workers. Joint Action Committee comprising CITU & AITUC called for this strike which was later joined by INTUC. The strike was overwhelmingly successful. Meanwhile in response to a public interest litigation AP High Court ordered to withdraw the strike on 6th July evening, for 3 week to facilitate a negotiated settlement with the state government. But the negotiation failed and again the road transport workers started indefinite strike from 18th Oct 2005 at the call of Joint Action Committee of trade unions. 95% workers joined the strike despite all efforts by state govt to disrupt the unity of the workers. The strike ended with understanding reached between the JAC and the State govt. on some of the demands.

8000 contractors workers in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant went on a continuous strike from 2 to 16 June, demanding higher wage, annual bonus, ESI facilities and other statutory benefits. CITU, AITUC and HMS gave the call. The management, at first, refused to be involved in the matter and left it to the contractors. They refused to take up their responsibility as 'Principal Employer'. But under pressure from the trade unions and also the people of Visakhapatnam they had to take part in negotiation and an interim settlement was reached. The workers pay was increased in the first step by Rs 300/- per month and ESI and Bonus demands were agreed to. A joint committee was formed to conclude the final agreement in 6 months.

A 28-day long Padayatra was organised to cover 750 kilometers through the rural and urban areas of Visakhapatnam district to highlight the miserable condition of poor workers, migrant workers, agricultural sector workers and other poor sections of the society. The padayatra started on 21st November and ended on 18th December, both in Visakhapatnam city.

The participants tried to educate and enthuse the workers to launch militant struggles to get rid of the horrible conditions of their housing, lack of electricity, lack of ration cards and ration materials like grains and kerosene and lack of water for drinking or irrigation. The unorganized sector workers do not get even the minimum wage, they are under constant threat to be thrown out from government land because they have no place to stay. The small houses in rural areas, erected by government for poor workers/dalits, are in dilapidated state or actually broken down. The programme got strong response from people at large. A big mass meeting was held on the final day.

CHHATTISGARH

On 11th July 2005 hundreds of health workers demonstrated before the District Collector, Raipur protesting against winding up of village health scheme from March 2005. It was pointed out that incidence of Malaria, water-borne diseases had increased even death rate had gone up after withdrawal of the scheme. The health workers demanded that considering the poverty and low level of consciousness

the scheme should be not only reintroduced but also the staff should be taken in a regular cadre. They submitted a memorandum to the state minister of Health & Family Welfare.

On the same day hundreds of Anganwadi workers and helpers staged a big demonstration in Raipur with their 6-point charter of demands which highlighted the issues like restructuring ICDS and bring it under HRD Ministry, introduction of PF, DA and Social Security benefits, wage increase, pension scheme, setting up of complaint cell against sexual harassment and ending corruption at administrative level. They submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the district collector.

GUJARAT

On 13th September a peaceful procession was organized in Bhavnagar where thousands of workers and common people took part demanding land, employment and food. The processionists raised slogan for the success of 29th September strike. Suddenly police started a lathicharge and arrested thousands of people including women. Several people including senior leaders were injured in the lathicharge.

HARYANA

On 12th July, five construction workers died while working owing to the collapse of a two-storey building at Hissar. The District Administration as usual, ignored the demand of Bhawan Nirman Kamgarh Union (CITU) for compensation. On 13th July the union led a huge procession with the dead bodies from hospital to Deputy Commissioner's office and demonstrated there. Finally an amount of Rs 2,15,000 to the family of each deceased was agreed upon. The union demanded that Construction Workers Welfare Fund should be constituted as per the Central Act.

20,000 pit-loom workers, mostly migrant workers from West Bengal are working in Panipat in underground small pits to produce carpets and blankets for export, which give the owners huge profits. The workers do not get even the minimum wage. Under the leadership of CITU and IFTU they forced the employers to sign a tripartite agreement on 22nd September 2005 but employers did not implement the agreement leading to continuous dharna from 18th to 26th October before the DLC office.

On 29th October two leaders, P P Kapur of IFTU and Jay Bhagawan of CITU were beaten up by employers goons in front of the police station, but police arrested the leaders. Thousands of workers demonstrated and freed the leaders to take them to hospital and a spontaneous strike was observed on 30th October. Since then continuous demonstrations, dharnas are being organized for their demands and the demand to arrest the goondas of the employers. The struggle is continuing.

J & K

For the first time in history a rally of 25,000 employees and workers was held in Srinagar on 9th July 2005. The call was given by a Joint Action Committee formed by trade unions, all the organizations of government employees, teachers, Anganwadi workers and helpers, casual workers, contractors workers and ad hoc employees.

Their demands were, among others, regularisation of contract workers, temporary workers, withdrawal of new pension scheme, regularization of Rehbar-e-Talem teachers, anganwadi workers, revival of public sector units in state and release 3% DA to state govt employees, and wage increase of all temporary workers.

Demonstrators converged at the Sher-e-Kashmir Park from all the districts right from the morning. After a long time there was a massive gathering where all the speakers from different organizations criticized the anti-people economic policies of central and state governments.

KERALA

The entire working class in Kerala observed a massive general strike on 5th July 2005 at the call of Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions, comprising CITU, AITUC, UTUC, UTUC(LS), HMS, INLC, KTUC(J), NLO, TUCA which had seen the entire state paralysed in all the 14 districts of the state. Only the INTUC leaders refused to join this massive movement but their followers joined the strike in large numbers. BMS and STU (pro IUML) had joined the struggle right from the preparatory campaign. The charter of demands had put forward the most urgent issues agitating the section of working population, peasants, agricultural workers, unemployed as well as office employees, govt employees, public sector workers, teachers included, workers in private sector industries in informal sector joined the strike almost totally. Most significant is that the participation in strike in Cochin Shipyard was 100 percent.

The demands included the following: (1) Stop privatisation of PSUs, 2) protect the traditional sector industries and workers in unorganized sector workers. 3) Grant special package scheme for the poor and marginal farmers (4) withdraw the contributory pension scheme proposed by the central govt (5) remove the ban on recruitment (6) stop downsizing of workforce (7) draw up special schemes to remove unemployment and (8) withdraw all the anti-people, anti-working class policies of the government. It was demanded to withdraw the petrol and diesel price hike.

In the campaign stage jathas, vehicle jathas, joint conventions, gate meetings were held all over the state. There was a brutal police attack on students and youths by police on 4th July when they protested against commercialization of education by the UDF Govt.

On 3rd August, 2005 workers from Railway Catering service led by Contract Catering Workers Union, Kerala, took out a march to Jantar Mantar in New Delhi with their demand to the Railway Minister to review the new catering policy as they are being rendered surplus consequent upon the new policy. They also demanded a status quo till a review is made and protection of jobs in the event of a new policy.

On 23rd August, hundreds of Railway Licenced Porters from Kerala held a Parliament march demanding stoppage of parcel loading and unloading job to private parties, contractors other than the licenced porters. They also demanded that they should be brought under PF pension and welfare schemes as well as a quota from this section of workers while recruiting group D employees.

The march was organised by Southern Railway Licenced Porters Union (CITU). Before the march the workers staged demonstrations, dharnas in front of major Railway stations. The Railway Minister assured the delegation to look into the matter favourably.

MADHYA PRADESH

257 women workers had been on a tool-down strike for 45 days demanding justice. They are mostly widows or dependents of deceased employees of BHEL, Bhopal, who were employed in Masala Papad Kendra run by Ladies Club Welfare Society. Though apparently it is a voluntary non-profit

organisation the beneficiary of its project is BHEL as because 226 workers work in jobs of Armature and coil insulation, winding and such works needed for electrical motor production, etc. These workers by this via media served BHEL, as they could not be recruited directly.

CITU led their struggles for just wage and benefits supported by BHEL regular workers' union. The tool down was withdrawn after getting assurance of a favourable consideration.

