

The CGIL's GLOBAL INITIATIVE

Guidelines for the political and organizational re-definition of the International Department

The crisis of the neoliberal model of globalization

We are in the midst of a profound systemic and long term crisis of the structure of the global capitalist economy; a crisis which is at the same time economic, financial and monetary.

The "*risk society*" is undergoing deep demographic changes along with a growing scarcity of food, energy, mineral resources, potable water, arable land and damages caused by the climatic emergency. Human activity has far surpassed nature's limits of regeneration and biological reserves, thus destroying the future. The "ecological footprint" has reached a level of 2.1, but the planet's resources continue to be sacked and the food disaster risks exterminating hundreds of millions of people. An ageing global population is a testimony to the successes of modern medicine and the social state, but only a radical change in the current development model will allow us to meet the challenges which this poses.

At the same time, the "global order" has again been challenged after the transformations due to the second world war and the end of the "cold war". The global economic-financial structure gave the United States the role of the holder of the global reserve currency and main architect of IMF (International Monetary Fund) policies in a system of fixed exchange rates and limited convertibility to gold.

The unilateral declaration of the end of convertibility of the dollar at a fixed rate for gold in 1971 signaled the end of the Breton Woods accords and the beginning of the "dollar standard" and from a "consenting" hegemony to an ever more unilateral domination by the United States. This domination spread to the military sphere with the proclamation of the right of intervention to defend US interests which was escalated after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001.

The global acceptance of the neoliberal economy, supported by the fall of the "true communism" of Eastern Europe, was accompanied by ideological support for "*free market fundamentalism*": the dogma of the auto-regulatory capacity of markets. All regulatory intervention was to be removed as interference which weakened the markets.

The pursuit of *shareholder value* in the past 20 years has promoted short term financial gains in the extreme. A "*structural unemployment*", to contain inflation, and a promotion of inequality were theorized as necessary, through a "*fiscal revolution*" which favored higher income individuals in order to stimulate economic entrepreneurship.

But the decision which signaled the passage from the gold standard and regulated capitalism to the turbulence of unregulated financial capitalism, was the financial institution of the Washington Consensus which promoted total freedom in the movement of capital and which set off financial globalization.

Neo-liberal ideology affirmed the inevitability of competition of the global market which would necessitate a lowering of wages, worsening working conditions, lowering standards of living and an increase in precarious jobs. For this reason, in the past 30 years, there has been a global increase in poverty and inequality and a re-distribution from the bottom towards the top and increased polarization of income and wealth which has undermined social cohesion.

Impoverishment and job precariousness have also exacerbated the shortage of solvent demand. This shortage couldn't be resolved through capital gains and financialization has brought on the current crisis which brings us to the crossroads with the neo-liberal model in one direction and a new ecologically and socially sustainable development model in the other.

In previous decades two different models of capitalism were put forth: the Anglo-Saxon model characterized by the supremacy of financial markets, the maximization of short term profits even at the expense of the stability of corporate growth on the one hand, and the Rhine Capitalism, defined as the "social market economy", characterized by the presence of public economic policies, the combining of bank-corporations, a lowering of shareholder profits in order to increase corporate development, medium to long term investment planning and paying attention to the needs of all corporate stakeholders on the other.

Deregulation of the financial markets has hampered the realization of Keynesian policies and has imposed the dominance of finance over production and has given the United States a double advantage: the domination of the global financial economy and a continuous influx of capital from other countries particularly China. But the fact that the country which held a global monetary and credit leadership position was at the same time the largest and fastest growing debtor created a fundamental imbalance, deteriorated the global financial system and progressively decoupled the financial economy from the real economy, and shifted resources towards speculative, short term instruments.

With the explosion of the financial bubble starting with sub-prime mortgages, and facing a general economic collapse, a gigantic government bailouts of banks and insurance companies were carried out in the United States, Europe, China and other countries. Central banks favored the dismantling of toxic financial instruments but put the cost on the backs of tax payers, increased deficits and cut back on social programs. The bailout and stimulus packages avoided a global collapse but they did not eliminate the causes of the crisis nor its disastrous effects on employment. The financial bubble has not yet been eliminated and its effects have only been pushed forward in time, transforming private debt into public debt and increasing the risk of inflation and future new bubbles.

