

# TNC UPDATE #18

## 02-2015



*A regular update of IUF TNC activity exclusively for IUF affiliates. More detail can be requested from the individual IUF staff person identified with each entry.*

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## AGRICULTURE

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### **Bananas:**

#### **Chiquita/Cutrale**

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On January 5, 2015 Chiquita was bought by Brazilian orange-juice maker **Cutrale Group** and its investment-firm partner, **Safra Group**. The deal combines Chiquita's bananas and Fresh Express packaged salads with Cutrale's oranges, apples and peaches.

Rapidly following on from the announcement that the deal had been concluded, Cutrale closed Chiquita's head office in Charlotte USA, making redundant the 320 staff based there.

The IUF already has some experience of Cutrale. Some years ago Cutrale bought a Coca-Cola Minute Maid plant in Florida and immediately started the process to de-recognize the IUF-affiliated Teamster union. In Brazil IUF affiliates have had to continually confront Cutrale's anti-union policy. The company has been taken to court for the low wage payments it made to orange harvesters and has been condemned by the Labor Court for discriminating against pregnant workers.

Whilst it appears there will be a meeting in March of the IUF/COLSIBA-Chiquita-Review Committee which monitors the international agreement with Chiquita the future of the entire process is clearly now uncertain.

Late last year in **Panama** IUF-affiliated SITRAIBANA reached a mutually satisfactory agreement with Chiquita following a lengthy strike. The International Agreement process helped secure this outcome for our members.

#### **Compagnie Fruitiere (CF)**

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Following the creation in 2014 of the **IUF's African Banana Workers Network**, the IUF held a workshop in Abidjan in October 2014 to focus on building trade union capacity to work on TNCs in West Africa. The workshop brought together

affiliates from Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana. The focus of the meeting was Compagnie Fruitiere, the main banana exporter from Africa. There are unions on all its plantations – the biggest of which is PHP in Cameroon with 6,000 workers. It was agreed that unions representing workers in CF would work together with the IUF to develop a more strategic approach to improving living and working conditions in the banana plantations.

## BEVERAGES

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### Coca-Cola

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IUF affiliates in **Italy**, Flai-CGIL, Fai-CISL and Uila-Uil mobilized workers and organized a strike for several hours in all sites of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company (HBC) on September 26, 2014 to protest a company plan that would lead to a reduction of 12 % of the workforce in Italy. A meeting between the management of CCHBC Italy and the trade unions that represent CCHBC workers was held on September 26. An agreement was signed between the unions and CCHBC which was ratified by the workforce on October 1. There are 89 fewer job losses from the original 249 announced. For 160 redundant positions, incentives were agreed based on volunteers.

The Coca-Cola Company, SABMiller PLC and Gutsche Family Investments (GFI, majority shareholders in Coca-Cola Sabco) have agreed to combine the bottling operations of their non-alcoholic and ready-to-drink beverages businesses in **Southern and East Africa**. The IUF is concerned that this deal will lead to negative organizational change and restructuring. We will urge affiliates in Africa region that are organized in Coca-Cola and SABMiller to inform us of any changes or effects on the employment or unions' positions arising from this major merger of operations. Please send the relevant information to [burcu.ayan@iuf.org](mailto:burcu.ayan@iuf.org).

The IUF affiliated Food, Beverages and Catering Union of **Germany** (NGG) passed a resolution about the business strategies of Coca-Cola Erfrischungsgetränke AG (CCE AG) and possible impacts of these strategies on Coca-Cola workers. You can find the resolution in the following languages: [English](#), [German](#) and [French](#).

The IUF-affiliated National Union of Workers of Bepensa Dominicana SA (Sinatrabedsa) and the Coca Cola in the **Dominican Republic**

(Bepensa) have begun negotiations. However Sinatrabedsa is not willing to renounce rights acquired during earlier collective bargaining negotiations. Read more [here](#).

The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) plans to cut up to 1,800 jobs across the globe over the coming weeks, as part of a \$3 billion cost-cutting drive. Redundancies will be significant at the company's headquarters in Atlanta and global regional offices where more than 10 percent of corporate staff could lose their jobs. The company states that bottling and distribution divisions will be largely unaffected for now.