MAHARASHTRA

Transport workers of Bombay Electric Supply & Transport undertaking or BEST decided to conduct a vigorous campaign against privatisation of public transport system (bus) in Mumbai, which is under govt control. On August 25, 2005 in a convention in the Vanmali Hall in Central Mumbai, the workers decided to defeat the World Bank conspiracy to privatise transport system in Mumbai, also in the entire Maharashtra.

ORISSA

J K Paper Mill in Rayagada, Orissa employs 1100 regular workers and 3000 contractors' workers. The contract workers get much less than statutory minimum wage and benefits. In October 2004, the workers formed a union. Singhania, as per the standard Indian practice by the employers, dismissed A Ganeswar Rao, General Secretary of the union from service. The Orissa government is refusing to take any action against the Singhania who make huge profit from this company producing costly Xerox papers. The workers are continuing their agitation.

Dharnas, demonstrations, rasta roko are being organized regularly against the handing over of rich iron ore deposits to Posco of South Korea with a right to export and prime agricultural land near Paradip port for construction of their store-yard. People of Orissa condemn these unfair benefits being given to a foreign big company to make huge profit using our resources and land. A broad-based convention on 'Save Mineral Resources' will be organised in January, 2006 at Barbil demanding ban on export of valuable minerals and for a national mineral and mining policy.

A bandh was observed in Jajpur on 29th October against the state government's decision to privatize Ferro-Chrome plant. The CITU, AITUC, HMS and also INTUC led the struggle. Prior to that a convention was organized on 21st October.

Orissa government's decision to privatise Kalinga Studio, OTDC, Kalinga Iron Works was opposed by holding demonstrations, dharna before the Governor's house on 3rd November, and before the Assembly on 29th November under the leadership of CITU.

3,000 workers marched to Assembly demanding revision of minimum wage, welfare fund for construction workers' identity card for beedi workers and raise of allowance for Anganwadi workers and helpers.

WTO-Virodhi demonstration on 13th December and protest demonstration against reduction of PF interest rate was observed widely in the state on 20th December.

PUNJAB

On 31st July 05, a massive demonstration was organized in Ludhiana by workers under the leadership of CITU to demand that the workers be given trade union rights and the unions be given registration

which was being denied for years. The workers protested against the administration playing in the hands of the factory owners, particularly the cycle factory owners.

The state govt and the factory owners did their best to foil the march by police arrangement, by changing weekly off day and by threats. But nothing could stop the workers to join the march in huge numbers.

From 4th to 9th November, Jathas were organized all over Punjab, which evoked good response among all sections of workers. Under the banner of CITU the workers raised the demands like a) upward revision of minimum wage (b) implementation of labour laws (c) regularization of contract and casual workers and (d) against large-scale engagement of contractors workers in regular jobs in industries, offices etc. The jathas culminated in a central rally in Ludhiana on 9th November 2005 where workers participated in thousand members.

Workers in cycle industry in Ludhiana finally got their success after years of struggle when Punjab government had to grant registration to 3 unions out of 7 they applied for. But the most powerful industrial house making cycles namely Hero Group retaliated by declaring lock-out in one of the Rockman units. They are spreading provincial hatred to divide the workers.

The workers under CITU are fighting unitedly to defeat the heinous conspiracies and to force them to lift the lock out.

As a follow up to 29th September strike, Punjab state committee of CITU organized two inter-district jatha march from 4th November to 9th November, starting from Hussainwala (Ferozpur) and Jalianwalabad, demanding upward revision of minimum wage abolition of contract labour system, implementation of labour laws, ration card to migrant workers and absorption of daily wage workers in various departments.

Two jathas converged at Chattar Singh Park, Ludhiana after covering all major industrial centres and big towns including Ropar, Chandigarh, Batala, Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, to name a few. The jathas were received by large number of people everywhere and huge crowds joined them at Ludhiana paralysing the city for many hours. The programme ended with a big mass meeting.

TAMIL NADU

On 12th August, 05, hundreds of activists assembled at Tambaram, South Chennai to express their solidarity with the workers of Visteon India Ltd, a unit of MNC producing automobile components. The management refused to allow any trade union movement there and remained absent in tripartite meetings on 10 occasions though called upon by DLC of TN Govt. Instead, the management threatened and forced some employees and trainees to sign individual agreement forms. In the militant demonstration several central TU leaders as well as central govt employees, BEFI leaders declared that any attempt to replicate Honda will be resisted and the challenges of the MNCs will be met.

At the call of All India Road Transport Workers Federation 4 days campaign programme was carried out in Chennai in the second week of August. Workers of state transport, goods transport tempos, taxis, auto-rickshaws joined the campaign that included jathas, street corner meetings, distribution of handbills, etc.

The demands were: amendments of Motor Vehicles Act, Social Security to transport workers, implementation of labour laws. Issues like petroleum price hike and privatization of transport system

were also highlighted.

On 16th August a massive procession marched through the streets of Chennai and a memorandum was handed over to the Transport Minister.

The State government refused to hold negotiations on the charter of demands submitted by State Transport and Electricity Workers. In spite of continued struggles the government did not negotiate but imposed unilaterally a 5-year settlement on these workers from a date 2 years after expiry of last settlement. In the State transport sector CITU, LPF (DMK), AITUC and some other unions went on a protest strike on 31st August and in electricity, CITU organized a strike on 15th October. The DMK union had called for strike but there was no participation from their strike.

More than 20,000 contract workers in State Electricity Board went on indefinite strike from 3rd November, which continued upto 9th December, under the leadership of CITU. The State government refused to pay Deepavali ex-gratia to 12,500 out of the total 21,000 contract workers. The government refused to regularize their services also. The strike was withdrawn after the government announced ex-gratia payment of Rs 750/- to 7500 workers in addition to the 8500 workers paid earlier.

The union is continuing the struggle to regularize them. As a result the state government has announced absorption of 2500 workers of the first batch of 8,500 contract workers earlier.

280 workers including 130 women in KICM factory, a mushroom exporting unit went on indefinite strike against victimization of 23 leading activists including 5 women. The issue was successfully settled after 200 days strike and work has resumed.

Silk weavers in Kanchipuram conducted a weeklong successful strike against the master weavers as a section of them refused to implement a settlement reached earlier.

There were statewide demonstrations by PSU workers on 20th October, demanding Bonus and other issues.

More than 3000 loading and unloading workers organised a march to the State secretariat in Chennai on 26th August.

Padayatras were organized to converge in Golden Rock (Trichy) to observe Martyrs Day to commemorate sacrifice of railway workers who were shot down by the government in 1947. 19 groups of CITU participated in this programme.

TRIPURA

On 5th June 2005 in Town Hall, Agartala, State level 'Right to Work' convention was held to carry forward the struggle against unemployment. Posters, leaflets were distributed throughout the state. About 1600 delegates attended the convention and leaders of 17 mass organizations spoke in the convention. It was decided to extend the campaign upto the grass root level within the month of September 2005.

UTTARANCHAL

Workers of pharmacies run by Divya Yoga Ashram Trust at Haridwar continued their dharna and

hunger strikes in relay for months together demanding implementation of 21.5.2005 tripartite agreement which enjoins upon the trust management to pay statutory minimum wage and reinstatement of retrenched workers. The management refused to implement the agreement they signed. On 23rd August a joint convention before the District Magistrates office was organized where leaders from CITU, AITUC, INTUC and many other mass organizations vowed to support the movement to victory. In solidarity workers from other industries joined the continuous dharna along with the hunger strikers.

Special discussion on CADRE DEVELOPMENT IN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The constitution of the CITU clearly defines its perspective when it states, "holding fast the ideal of socialism, the CITU stands for the complete emancipation of the society from all exploitation."