Even the rescue of whole industries, in the presence of a global downturn, tends to create acute commercial conflicts, protectionist stances and retaliation. This emerged in the US which limited government aid to "buy American", and in France where the government, in contradiction to European legislation, tried to limit aid only to French companies. For almost a decade, on the other hand, the WTO negotiations of the so-called Doha round, has found increasing opposition.

Bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements increasingly take the place of global agreements.

These typically put a greater burden on developing nations causing elevated social tension and increasing inequality by trying to gain competitive advantage by increasing unemployment and the cost of labor.

This crisis seems to mark a definitive end to neo-liberal ideology and self-regulation of the markets. As in previous big crises, there is now a return to the real economy bringing the banking system back to its original purpose of intermediation and the collection of deposits and to a decisive government intervention in the economy, in production, in corporate capital and in redistribution policies.

The absorption of debt in the real economy is likely to require lots of time given the enormous quantities of "false" capital in circulation. In the '80s, the financial economy was equal to global GDP but in January 2008, global GDP was 55 trillion dollars, there were 531.2 trillion dollars of derivatives and 65 trillion dollars of CDs to which must be added all of the other financial products. This leads one to believe that there will be a long period of correction and economic stagnation: we

cannot assume that a cyclical recovery will occur and we risk prolonged systematic chaos with a chronic depression similar to the one suffered by Japan for several decades.

The decline of the economic power of the United States and the migration of the center of gravity of the global economy towards the East is made evident by the fact that in recent months, foreign investment made by developing nations in the West has overtaken Western investment in the rest of the world for the first time. The principal actors are sovereign wealth funds, owned by governments of countries with positive international trade balances (China in particular) which control massive quantities of capital derived from trade surpluses; these become decisive in the global financial equilibrium. They operate predominantly on global markets, sweeping up energy and mineral deposits, arable land, large industries and banks and bringing about the “nationalization” by foreign countries, in a new form of neocolonialism which modifies the traditional relationship between the state and the territory.

The dollar seems destined to lose its role as the global reserve currency. China, on the one hand, intends to sustain the value to protect its huge foreign currency reserves invested in US debt instruments (850 billion USD) and, on the other, it is diversifying its investments towards debt of European countries, is pushing to create a basket of reference currencies which include the Yuan, and is increasing commercial transactions based on the national currencies of the countries towards which it is exporting in South-South commerce.

In the face of the decline of the United States, today there doesn't seem to be any country which can aspire to be a successor. China, with an economy mostly based on exports, cannot drive the global economy. The emergence of the BRIC countries, with a new model of capitalistic accumulation in a mixed form which combines a growing presence of private multinationals and a strong government presence in the economic process, has brought about a strong change in the traditionally asymmetric center-periphery relationship in which developing nations depended on industrialized nations. On a productive level, China has emerged as the “factory of the world” to which Japan serves as a structure for financial services while India proposes itself as the “office of the world”, by specializing in commercial and administrative-IT services for the whole planet. Russia and Brazil are exporters of energy and other raw materials. But the roles and specializations of the emergent economies is rapidly changing. Their role in the global economy and their level of technological sophistication is growing, as is the breadth of South-South economic and commercial relationships.

In the current scenario there is a growing tendency for multilateralism which is however lacking efficacious political, economic, financial and monetary *governance*. The emergence of the G20 as the new instrument for global governance in the place of the declining G8 does not remove the necessity to redesign the whole system on a more stable and democratic basis. On the other hand, the idea of economic and monetary macro-areas is emerging (China, Japan, Korea and ASEAN; the evolution of Mercosur, etc.) and which may become the embryo for new regional political aggregations. The European Union, which is profoundly divided in terms of political strategy, risks being left out in the cold in a rapidly changing global situation despite still being the largest market and the strongest economy on the planet.

The crisis has reduced resources, lowered living conditions for the working classes (lower salaries, employment and social protection) and has restricted claims' room for the movements. There is a worsening of relationships between peoples, classes, genders, generations and between economy and nature. According to the ILO, 50 million jobs are at risk along with pensions and homes. Another

100 million people have been pushed below the poverty line, distancing us, perhaps forever, from the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals).