This enjoins upon the CITU several basic tasks of which the first and foremost is that of uniting the entire working class in the struggle against all attacks by the ruling classes and for improvement in economic and other conditions of life. Other major tasks are to unite the working class with other toiling classes and to create awareness among the workers about the perspective.

Since its very inception, the CITU has been pursuing the line of unity and struggle. It has been persistently striving to unite the entire working class. The CITU can rightfully claim to have played a prominent role in this coming together, at the present juncture, of a number of important trade unions on one platform for struggle against the new economic policy. Similar is the case with the coming into existence of a platform of mass organisations, under the aegis of which several common struggles have been conducted.

However, recent experience tells us that unless the CITU itself is substantially strengthened, the ongoing united struggle of the working class will be unable to make further advance, adequate enough, to meet the challenges of the growing onslaught of the ruling classes and the imperialist forces. A stronger CITU is what the prerequisites for the active functioning of the united platform of the trade unions and mass organisations.

The CITU document on "New Struggle and Organisational Consolidation of the Trade Union Movement" (2002) underlined the significance of initiation of grass-root level independent campaign by CITU for uniting the graded by struggle unity among the trade unions and united countrywide movement.

It thus requires an effective cadre base at all the workplaces, regional, district and state levels. The development of these cadres is as well equipped force to address the task of uniting the class and from the grass root level.

From early 90s we have been carrying on serious exercise on the problem of strengthening the CITU organisation. In 1993, we adopted the Bhubaneswar document. From time to time we have been reviewing the progress of implementation of this document. Though there has been improvement in some respects, the progress is far from satisfactory. In the light of the document, we decided to increase the membership from 24 lakhs to 45 lakhs in a couple of years or so. But today we have not crossed the 34 lakhs mark even. Besides, we have not been able to spread substantially to new areas. What is the reason for this failure? We may refer to the Bhubaneswar document itself for an answer.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

Special discussion on CADRE DEVELOPMENT IN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The constitution of the CITU clearly defines its perspective when it states, "holding fast the ideal of socialism, the CITU stands for the complete emancipation of the society from all exploitation."

This enjoins upon the CITU several basic tasks of which the first and foremost is that of uniting the entire working class in the struggle against all attacks by the ruling classes and for improvement in economic and other conditions of life. Other major tasks are to unite the working class with other toiling masses and to create awareness among the workers about the perspective.

Since its very inception, the CITU has been pursuing the line of unity and struggle. It has been seriously striving to unite the entire working class. The CITU can modestly claim to have played a prominent role in the coming together, at the present juncture, of a number of important trade unions on one platform for struggle against the new economic policy. Similar is the case with the coming into existence of a platform of mass organisations, under the aegis of which several common struggles have been conducted.

However, recent experience tells us that unless the CITU itself is substantially strengthened, the ongoing united struggle of the working class will be unable to make further advance, adequate enough to meet the challenge of the growing onslaught of the ruling classes and the imperialist forces. A stronger CITU is also the pre-requisite for the active functioning of the united platforms of the trade unions and mass organisations.

The CITU document on "United Struggle and organisational consolidation of the Trade Union movement" (2002) underlined the importance of initiation of grass-root level independent campaign by CITU for creating the ground for tangible unity among the trade unions and united countrywide movement.

All these require an effective cadre-base at all the workplaces, regional, district and state levels. The development of these cadres as a well equipped force to address the task of uniting the class right from the grass root level.

Since early 90s we have been carrying on serious exercise on the problems of strengthening the CITU organisation. In 1993, we adopted the Bhubaneshwar document. From time to time we have been reviewing the progress of implementation of this document. Though there has been improvement in some respects, the progress is far from satisfactory. In the light of the document, we decided to increase our membership from 24 lakhs to 40 lakhs in a couple of years or so. But today, we have not crossed the 34 lakhs mark even. Besides, we have not been able to spread substantially to new areas. What is the reason for this failure? We may refer to the Bhubaneshwar document itself for an answer.

The document reads: "one of the major causes of our organisational stagnation is the neglect of the urgent task of cadre development. Without sustained availability of growing contingent of cadres discharging multifarious responsibilities facing the organisation, the required all round development of organisation cannot take place". Further, "In several meetings.... comrades have mentioned the question of paucity of cadres as a bottleneck they face in advancing in existing centres and expanding in newer centres."

Our experience of the past years fully confirms these statements. Therefore, at a time when we are in dire need of enhancing the strength of CITU organisation so that we can carry forward the ongoing struggle of the working class further, we cannot but give utmost priority to the task of cadre development. We also need to realise that our struggle has become infinitely complex and difficult today. Only well trained and properly equipped cadres can effectively lead these struggles.

II. WHO ARE CADRES?

There is nothing mystical in the concept of 'cadre' as the reactionary media often try to make out. In relation to political parties and mass organizations, it should be clear, that the word simply means an active worker, with the qualification that a cadre works regularly and continuously for the organization with which he or she is associated. A cadre is certainly not like an employee serving under an employer for remuneration. A cadre renders voluntary service because he has conviction about the ideal pursued by the organization and therefore wants its realization. Of course a cadre works under the direction of the leadership. But he is essentially a part of a 'collective' comprising both the leaders and the cadres, which actually emerges almost automatically, even if not formally constituted, and which is really responsible for the totality of the work with each cadre having his or her own share of work and responsibility. A cadre need not necessarily be a holder of an executive post in the organization though he or she may have some executive function. He or She may be a whole timer but need not necessarily be one. There may be part timer cadres too. This in brief is the general profile of a cadre.

The role of the cadres is pivotal in the functioning of any organization. In all organizations decisions are taken by a relatively small group of leaders. But decisions, however correct, mean nothing to the organisations unless it is implemented. And it is the cadres who implement them. Not that the cadres alone do it. Many others may and actually do, participate in the process but it is the cadres of our description who keep the process going. Political parties and trade unions have an enormous volume of daily work to attend to, apart from campaigns movements and struggles, conferences and conventions, which go on in a regular and continuous flow. Who else except the active worker working regularly and continuously that is except the cadres of our description can carry on the daily work and also keep the flow of other works going? Even the quality of the work depends on the quality of the cadres. Hence the old adage popular in the international working class movement "CADERS DECIDE EVERYTHING"

Cadres, as we all know, are not available readymade in the markets. Some cadres grow spontaneously in the course of struggles and other union activities. But for quantitatively and qualitatively adequate cadres, planned and conscious effort for developing them is needed. From the very inception the CITU is having a strong contingent of capable cadres. Thanks to their untiring effort under an able leadership, the CITU, over the decades have grown from strength to strength working in most trying circumstances. But of late, particularly with the advent of the so-called era of globalization marked by all round offensive of capital, for the CITU organisation, the primary requirement is a sizable number of well-trained cadres. Not by leaving it to spontaneity, but only through a vigorous programme of cadre development that we can have sufficient number of capable cadres in shortest possible time. That is the most urgent need of the hour.

III. RECRUITMENT OF CADRES

The cadre development process involves (a) identification of potential or prospective cadres (b) education and training of these prospective cadres for their proper development (c) reeducation and retraining of the existing cadres. We are to pay due attention to all the three aspects of cadre development process.

As regards the method of identification of potential cadres and their training we may profit by referring to the Bhubaneshwar document, which is a treasure trove of ideas relating to organizational problems. "During enumerable struggles conducted by us we have come across a large number of workers who show interest in our organisation". They not only show interest but often take active part in struggles on their own, some times showing unusual courage and capability. Also during conferences and similar programmes, they sometimes render their service on their own initiative and display remarkable efficiency. They are our prospective cadres to be picked up, educated, trained and properly placed.

In reply to the complaint that there is shortage of workers the teachers and leaders of international working class movement asserted that there were "enormous number" of them, "they need only be discovered in our own organizations during strike and demonstrations, in various mass organizations of the workers... They must be helped to grow in the course of their work and struggle, they must be put in such conditions, where they can really be useful ..."