The state has become active once again, but primarily to convert the costs of saving financial capitalism from the private to the public sector. There is almost no indication of a return to collective interests like the defense of income and employment levels and promotion of the social state which have all characterized the democratic experience. It seems, instead, particularly in Europe, that policies aimed at additional salary, pension, employment and workers' rights cuts are prevalent.

It remains to be seen under which scenario we will come out of the crisis; some are regressive and authoritarian, others are lean towards a more advanced social model.

The World Social Forum reminds us that a *different world is possible*, but we have to fight to achieve it and block authoritarian regression.

In many emerging economies and developing countries (South America, India, Southeast Asia, Africa) we are seeing the birth of important movements against neoliberal economics. These movements are able to influence political and institutional policies, but in Europe the left and the progressive movements are generally in difficulty; the predominant movements are right wing, populist, racist and xenophobic. This makes Europe unable to pursue positive cooperation and development policies towards the Mediterranean countries where the revolts of 2011, regardless of their result, signal a profound crisis of authoritarian repressive regimes; regimes based on corruption and social inequality which have been sustained by European governments as illusory bulwarks against Islamic fundamentalism and unstoppable migratory flows. The inability to offer a positive solution to the Palestinian question and to the issue of the “war against terrorism” and aggression and occupation of countries historically and culturally tied to Arabs has further eroded the credibility of the United States and the majority of European Union countries with respect to the millions of youths who are the protagonists of the revolts in countries of the Southern Mediterranean. In response to the delicate transitions in Tunisia and Egypt, and the dramatic situation in Libya, an extraordinary European plan which can supply economic and political support for a implementing a democratic process which is linked to a new economic and social development model in the area is necessary.

The role of Trade Unions

Trade Unions are deeply involved in these processes. The crisis has hit the labour markets hard. In developed countries, unemployment has increased and salaries and the share of national income which wages represent has been lowered. Traditional forms of social protection, reduced by spending cuts or “dodged” by the creation of precarious jobs are not able to sufficiently protect those who have lost jobs or who are seeking employment. In emerging nations or in any case countries where there was economic growth even during the crisis, employment and wage increases have not kept pace with productivity gains. Full time work with permanent contracts and *decent work* according to ILO standards have not increased, particularly because of a lack of social safety nets. Excluding China, which has a particular trade union situation (the ACFTU reports spectacular growth in membership, reaching 230 million members today), the rate of unionization has progressively decreased in developed nations which have a longer tradition of Trade Unions. In developing nations, unionization has remained extremely low because of organizational limits, structural limitations of the labour markets and divisions within and weakness of the organizations themselves.

At the same time, however, the crisis has reinforced the common agenda of Trade Unions in different countries and has seen growing visibility, presence and coordination by the ITUC - International Trade Unions Confederation.

The foundation of the ITUC represents an important step forward and closure – even if not definitively – of the inheritance of the "cold war"; not only through the fusion of the two International Workers' Confederations whose separate existence became anachronistic, but also with the confluence of several important national Trade Unions Centers which had remained independent from International Organizations.

The birth of the ITUC and the explosion of the crisis have also created more cooperation and sharing of views not particularly with the WFTU but with Trade Unions – like the ACFTU – who, regardless their international affiliation, are necessary stakeholders in any coordinated actions in the global economy because of their true level of representation or because of the importance of their countries.

At least from the point of view of coordination and presence at institutional and global governance meetings, the ITUC, thanks to the important contribution in research and analysis given by the TUAC (the Trade Union Advisory Committee of the OECD), has certainly shown greater visibility and lobbying capacity with governments and International Organizations and promoting a greater role for the ILO itself. The effectiveness of actions at a global level cannot be separated from the ability of Trade Unions to influence the policies of their national governments: it is the governments who, in the end, take multilateral and international decisions and is at this level that weakness and, sometimes, the subordination to internal pressures weaken the actions of those same Trade Unions.