For recruitment of prospective cadres, apart from the qualities shown by them during struggles and other activities, we shall also look for some other qualities. It should be seen that they have deep devotion for the cause of the working class. Honesty and integrity should be another criterion. They should be industrious. They should have desire to learn things. They should also have the disposition to undertake difficult task and so on.

In the process of recruitment we must take care of several important aspects. First, importance must be given to recruitment of actual workers. Second, we must remember that the unorganized sector is rapidly widening and we need large number of cadres for and from this sector. Third, organised sector must not be neglected and attempt should be made to utilize cadres from organised sector for the unorganised sector. Lastly, due attention should be paid for recruitment of cadres from among workers belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, minority communities and working women. Another important source of cadres are the other sectors of democratic movement, such as student movement, youth movement etc.

IV. TRAINING OF CADRES

Drawing upon the experience of the international working class movement and basing on our own experience, the Bhubaneshwar document stated that after identifying the prospective cadres, we are "to involve them in day to day union activity, give them suitable responsibility after making objective assessment about their capability, extending regular guidance to them with a view to help them in discharging their work more effectively, appreciating their capabilities when they perform well and helping them to learn from their mistakes and promoting them to higher responsibility when they exhibit necessary capabilities". Here we find in a nutshell the entire methodology of training the prospective cadres.

There is a confusion prevalent among us in relation to education and training, many of us think that organizing classes is the 'be all and end all' of education and training. It is important to make the

distinction between education and training.

Not only in trade unions but also in every sphere of human endeavour "training" is basically practical as distinct from education, which is predominantly theoretical. The purpose of training persons is to make them capable of doing some thing and doing it better. In trade unions training programmes aims at turning out better trade unionists. The received principle is that one learns to do, and do it better only by doing it. It is this principle that underlies the above methodology.

While involving prospective cadres for training we should take care to develop in them basic trade union skills, develop capacity to lead organizations and movement, to effectively comprehend and make presentation on various issues, to address organizational and movemental problems both at unit level and regional level. Cadres should be trained to study the current states and condition, to handle legal matters, communication and documentation skill, negotiating skill, skill for conducting agitation and propaganda. It is to be noted that mere understanding of the issues is not enough for a cadre, attaining the required skill to put into practice the correct understanding in day to day trade union work is important.

Organisation of workshops/camp may be very useful in developing cadres. In workshops/camps, experience of the cadres themselves in running the trade unions, launching and leading movements, building organization etc. can be exchanged. The cadres may explain problems faced by them. Problem solving exercises may be taken up in the workshops to focus on the skills required in comprehending and evaluating a problem and finding a solution or the appropriate course of action. The workshop is also the most appropriate means of imparting basic trade unions skills like communication, negotiation, record keeping, documentation, agit-prop campaign etc, which are quite vital for effectively running a trade union. The elder and experienced comrades attending and guiding the proceedings of the workshops/camps may help the comrades in finding solution to the problems. Therefore, organization of workshops/camps should be considered as very important means in the process of cadre development.

V. EDUCATION OF CADRES

As for education of cadres, that is theoretical education, it should be noted, its purpose also is same as that of practical training, to make them better workers. Practical training alone cannot make a cadre most effective unless backed by theoretical education, as we all know, "practice without theory is blind". Therefore theoretical education is equally important for development of effective cadre.

Purpose of trade union theoretical education makes them better workers, conscious of where they stand and what they are doing.

Ideological education is of crucial importance, which demarcates CITU from other trade unions. Particularly in the face of aggressive ideological offensives by the capitalist and imperialist lobby in the post soviet era embracing the economic, social and cultural fields, ideological struggle, both against the adversaries and against the spurious trends within the working class and progressive movement itself has assumed paramount importance to keep the movement and organization in track. Ideological education has to be seen and perceived as an ongoing process, not just a classroom session in an education programme but as an effective means of sharpening the understanding on everything around us, making an objective assessment of what is going on and making appropriate decision both on tactics and strategies. The trade union education on ideological issues should be reoriented to equip our cadres with these capabilities.

Present day capitalism and globalisation, their impact on India, response of different classes in India - all these will of course be a part of the syllabus. Character of trade unions in general, character of CITU in particular, character of other trade unions, communalism and casteism will also form a part of the syllabus. Labour laws, rights and benefits won through a century of struggle, current attacks on them - all these should be discussed. This is the minimum to start with.

Interactive classes are likely to be helpful, if the participants take part with proper attitude. The participants' role will be to explain the experience in implementing the principles examined in the presentation. Only then the interactive discussion can be really fruitful. At the same time self-study is also important. Cadres must be given all help to carry on self-study and classes should be so planned and articulated so that interest for self-study is generated among the cadres.

It should be noted that only the basic parameters of the plans for education and training has been provided not the plans. Actual plans will require much elaboration, and that is an urgent task to be accomplished by the leadership from the central to the union level.

VI. IMPEDIMENTS

There are not a few impediments to the proposed cadre development programme, some of which are extraneous while others are intrinsic to the present state of our organisation and mindset. Note has to be taken of them.

One major thrust of the neoliberal globalisation is the drastic reduction of work force in the name of so-called right sizing. In many establishments new entry has been totally stopped and old existing workers are sent out through VRS. In this situation finding new cadres is not as easy task.

Apart from this direct effect, Globalisation has very damaging indirect effect too. Spread of consumerist mentality is another scourge of globalisation. Under influence of consumerism younger generation has developed a tendency to keep away from unions. This also creates some difficulty in cadre development effort.

In days to come the first problem will persist and is likely to be more acute until the working class movement is strong enough to reverse the employment policies of globalisation. We have no other go but to try to develop cadre from among the work force available which is also not too small. As regards the second problem, to fight against it is a part of the ideological struggle of our trade unions. Only persistent ideological - cultural work among the workers, patiently carried out, can change the situation.

The other major impediment is intrinsic it is the lack of democratic functioning and attitude of leaders. Actual task of cadre development is infinitely more difficult than talking or writing about. "Bhubaneshwar document has correctly stressed that cadre development is possible only through "planned and conscious effort. Who will do the planning if the leadership of the organization does not care to function democratically." The question of cadre development needs to "find place in our collective consciousness". Where is the collective consciousness if there is no collective functioning? Therefore democratic collective functioning of organisation is the indispensable precondition for successful cadre development effort.

It is not only that democratic functioning is absent in wide areas. There is often a pernicious anti working class vice in a fairly large section of leaders who do not want new and effective cadres to come up lest they should lose their monopoly of leadership. There are many instances of this tendency

in our organisation. But it does not end here. Such leaders not only prevent emergence of new cadres, they indulge in the practice of 'developing' personal followers, "chamchas" with whose help he himself control the organisation. This tendency will have to be eradicated with firm hands.

VII. WHOLE TIMERS

We need – more whole time workers for manning the existing organisation and for its expansion. The Bhubaneswar document has discussed the question of whole-timers. There is no need to repeat it here. We only reiterate that developing and maintaining an effective team of whole-time cadres and exploiting full potential of their capabilities in various tiers of the organisation is of crucial importance. Our cadre policy should appropriately be in tune with this objective. Developing and maintaining an effective team of whole timers, constantly updating and sharpening their level of understanding, commitment and skills and taking appropriate care of their basic needs are of crucial importance.

But, we must not under-estimate the importance of part-time workers. We need a large number of part time cadres. They are the living link between ordinary workers and the organisation. Developing part-time cadres, i.e. more number of skilled and trained activists from among the employed workers will ensure more effective presence of the union in the work places. They being in constant touch with the mass of the workers will be of considerable help to consolidate and strengthen the union. This may also help in releasing whole time cadres for deployment in other areas yet to be accessed. Towards this end, the union leadership has to consciously plan their activities in such a manner as to encourage more initiative among the ranks of the workers, identify the potential activists in the union and try to activate them in day-to-day work. Hence, developing part-time cadres must be at the center of our cadre development perspective.