At the same time, even if frequently in a contradictory manner, the relationships between the ITUC, the ETUC and the International Trade Unions movement in general and other social movements have increasingly developed, in particular with the role of Brazilian CUT in the co-promotion of the World Social Forum which, starting in Latin America, has progressively involved movements from all other continents as well. The variegated and rich archipelago of alternative movements has deep connections with peace and anti-war movements which tragically characterize the first decade of the millennium; from Afghanistan to Iraq to various African nations. The CGIL, at least since the European Social Forum of Florence, has been a protagonist of the rich dialogue and link between Trade Unions and the movements, not only in Italy (where we will become important players with the ten year memorial of Genua), but also at an European and world level; we continue to work to create networks and meetings (Labour and Globalization, European Joint Social Conference, etc.) and to contribute fully to the involvement of the ETUC and ITUC.

Global policies of the CGIL

The contradiction between the global scope of the financial system and the national scope of the system of political power requires a jump-start of the economy through a series of public interventions of broader scope than national interventions and require global democratic governance. A democratic reform of the UN and overcoming the right of veto are fundamental if this organ is to become the embryo for a global government. The most plausible path seems to pass through the creation of unions within macro-regions like the European Union; these should unite in a global body which is able to govern economy and social and environmental dimensions. Trade Unions and social representatives must have the power to have a decisive role in the decision making process. The role of the ILO must also be reinforced so that it becomes a key player in the global institutions which form economic and trade policies (IMF, WB and WTO).

It would be helpful to take up the idea of Keynes, which was excluded at Bretton Woods, of a non-treasury non-hoardable currency dedicated exclusively to productive investment and trade exchanges and an independent world central bank with regulatory, supervisory power and control over global

markets, the mobility of capital, risk evaluation and global reserves, the governance of credit and international liquidity and public debt restructuring. This institution would supersede the existing “privately held” organs like the G8 and G20.

The tendency to form regional monetary unions is to be promoted to bring us down this path. To slow down speculation and market volatility, it is necessary to limit the movement of capital through administrative controls and the adoption of a Tax on Financial Transactions (as proposed by the ITUC) which makes speculation less profitable; the proceeds from the tax should be used to finance global public goods, the defense of the environment and to sustain a non-destructive development model.

Even on the European level it is necessary to create an European fund for investment and re-capitalization whose activities should not be limited to the financial system, but should be extended to cover health care, education, permanent training, research, innovation, infrastructure networks, energy saving and renewable energy. The proposal of the ETUC on Eurobonds should be supported. This instrument for debt management for member nations which leaves each nation responsibility for debt servicing and repayment of its own debt would eliminate the differences in spread between nations and reduce the speculative attacks which are crippling Greece, Ireland and Portugal but are also threatening Spain and could hit our country as well.

On an European and global scale, we must revive a political government of the economy cleansed of neo-liberal policies to carry out a proactive program in sustaining development. It's not enough to promote aggregated demand growth in Europe and world-wide. We need to go beyond this, and ask the question of *what, how, where and for whom we need to produce*, with direct State intervention to create an industrial policy aimed at recreating the development model so that it includes the creation of skilled jobs in a framework which is fair and includes sustainable environmental and social policies. To promote a new industrial policy – through a reversal of the current energy paradigm, saving non-renewable resources, protecting our environment, urban quality, the transport system, production and distribution of public and social goods, de-privatization of water resources, maintenance of public goods, artistic and landscape, public forests, buildings and waterways - direct State investments are necessary, particularly for those areas which cannot be sustained purely with policies based on privatization.

That is why it is unacceptable that the stronger European Nations, *in primis* Germany, want to impose ever more stringent automatic constraints on balances which limit or eliminate the possibility of quality public investment or use the crisis as an excuse to strengthen nationalistic policies instead of promoting the necessary economic and social equilibrium between the Nations of the European Union and particularly a balanced growth of the economies of Eastern and Southern Europe.

In order to propose a new social and economic model a radical rethinking of development indicators which take into consideration environmental and social sustainability is also necessary. Adding other parameters to GDP like indicators for income and wealth distribution and the use of parameters which measure social well-being and real wealth like *ecological footprint* and the Human Development Index can reinforce the idea that *another world is possible*. This will allow us to overcome the limitations of capitalistic interests and to promote a different type of society and a new model for development and social well-being, defend the environment and ensure life for future generations.

We must include goods which are not represented in GDP like the enormous value of social reproduction (that is more than half of all work; valuing the contributions of women who are

principally involved in producing it) and the availability of human and natural resources to stop their devastation and conserve resources to preserve them for future generations.

A new development model requires a re-evaluation of the “civilization of work” because the quality of production is dependent on the quality of work and therefore stable, protected and well-paid jobs. Income has to be redistributed world-wide and within each nation to sustain low and middle incomes in particular in order to promote more equality and also to increase the propensity for sustainable consumption and decrease those to financial saving. Social safety nets also must be strengthened: health care, social security, assistance and support for those who are not self-sufficient, training, gender policies and work-life balance are all fundamental drivers of development and can help create a society of social cohesion for all ages as suggested by the United Nations.

Redefining the guidelines for initiatives of the current International Department

The CGIL has a highly prestigious reputation on an international level due to its strength in Italy and to its recognized political/union coherence. At the same time, the Trade Union system in Italy and the system of industrial relations – now under attack in the “name” of subscribing to Anglo Saxon models – is an unusual “case” in the global context and in many ways even on a European level where the prevalent model is trade-unionism, negotiations are mostly at the company level and the Confederation's role is nonexistent or very limited.

Regarding CGIL culture, there is a growing understanding within the organization that, in an ever more inter-dependent globalized setting, things which happen outside of our nation have a direct effect on our daily work, while the European dimension has become and will become ever more “domestic”: the center of decision making for many issues has become Europe and this trend will only accelerate. But this knowledge of an increase in European and international commitment on all levels has not yet translated into initiatives which “incorporate” the global dimensions in our daily activities. Language, travel and cost problems tend to relegate global issues to a sort of “specialist” category, or mean that these types of issues are dealt with episodically, and outside of the strategic-political context which is the basis of all other trade union activity.

If we look at the wide array of international initiatives and commitments of all of our structures - even if they are disjointed – the big picture is one of great depth, richness and potential which needs depth in management and coordination to become more effective and to avoid fragmentation and inconsistencies.

In general, changes at a global level, the birth of the ITUC and the idea of a common agenda among Trade Unions requires that we make a quality leap and a redefinition of the role of our international arm starting with a renaming of the “International Department” to something which reflects the current situation.

We need broad consensus around “strategies” and “priorities”, better flow of information and knowledge, the rationalization of the resources directly involved, and high level coordination which will contribute to orienting individual initiatives within a common framework.

The better we coordinate, the more our global activities will be fruitful (and the more efficient we will be in terms of human and economic resources).

In order to encourage the creation, updating and sharing of the “strategic framework”, we need to constitute a “Council for Global and European Policies” which should be convened at least annually, which involves all CGIL structures in a discussion on and orientation of common goals; this is above and beyond dedicated sessions of the Steering Committee (Comitato Direttivo Nazionale).

Regarding involvement of European and international branches we must remember that in international activities it is even more important that people and organizations we deal with know with which structures and even with whom they need to dialogue. The wealth of our interactions and the complexity of our organization requires that the presentation of our organization must always evidence the appropriate contacts and functions.

Another important point of reference, considering the current structure of the International Department and the European Secretariat, is the interdependence and close relationship between global policies and European policies starting with a continuous exchange of information, to the necessity of regular meetings to exchange ideas, to the sharing of material of common interest (PERC – Pan European Regional Council, ASEM – Asia-Europe Meeting, Euromed, European trade policies, etc.), to the uniformity of the positions to the ETUC and the ITUC, assuming the unequivocal representation into the various international bodies.

In this sphere, an integration of the information tools specific to European and global policies should be implemented.

In general, political-organizational exchange should be promoted between all structures of the Confederation involved in international activities, first off with greater and more punctual distribution of information (the practice of a report for every meeting/international initiative should be implemented), and with greater periodicity (at least two or three times a year) of broad meetings of all people involved in international activities (what we could define as the *coordination of global policies*): department, European secretariat, other national departments, national federations, INCA (National Confederal Assistance Institute), Prosvil and the international cooperation network, etc.