Some times, our unions and even higher level committees are under compulsion to accept whole timers who are neither suitable to nor helpful for trade union, most often which whole timers do not even have any desire to learn the work. In many cases the imposed whole timers are attached to a large number of unions and has actually no contribution to any; in most cases they are actually meant for political work though they are whole timers on union account. It will not be an easy task to bring about a change in the situation. But we must undertake to handle the job in proper manner. Whole time workers are expected to be our hard-core cadres and the matter should be dealt with accordingly.

What was admitted on the Bhubaneswar document 12 years back is generally true even today? We have so far made no consciously planned effort at cadre development. Only a few of our State Committees have made some attempts. Therefore, we are not in possession of much experience of this job. Cadre development work in trade unions is not exactly similar to the same work at political level. We have to start the work with whatever understanding we have and occasionally review our work. In the process, we shall accumulate experience, which will deepen our understanding and we shall be able to improve in our work gradually.

We must understand that cadre development is a wholesome process, much wider and deeper in scope. Cadre development is a very elaborate job; it is a part of the day-to-day work. In starting the work, we need to adopt a time bound programme and it brooks no delay. We have to set a target of three months, say by end of October, to discuss the matter at all levels and prepare necessary plan to start the work. The state committees must closely monitor progress of the work. We shall try to review our experience at the all India level after a year.

If we succeed in this endeavour - and succeed we must – the CITU will be more effective in fulfilling

its historic mission.

(Revised draft based on discussions in the CITU General Council Meeting held on July 23-26, 2005 at Alappuzha, Kerala)

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 - 30, 2005, pays its respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and democratic movement who passed away during the period since our last General Council Meeting held at Alappuzha (Kerala) in July 2005.

This meeting expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Com. Bikash Chowdhury MP, member of the Working Committee and an able organizer of the coal workers on 1st August. The meeting also expresses the sad demise of Com. Kaiser Imam, secretary of Bihar State Committee of CITU, who died of a massive heart attack. The meeting pays respectful homage to the departed leaders.

This meeting pays its respectful homage to the former president of India, Sri K R Narayanan, who left after a long record of distinguished service to the nation. The meeting also condoles the death of veteran communist leader Com. P. K. Vasudevan Nair, the leader of the CPI Group in Parliament. Meeting pays its respectful homage to the departed leader.

ON HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 - 30, 2005, respectfully remembers the courageous sacrifice of those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade unions, peasants, agricultural labour, youth, students and women who left a permanent impression on the democratic movement as a whole and continue to be a constant source of inspiration to the working class in their struggle against exploitation as well as against separatist, divisive and communal forces safeguarding the unity of the people and integrity of the nation.

This meeting recalls the firm determination with which innumerable comrades of the democratic movement embraced martyrdom confronting the heinous and ghastly attacks of the goondas, henchmen and the employer nexus on the Honda Motor Cycle Workers of Gurgaon (Haryana) and Jharkhand, condemning the barbarous act.

This meeting expresses its heartfelt sympathies at the loss of innocent lives and cattle in different parts of the country due to devastating floods and incessant rain and demands adequate and quick relief to the affected people.

This meeting strongly condemns the heinous attacks perpetrated by the terrorists and divisive forces through series of bomb attacks in Delhi. It also condemns the attacks perpetrated against Dalits and lower castes as in Jammu (Jharkhand) and elsewhere and demands stringent punishment to those responsible.

This meeting expresses its deepest sympathies with the innumerable victims of the massive earthquake in Jammu & Kashmir rendering thousands of people homeless besides the death toll of over 1200. The Working Committee appeals for liberal help to the victims.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 – 30, 2005, pays its respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and democratic movement who passed away during the period since our last General Council meeting held at Allapuzha (Kerala) in July 2005.

This meeting expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Com. Bikash Chowdhury MP, and a member of Working Committee and an able organizer of the coal workers on 1st August. The meeting also mourns the sad demise of Com. Kaiser Imam, secretary of Bihar State Committee of CITU, who died of massive heart attack. The meeting pays respectful homage to the departed leaders

This meeting pays its respectful homage to the former president of India, Shri K R Narayanan, who died after a long record of distinguished service to the nation. The meeting also condoles the death of veteran communist leader Com. P K Vasudevan Nair, the leader of the CPI Group in Parliament. Meeting pays its respectful homage to the departed leader.

ON HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 – 30, 2005, respectfully remembers the courageous sacrifice of those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade unions, peasants, agricultural labour, youth, students and women who left a permanent impression on the democratic movement as a whole and continue to be a constant source of inspiration to the working class in their struggle against exploitation as well as against separatist, divisive and communal forces safeguarding the unity of the people and integrity of the nation.

This meeting recalls the firm determination with which innumerable comrades of the democratic movement embraced martyrdom confronting the heinous and ghastly attacks of the political gangsters, the police and the employer nexus on the Honda Motor Cycle Workers of Gurgaon (Haryana) and severely condemns the barbarous act.

This meeting expresses its heartfelt sympathies at the loss of innocent lives and cattle in different parts of the country due to devastating floods and incessant rains and demands adequate and quick relief to the affected families.

This meeting strongly condemns the heinous attacks perpetrated by the terrorists and divisive forces through series of bomb attacks in Delhi. It also condemns the attacks perpetrated against Dalits and lower castes as in Gohana (Haryana) and elsewhere and demands stringent punishment to those responsible.

This meeting expresses its deepest sympathies with the innumerable victims of the massive earthquake in Jammu & Kashmir rendering thousands of people homeless besides the death toll of over 1200. The Working Committee appeals for liberal help to the victims.

ON CONDOLENCE

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 - 30, 2005, pays its respectful homage to all the leaders, cadres and activists of the working class and democratic movement who passed away during the period since our last General Council meeting held at Alappuzha (Kerala) in July 2005.

This meeting expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of Com. Bikash Chowdhury MP, a member of Working Committee and an able organizer of the coal workers on 1st August. The meeting also mourns the sad demise of Com. Kaiser Imam, secretary of Bihar State Committee of CITU, who died of massive heart attack. The meeting pays respectful homage to the departed leaders

This meeting pays its respectful homage to the former president of India, Shri K. R. Narayanan, who died after a long record of distinguished service to the nation. The meeting also condoles the death of veteran communist leader Com. P. K. Vasudevan Nair, the leader of the CPI Group in Parliament. Meeting pays its respectful homage to the departed leader.

ON HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

This meeting of the CITU Working Committee, being held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 - 30, 2005, respectfully remembers the courageous sacrifice of those leaders, cadres and activists of the trade unions, peasants, agricultural labour, youth, students and women who left a permanent impression on the democratic movement as a whole and continue to be a constant source of inspiration to the working class in their struggle against exploitation as well as against separatist, divisive and communal forces safeguarding the unity of the people and integrity of the nation.

This meeting recalls the firm determination with which innumerable comrades of the democratic movement embraced martyrdom confronting the heinous and ghastly attacks of the political gangsters, the police and the employer nexus on the Honda Motor Cycle Workers of Gurgaon (Haryana) and severely condemns the barbarous act.

This meeting expresses its heartfelt sympathies at the loss of innocent lives and cattle in different parts of the country due to devastating floods and incessant rains and demands adequate and quick relief to the affected families.

This meeting strongly condemns the heinous attacks perpetrated by the terrorists and divisive forces through series of bomb attacks in Delhi. It also condemns the attacks perpetrated against Dalits and lower castes as in Coimbatore (Kerala) and elsewhere and demands stringent punishment to those responsible.

This meeting expresses its deepest sympathies with the innumerable victims of the massive earthquakes in Jammu & Kashmir rendering thousands of people homeless besides the death toll of over 1200. The Working Committee appeals for liberal help to the victims.