Local organizations (starting with the regional offices and CdLM – metropolitan cities' offices) should be encouraged to find a responsible for international policies and international cooperation

(including de-centralized cooperation) if they do not already have one. The various local organizations should be coordinated (starting with existing relationships and initiatives for international solidarity) to focus on a specific geographic area and foreign Trade Unions, in strict coordination with the national Department.

We confirm our commitment to reinforce and enlarge the ITUC and the ETUC. Even with different situations, we are interested in improving their “bargaining” profiles.

For the ITUC, this means first of all the capacity to sustain the birth and growth of truly autonomous and representative Trade Unions in emerging and developing countries. Organizations which become better able to negotiate and work with greater attention to the internationalization of the economy, of trans-national companies, unionization and collective bargaining through the supply chain, in coordination with the GUFs.

Dialogue with International Institutions must move from being mainly “diplomatic” and for “lobbying” towards the construction of true “global” mobilization campaigns, starting with effective support for the FTT (Financial Transactions Tax) proposal.

As we have done in the past, we want to give great attention (and, in coordination with the ITUC's initiatives) great support, when possible, to Trade Unions which are working in areas with particularly difficult situations (Palestine, Maghreb, Western Sahara, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Nepal and Colombia for example). We intend on maintaining a stable, cooperative relationship with the regional offices of the ITUC, strengthening bilateral relationships with the “more influential” Trade Unions and with those Trade Unions with which we have a common outlook, and share ideas about South-South Trade Unions' experiences (for instance with SIGTUR).

For the ETUC, this means creating the conditions for greater autonomy from the European Commission to promote a profile of negotiations, over and above one of “social dialogue” which is too often separate from the true dynamics of working conditions in European countries. Even in this case, when participating in European decisions, particularly on Directives about labour issues, we must have greater capacity for mobilization and involving Trade Unions. In recent years there have been many initiatives for Europe wide mobilizations, but the levels of coordination and interaction with counterparts in individual countries (where, in different times, Trade Unions had to confront similar attacks to rights such as welfare) were insufficient. The attention given to the EWCs must be escalated and a discussion on the progressive construction of a real negotiations at a continental level must be started.

Our bilateral relations in good measure reflect what we affirmed for the ITUC, with increased emphasis on Trade Unions in the Mediterranean area and those of the Balkans as well as Eastern European Trade Unions.

Our interaction, moreover, should be also confirmed with Trade Unions which do not have any or similar to ours international affiliation.

In the activities and in the organization of the *Department for Global Policy*, transversal issues should take precedence.

- Our ability to intervene on internationalization of the economy and businesses must be improved, in alignment with the National Federations, to follow the themes of trade, foreign direct investments, multinationals, and therefore the activities of the TUAC, the WTO, the European trade policies through EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements) and FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) with greater continuity.

As far as the TUAC is concerned, greater continuity is needed of presence in the various groups and we must also increase sharing of information and the involvements of the Federations particularly in the light of the current revision of the Guidelines on Multinationals. The National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines was activated late and up till now inadequately by the government. It should be brought back to its "institutional" role and overcome the tendency to "drown" the GL in a foggy concept of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. It should be used effectively as the body for "monitoring" the international activities of Italian companies and for dealing the disputes over GL violations.

Support for the Federations when negotiating over the Italian presence overseas favors concrete collaboration with Trade Unions in the countries receiving Italian investments (and vice-versa for foreign investments in Italy) and its objective must be better bargaining capacity to favor all workers (both Italian and foreign).

- The "globalization of rights" is one of the basic tenets of Trade Unions actions at global level.

The ILO, through the definition and approval of International Conventions which regulate labour laws and through constant monitoring of the application of that laws, is the first institution to promote those rights. Even though during the neoliberal wave, entrepreneurs and many governments have tried to limit its fundamental mission on labour laws, the tripartite nature of the ILO and the role of Trade Unions and progressive governments have maintained and reinforced its position as an institution which produces universal rules, studies and analysis, work programs, cooperative projects focusing on *Decent Work*, employment, the fight against poverty and inequality and social protection as means to overcome the crisis.