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

Meeting of the Working Committee

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

December 28 – 30, 2005

Information Document

40TH SESSION OF THE INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE- DECEMBER 9-10, 2005

Views/Comments of Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) on Agenda Items

GENERAL

The **Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)** deplores the inordinate delay in convening the present session of the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), which has resulted in skipping the session due in the year 2004.

The **CITU** also takes exceptions to several of the recent actions initiated by the present government.

The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) adopted by the present government, inter – alia, stated: **“The UPA Government firmly believes that labour-management relations in our country must be marked by consultations, cooperation and consensus, not confrontation. Tripartite consultations with trade unions and industry on all proposals concerning them will be actively pursued”**

Besides, the Prime Minister while presenting the Shram Awards on 4th October, 2004 noted: “The last few years have seen the phenomenon of jobless growth and we need to reverse this trend so that more growth translates into meaningful results for the working classes”. He added: “Structural reforms in a democracy, to be durable, must involve consultation with all stakeholders, particularly the workers and trade unions. Our government is committed to reforms with a human face. The working classes of our country have my assurance that we shall never pursue a path, which affects adversely the interests of the workers and the toiling masses of our country”.

These commitments reflected a commendable attitude. But, the practice of UPA governance has, unfortunately, **not** matched this attitude.

The NCMP also assured, **“Rights and benefits earned by workers, including the right to strike according to law, will not be taken away or curtailed”**. But, during the past year and half, the government had not taken any action on the most pressing demand of the trade union movement that the Government should take effective steps to negate the pernicious impact of - and clear the impasse created by - the Supreme Court verdict, dated August 6, 2003, against the right to strike of the government employees, as well as other workers.

A plethora of decisions have been taken on issues of serious concern to the working classes without any consultation whatsoever. From proceeding to disinvest up to 49 per cent of the government holding in public sector enterprises, despite the NCMP commitment of not privatising profit-making PSUs, to the launch of banking sector ‘reforms’ of mega mergers and facilitating take over by foreign banks of Indian private sector banks, unilateral and arbitrary moves are afoot, throwing to winds the aforesaid commitments. The move for a “Bill to be introduced to amend section 66 of the factories Act, 1948 to provide flexibility in working hours of women” is yet another move sans consultations.

The government resorted to the Ordinance route for the establishment of a Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), toeing the retrograde NDA line of privatising pension funds and

diverting the contributions to the speculative stock markets. The government has also declared its intention to open the 'pension sector' for FDI, along with retail trade and mining sectors!

The process to privatise the Delhi and Mumbai airports, in the name of modernisation through the private-public-partnership is vigorously being taken forward. The Union cabinet has moved for corporatisation of Security Press and government mints, with eventual privatisation in mind.

The chorus for labour law changes had been revived, reportedly at the instance of the Prime Minister himself.

In an unusual move, the Secretary, Labour & Employment, Government of India, has initiated a move on "Making Labour Markets Flexible – Suggestions for Consideration", which is nothing but echoing the employers' demands for unfettered rights for 'hire & fire'.

Two Bills, both pertaining to basic labour rights, have been introduced in Parliament without any consultation with the trade unions.

The Bill titled "The Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2005" provides for exemptions to employers in furnishing various returns, registers, statements, mostly pertaining to employees and employment conditions, under various labour laws.

The Bill titled, "Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bill 2005" contains dangerous provisions for taking away a large section of workers engaged in the Small and Medium Enterprises out of the purview of labour laws.

The Ministry of Labour has contemptuously violated the assurance, given on the floor of the Parliament, to rescind the NDA government notification permitting a new classification of "Fixed Term Employment Workmen".

The central government has flatly ruled out any consideration of the demand for the setting up of the Sixth Pay Commission for government employees.

The UPA government took the extreme step of deciding (by majority in the CBT) to reduce the interest rate on EPF from 9.5 to 8.5 per cent, with the Prime Minister in its wake intervening, during August 2004, to assure that the interest rate would be maintained at 9.5 per cent. But, the Finance Ministry took a dubious route of pressurising the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation to dip into the Special Reserve Fund to sustain the interest rate at 9.5 per cent up to the year 2004 – 05. This has led to a situation where the interest rate is again slated to be reduced further during the current year.

The Finance Ministry is getting ready with its plan to migrate to the EET model of subjecting to taxation all kind of savings instruments, provident funds, various small savings schemes, insurance claims etc., thereby imposing further financial burdens on all workers and the vast community of small savings public.

Attempts are on to release a new series of Consumer Price Index with 2001 as the base year, while the unanimous concerns voiced by the central Trade Unions Organisations remain to be addressed.

We stop here for the sake of brevity. All these are a blatant violation of the solemn commitments made

in the NCMP and constitute an attack against the hard won rights of the workers. We urge the government to desist from pursuing any further such an anti-labour policy-regime.

Before dealing with the specific agenda items tabled for discussion in the present session, we wish to make two preliminary observations.

The **CITU**, in the memorandum incorporating our views and comments on the agenda items of the thirty-ninth session of the Indian labour Conference held on October 16 – 18, 2003, took strong exception to giving a go by to the time-honoured practice of incorporating the report on action taken on the conclusions of the previous session(s) of the ILC as a part of the agenda of every session of the ILC, a practice followed up to the 37th session of the ILC held during May 2001. While strongly urging the agenda item “Action Taken on the Conclusions of the previous Sessions of the ILC” should invariably find place in every ILC, we had insisted that adequate care be taken to ensure that such lapses do not recur in future. Despite that, the agenda papers, currently circulated for the 40th session of the ILC, has deliberately omitted “action taken report” in the agenda.

Again, during the last session of the ILC, we recorded our appreciation for increasing the duration of the session to three days and emphasised the need to maintain this duration for the future sessions of the ILC as well. But, sadly the present session, though meeting after a long gap of over two years, had been restricted to just two days, despite the heavy agenda items tabled. We take exceptions to these aspects.

AGENDA ITEM I: “SOCIAL SECURITY FOR UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WORKERS COVERING THEIR SERVICE CONDITION, SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER BENEFITS”

While the **Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)** welcomes the move to take up this agenda for detailed deliberations in the ILC, there are certain glaring omissions on the part of the government to address even the very recommendations of the previous sessions of the ILC on the self same subject.

In particular, we desire to draw attention to some of the specific recommendations of the Committee on NCL Recommendations regarding Unorganised Labour of the thirty-ninth session of the Indian labour Conference, 2003.

The report of the said Committee circulated as part of the Summary Record of the 39th ILC included, inter-alia, the following among its eighteen point recommendations:

“The Committee felt that the recommendations of the technical group on umbrella legislation for the unorganised sector, prepared in the context of the last year’s (2002) National Seminar could have been suitably incorporated while drafting the Bill. This Committee had recommended a separate law for the agricultural workers as well as adequate safeguards for ensuring minimum wage security, which addressed the lacunae in the present Minimum Wages Act. Perhaps this Bill; could incorporate enabling provisions for a separate agricultural workers initiative in due course. ...”

“The trade union representatives also felt that much more detailed ground level tripartite consultations are a necessary prerequisite before the Bill is posed to the legislature.”

“The Committee suggested that consequential amendments be made to the draft Bill on the basis of these suggestions, before it is posed to the legislature.”

Unfortunately, the government had not attempted to have such a detailed ground level tripartite consultations during this long interregnum. It had repeatedly circulated different versions of the draft Bill for eliciting the views and suggestions from the Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs). But, the unanimous inputs provided by the CTUOs at various stages yet remain to be addressed for the most part.

The agenda note only places the different drafts in Annexure I to IV with a bald suggestion that the *'modalities for adequate social security through the Unorganised Sector Workers Bill may be discussed'*.

The agenda note refers to a decision of the Union Cabinet in its meeting on November 6, 2003 that 'the Ministry of Labour in the first instance should prepare a comprehensive scheme in consultation with the Ministry of Finance'. The scheme thus prepared viz. the Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Scheme – 2003 was launched, which could not be implemented properly due to the absence of statutory support and non-availability of implementing infrastructure. The Scheme had admittedly proved not viable because contribution from employers was not forthcoming. The present drafts annexed to the agenda note also leaves the issue of framing social security schemes for the unorganised workers wide open for the administrative structures envisaged in the Bill(s) to frame in future. This in our view will make the core issue of social security for the unorganised sector workers a non-starter. We therefore urge that the scheme proper should be worked out prior hand, in the light of the experience gained during the 'implementation' of the now defunct 'Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Scheme – 2003'.

Again, the agenda note states: 'The Ministry is, presently, working on an insurance scheme for these workers in consultation with LIC.' A review of the now defunct 'Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Scheme – 2003', prepared by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, showed the contributions collected there under from the workers were just sufficient to buy the health insurance cover, leaving no corpus for the pension scheme for these workers. In this backdrop, it would be unwise to put in place a Bill without concretely working out both the health insurance and pension schemes with clear-cut provisions for appropriate resources.

In this connection we are extremely unhappy over the proposal as contained in the agenda note that ***'legislation on agricultural workers could appropriately be left to the State Governments to act upon.'***

The CTUOs have repeatedly been emphasising the need for enactment of a comprehensive legislation for agricultural workers, which proposal has been lingering for over several years.

The NCMP adopted by the present government had also categorically committed: **"The UPA administration will ensure the fullest implementation of minimum wage laws for farm Labour. A comprehensive protective legislation will be enacted for all agricultural workers"**. The proposal in the agenda note, in our view, tantamount to reneging on this commitment. The lack of consensus over this issue is based upon an exercise embarked far back in 2000 and it is a matter of regret that the present government did not even make an attempt to build a consensus on this vital issue, notwithstanding the above NCMP commitment.

Moreover, the draft prepared by the National Commission of Enterprises in Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) seeks to incorporate a separate part comprising conditions of work of the unorganised sector wage worker (agriculture). It is not clear whether this aspect is also under consideration of the government.

The various drafts annexed to the agenda note suggest establishment of a national Social Security Authority and issue of a unique Social Security Identity Number for the unorganised sector workers.

The issue of social safety net was discussed in the 38th session of the Indian Labour Conference held in New Delhi on September 28-29, 2002. The conclusions presented to the concluding plenary of the ILC session, by the Committee, which discussed this agenda, inter-alia, noted:

"The ILC emphasised the need to urgently evolve a National Social Security Policy covering all sections of workers. It also urged the establishment of a 'National Social Security Authority' under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister with adequate representation to all social partners.

"Public expenditure by the Government on social security measures is merely 1.8% of the GDP in India. Many other countries are spending much more. The expenditure on social security should be increased by 1 to 2 per cent of GDP annually, till a satisfactory social safety net is in place.

"The existing social security provisions are considered inadequate in as much as 92% of the workers in the country are out of coverage. In such a situation, there is an urgent need to extend social security to the workers in the unorganised sector.

"All the labour legislations relating to social security should be consolidated and one comprehensive social security law needs to be enacted.

"Contributions towards social security should be by the Government, employers and the employees. In a welfare state, the commitment on the part of the Government to take care of social security of the workers is more essential.

"The existing social insurance schemes should be modified and made more effective.

"All the safety related social needs of workers, viz, health care, unemployment benefits, old age benefit, accident compensation, skill development, safety, etc., should be addressed.

"Steps should be initiated for achieving functional and administrative integration of the existing institutions/agencies administering various social security benefits. This would result in increasing the coverage and also avoid duplication of benefits.

"The key issue facing the country today is lack of an adequate safety net for workers who lose employment. It was felt that an insurance scheme to provide minimum financial assistance to such class of workers till they find alternative employment could be introduced in consultation with all the stakeholders. However, initially it could cover a reasonable duration of unemployment.

"Healthcare provided by ESIC suffers from several weaknesses. The ILC recommended improving the health care system after exploring different options, better coordination of health services and reduction of administrative cost."

The ILC also approved the above conclusions unanimously. It is noteworthy that the ILC could reach unanimity only on this item of agenda.

The CTUOs in their unanimous inputs provided at different stages have also emphasised these aspects. The agenda note record the view of the CTUOs that *"there should not only be liberal funding by the*

Central Government but it should set apart 3 % of the GDP for social security scheme for the workers". But, this has not met with any response from the government. We are, therefore, of the view that unless these core issues of social security are fully addressed, the proposed Bill would not be a meaningful legislation.

We urge that this aspect of social security for the unorganised sector workers should aim at fulfilling the commitment in the NCMP, which reads as under: **"The UPA Government is firmly committed to ensuring the welfare and well-being of all workers, particularly those in the unorganised sector who constitute 93 per cent of our workforce. Social security, health insurance and other schemes for such workers like weavers, handloom workers, fishermen and fisherwomen, toddy tappers, leather workers, plantation labour, beedi workers, etc will be expanded"**.

We also express our dissatisfaction over the failure of the government to factor into the proposed Bill the unanimous suggestions placed by the CTUOs. We wish to draw the attention of the government to the following specific suggestion jointly placed by the CTUOs in their recent communication:

"We wish to emphasise that there is a need to synthesise the two draft Bills of the NCEUS with the revised draft Bill of the Ministry of Labour (forwarded with the June 2005 communication) and dovetail the unanimous inputs provided by the CTUOs into it. While doing so, utmost care should be taken to factor in the unanimous conclusions arrived at the National Seminar on Unorganised Sector Labour held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on November 7 – 8, 2002 and the comments and suggestions so far furnished by the Central Trade Union Organisations jointly and severally".

We suggest that a Working Group comprising the representatives of the CTUOs be constituted by the ILC to finalise the Draft Bill as suggested above.

AGENDA ITEM II: "AMENDMENT OF LABOUR LAWS"

'SECTION-1: AMENDMENT OF WAGE RELATED LABOUR LAWS'

The NCMP had stated the position of the present government on this subject as under:

"The UPA rejects the idea of automatic hire and fire. It recognises that some changes in labour laws may be required, but such changes must fully protect the interests of workers and families and must take place after full consultation with trade unions. The UPA will pursue a dialogue with industry and trade unions on this issue before coming up with specific proposals. However, labour laws other than the Industrial Dispute Act that create an Inspector Raj will be re-examined and procedures harmonised and streamlined".

At the outset, we had, in our general comments, expressed our displeasure over several moves, initiated by the present government, which have not been in conformity with this solemn commitment. We only hope that at least henceforth the government will exercise due restraint and refrain from making any unilateral and arbitrary moves, adversely affecting the interest of labour.

We note from the agenda note that the Ministry of Labour has decided not to go in for category-wise amalgamation of the existing labour laws as suggested by Second National Commission on Labour (SNCL). But, we wish to emphasise that efforts should be made to integrate the various labour laws into one single 'Labour Code'. We are of the view that the draft of such an integrated 'Labour Code' presented by the Indian Labour Law Association years back could form the basis of further discussion in this regard.

The 33rd session of the ILC noted that different wage ceilings exist for various benefits under different labour laws and desired that the Ministry of Labour should prepare a draft statement on wage ceilings and place it before the Standing Labour Committee (SLC). While placing such a statement before the thirty-fifth session of the SLC, the government pointed out: *'it will not be desirable to have the same wage ceiling under all labour legislations'*. It was also reported in that SLC that the Government proposed to abolish the wage ceiling under the Payment of Wages Act. But, we find that instead of abolishing the government has only hiked the wage ceiling under this Act to Rs. 6500 per month. The SLC was also informed: *"The Government is aware of the need to continuously monitor the question of wage ceiling under different labour legislations and to revise them wherever considered necessary."* We find that such monitoring and revision had not been undertaken on a continuous basis.