It is because of the wide variety of themes which it deals with, our capacity to be active in the ILO offices and our ability to use the positive power of its initiatives has involved many parts of the CGIL.

Together with and interlaced with these activities, all initiatives for the defense anywhere for human rights and labour rights, in strict cooperation with the ITUC, on the one hand, and national (CIDU – Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights) and international (Human Rights Council of the UN) bodies, on the other, are central to our activities.

- The problems and fragmentation often found in Trade Union organizations globally are even more important to the movements and social alliances which represent one of the principal forces which have been critical of the neoliberal model (predicting many of the contradictions and unsustainable elements) and who constitute one of the central actors in the construction of an alternative society. For this reason, the CGIL is committed to the processes of the World Social Forum and the European Social Forum and to the experiences which link and mobilize Trade Unions and social networks and alliances. In Italy, notwithstanding a period of fragmentation, these experiences were and continue to be particularly rich, favoring discussions with important people and sectors of society; sometimes we differ in our political-cultural traditions but often with convergent views in analyses, objectives and proposals. Participation in the "Tavola della Pace" (Table for Peace), in the Italian coalition of the GCAP (Global Call to Action against Poverty), in initiatives and campaigns against the mafias, on public goods, of international solidarity, for fair trade in addition to themes of more direct interest like the elimination of child labour and the fight for migrants' rights and against human trafficking.

Policies for international cooperation

Cooperation remains an important instrument for the global policies of the CGIL. Confirming the value of projects for the promotion of sustainable development, bilateral and multilateral projects of Trade Union cooperation must be strengthened. The existing CGIL cooperation network is useful and necessary; it can be widened with the involvement of other local structures (within a coordinated partnership effort). It must be supplied with adequate development and operational capabilities in a framework of coordinated initiatives tied to the strategic priorities proposed by the CGIL.

From the point of view of resources, together with institutional channels (MAE – Foreign Affairs Ministry, decentralized cooperation, EU – with potentially greater coordination between the CGIL network of cooperation and the European Secretariat for European projects) we must increase our capability to collect internal resources, in a “partnership” relationship on projects with territorial and CAAF(CGIL fiscal assistance services) structures.

Our commitment to the Solidar network in Europe and to dedicated structure of the ITUC should be confirmed.

Policies regarding emigration of Italians

The CGIL has always been heavily involved in the reality of Italian emigration. There are about 4.5 million Italians signed up at the AIRE (the Italian registry office overseas) but not all Italians living overseas are registered. Italian emigration is now showing a new rise tendency, in particular from Southern Italy: many young people with precarious jobs look for stable, better paid jobs overseas. There is a similar trend among those who work in research, in Universities, in creative activities and in the arts which fields have a naturally global dimension. The CGIL has historically been present in emigration through political initiatives, relationships with Trade Unions in other countries, the activities of the SPI (National Federation of Italian Pensioners) for those who receive Italian pensions and above all through the services which the Inca institution provides to Italians or those of Italian origin as well as to immigrants who have worked in Italy. In the last five years, the government has reduced the already inadequate funds set aside for Italian emigrants by 50%. The result is the elimination of all policies aimed at the divulgation of the Italian language and culture and the loss of even the minimal guarantees for Italians who live as indigents in countries where welfare does not guarantee even minimal health care and social security. We are seeing, therefore, an acceleration in shuttering of consulates and the decline of the activities of Italian Cultural Institutes. The government has also delayed the election of the organization which represent Italians overseas (Comites) for two years, gravely weakening the functioning of this volunteer organizations. As a result, the renewal of the council of Italians overseas (CGIE) has been delayed. The right to vote to elect the eighteen members of Parliament who represent overseas Italians must be reinforced through measures which guarantee practicability and transparency. Greater coordination of all offices which work in the area of emigration would give to all of the CGIL more incisive and effective actions to guarantee Italians living abroad their rights as citizens which are now often denied them. In this context, protecting transborder-workers takes on particular relevance.

Finally, it is important to sustain actions with associations who value the dialogue between different cultures and experiences (starting with the “INSIEME” - “Together” associations).

Rome, March 23th, 2011