The trade union movement in the country had all along demanded that there should be uniform definition of 'workman', 'industry' etc. in all labour legislations. It has also been insisting that all labour legislations should have universal application and towards that the existing parameters like the number of workers and income ceilings should be abolished in a phased manner.

Notwithstanding this principled stand, the CITU and in fact all the trade unions in the country have been of the considered opinion that the present wage ceilings in various labour legislations have become obsolete in the present day income levels of the workers for whom they are intended to apply. Hence, the upward revision of the existing wage-ceilings in all the labour laws should be decided on the basis of rise in the price index from the date of its last revision and thereafter the said ceiling should be inflation-indexed.

The current upward revision of ceilings in the Payment of Wages Act 1936 should be reworked on the basis of above parameters. It may be noted in this context that the wage ceiling under Employees State Insurance Act has also been revised upwards to Rs 7500/- and the government is reportedly contemplating further increase of the same. There is no sound logic as such behind stipulation of different ceilings in different labour laws.

Amendment of **Payment Bonus Act 1965** for removal of the obsolescence of various ceilings provisioned under the same has been pending since long. It is high time that it should not be delayed further and CITU suggests amendment of the Act by way of removal of all pay-ceilings.

In respect of amendments suggested in the **Minimum Wages Act 1948**, the CITU urges that the Act must incorporate clearly defined parameters for fixing the minimum wages by the State Government as well as by the Central Government to avoid arbitrariness in the same wage-fixing exercise. Such parameters should be based on formulations made by the 15th Indian Labour Conference together with the direction given by Raptakos Brett judgment. The Act also must provide for statutory periodic inspection on the implementation of the Act by the enforcement agency and a time-bound dispute solution machinery along with stringent provisions of penalty for violation, since this Act is the victim of violation by the employers to the highest degree directly hitting at the livelihood of the majority of the workforce in the country.

In respect of specific amendments suggested in the agenda note in respect of the Minimum Wages Act, our specific suggestions are:

1. Amendment in section 11(2) (at Sl. no 6 of the Annexure) should read as "The wages may be paid in cash except agricultural operations where it can be either wholly or partly in kind as decided by

the appropriate governments”.

2. Section 27 of the Act (ref: Sl. 19) should be kept unchanged.

(Addition to the Schedule may be made by notification, any deletion or alteration should require clearance by Parliament)

AGENDA ITEM II: “AMENDMENT OF LABOUR LAWS”

‘SECTION-2: INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ACT, 1947’

The NCMP commitment, as cited at the beginning of our comments under this agenda item earlier, categorically seeks to keep out the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 from the purview of the proposed exercise on “**some changes in labour laws**” that “**may be required**”. We urge the government not to violate this commitment in the NCMP. Without prejudice to this basic stance, we proceed to offer some comments on what is contained in the agenda note under this Section.

In respect of amendments suggested in the **Industrial Disputes Act 1947**, the CITU is constrained to note that the government has adopted the charter of demands submitted by the Employers organisations on the issue as its own while proposing most of the changes in the ID Act while the proposals made by the trade unions have been totally ignored. Almost all the Central Trade Unions have jointly conveyed their opinions on almost the identical proposals sent by the Labour Ministry on the same issues vide their joint communication dated October 28, 2005. Unfortunately, the Labour Ministry preferred in its wisdom to totally ignore the unanimous opinion of the trade union movement. The tenor of the proposals made in the agenda note in respect of basic changes in the ID Act unfortunately reflects ganging up of the two social partners, the government and the employers against the third partner, the workers.

CITU resents such an approach and records its rejection to the same. CITU also records that such an approach is totally unwarranted in view of the commitment made in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP).

To be specific, CITU does not agree with the concept of making the non-completion of the exercise under ‘Grievance Redressal Procedure’, at the enterprise level, an embargo for raising of industrial disputes and commencement of conciliation proceedings as proposed by the agenda note.

Secondly, CITU opposes the very idea of declaring the industries/establishments in Special Economic Zones, Export Processing Zones and 100% Export Oriented Undertakings as ‘public utility services’ under ID Act. CITU also maintains that the establishments pursuing profit should be kept out of the purview of consideration as ‘public utility services’ or ‘essential services’. The approach behind the proposals made in the agenda note aims at liberally branding all kinds establishments as ‘public utility services’ or ‘essential services’ in order to restrain trade union activities and curtail labour rights irrespective of the fact whether those establishments are having any real import with public utility or essentiality of services or not. CITU rejects such an approach outright.

Thirdly, the proposal for amendment of section 9A of the ID Act aims at converting the basic spirit of the provisions for ‘notice of change’ into mere intimation thereby giving the employers unfettered power to unilaterally change the service conditions of the employees/workers at their will. CITU cannot agree to such amendment of section 9A including that pertaining to amendment of the fourth schedule related to the concerned Section.

The proposal for direct reference of disputes connected with Termination/Dismissal/Retrenchment/

Discharge to Industrial Tribunal may be agreed to but the same should not be pre-conditioned by completion/exhaustion of the Grievance Redressal Process as mentioned in the agenda note.

The proposal made in the agenda note (item X, page 70) on amendment of special provisions relating to lay-off, retrenchment and closure in the chapter VB of the ID Act is also not acceptable as the same tantamount to introduction of hire & fire regime in more than 85% of the establishments in the organized sector itself. The NCMP also rejects such an approach altogether. The proposal for enhancing the retrenchment compensation may be considered separately without linking the same to the proposal made under Para X.

CITU suggests that the provision for empowering governments to grant exemption from the purview of any or all provisions of the ID Act should be dropped altogether.

In the era of globalisation driven economic policy regime, the working people are the hardest hit. Their livelihood has become most vulnerable owing to changes in the business scenario. All the available data and studies on the post globalisation scenario compiled and prepared both within the country and abroad established beyond doubt, one crude fact. The productivity of the workers increased substantially and their earnings have simultaneously gone down in real terms along with phenomenal increase in joblessness both among the workers and fresh entrants in the job market. Quality of employment has also gone down substantially. The size of permanent and regular workforce have declined drastically while casual and contract employment increased in large proportion reflecting sharp decline in quality of employment and severe decent-work deficit. In this background, the overall profit has been increasing by leaps and bounds. In such a paradoxical situation, all exercises for labour law changes must be oriented towards widening the protection coverage to the most vulnerable section—the workers in the instant case. CITU, therefore, cites the following suggestions as example for such directional changes in the legislative exercises pertaining to labour:

- The employment level in an establishment for not requiring prior permission for retrenchment and closure as provided in the ID Act should be reduced from existing 100 to 20
- All Labour Laws must have universal coverage, i.e., there should be no stipulation on minimum employment level of any establishment for granting coverage by all Labour Laws
- The provision for granting exemption to any establishment either in public or in private sector should be dropped from all labour legislations
- Provisions for regular statutory periodic inspection should be incorporated in all labour related legislations, wherever it does not exist.
- The Minimum Wages Act to be amended to ensure statutory periodic revision of basic wages along with automatic revision of the DA component linked to changes in price index.
- Wage ceilings in Payment of Bonus Act, Payment of Wages Act, Workmen's Compensation Act etc to be removed.
- Comprehensive Legislation on service conditions, job-protection and social security for Unorganised Sector Workers and Agricultural Workers
- Legislations for negating the pernicious impact of Supreme Court Judgment on "right to strike", the SC judgment nullifying earlier SC verdict on regularisation of contract workers deployed on permanent nature of jobs and also the recent judgment nullifying the right to 'equal wages for equal work'

These are only illustrative not exhaustive.

CITU urges upon the government to reorient their exercise on labour law reform in line with the suggestions made hereinabove and the direction emerging therefrom to formulate proposals for an effective tripartite dialogue to facilitate consensus.