The IUF has called on TCCC to engage with trade unions to guarantee the long-term sustainability of jobs in the Coca-Cola system by considering alternatives proposed by workers' representatives to avoid job cuts and outsourced labour.

### Coca-Cola Workers Alliance

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After long negotiations with The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) through the "Atlanta process" (a direct and permanent IUF and company engagement), IUF affiliates have secured 100% union membership in all three Coca-Cola bottling operations in **Guatemala** guaranteeing that all Coca-Cola bottling workers in Guatemala can now exercise their internationally recognized human right to be a union member. Of the three Coca-Cola plants in Guatemala, one was already represented by a union, and the other two have now signed collective-bargaining agreements. Read more [here](#).

In **Pakistan** after 10 months of local organising and campaigning activities (February to November 2014), raising issues with TCCC through the "Atlanta process" and meetings that took place in Istanbul between TCCC senior management, the Turkish bottler of Coca-Cola (CCI), the IUF Secretariat and the IUF Asia Pacific region, seven dismissed Coca Cola union leaders including Nasrullah Chohan, the President of the Lahore bottling plant union have been re-instated. The Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the IUF and Coca-Cola Pakistan Beverages Ltd also meant the withdrawal of company charges against 15 union members who were protesting management's scheme for early retirement and forced transfers. With the help of IUF, Coca Cola unions are now preparing for national collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiations. In 2015, this will lead to the first ever national CBA in Coca Cola Pakistan.

In **Hong Kong** IUF-affiliated Swire Beverages Union has signed a collective agreement with Coca-Cola's bottler for an employer and employee negotiating framework on October 17. An IUF team of affiliates from around the world has been raising union recognition and collective bargaining issues in Swire Beverages with corporate Coca-Cola management in its twice-yearly meetings with the company in Atlanta. Consistent support for our members' rights through this "Atlanta process" has helped to lay the foundations for respect for union rights locally in Hong Kong. The Swire Beverages (Coca-Cola) union, affiliated with the IUF and HKCTU - the only independent trade union centre in China - was the first union to strike in support of the democracy movement in Hong Kong in September 2014.

IUF **Korean** affiliates at Coca-Cola in Anyang rallied on January 20, to show their support for HKCTU leaders and others threatened by the state as a result of their fight for democracy.

Coca-Cola workers union in **Bolivia** joined the IUF and the Latin American Federation of Coca Cola workers (FELATRAC) and the union is seeking international support to tackle issues around outsourcing and long working hours. Read more [here](#).

Issues remain with Coca-Cola Amatil's distribution centre in **Western Australia**. Progress had been made with CCA and the employer and the union was recognized and convinced it was moving to negotiate a collective agreement. However the process has now stalled. The continued dismissal of a union activist at the facility continues to be an issue.

## **PepsiCo**

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Supported by the IUF, the PepsiCo (Frito-Lay) Workers Action Committee in **West Bengal, India** continues to hold actions in defence of their members' rights. The Action Committee recently organized a protest in front of PepsiCo's Kolkata production plant, with the participation of their families and supporters that generated considerable attention as the plant is located very near to a major national highway. Read more [here](#).

At a recent Caribbean meeting PepsiCo distribution workers in Guyana who are members of the IUF-affiliated Clerical & Commercial Workers' Union (CCWU) pledged support to their Indian sisters and brothers.

In **Nicaragua**, workers at the Nicaraguan logistics company marketing and distributing

products made by PepsiCo's flagship Central American bottler Embotelladora Nacional S.A. (ENSA) formed a union in Managua. Within 24 hours the company had fired 70 members and leaders. Read the full story [here](#).

Both cases will be the subject of discussions between the IUF and PepsiCo corporate management.

In **Australia** members of the IUF-affiliated National Union of Workers (NUW) at a Smith's snack foods warehouse in the Brisbane suburb of Tingalpa voted to ban overtime, paperwork and unloading trucks on November 21 in a dispute over equal treatment and occupied the canteen beginning November 27 after being told they would not be paid while industrial action continued. The IUF urged affiliates to show solidarity with the NUW at Smith's by signing their petition. Members of NUW have ended their occupation of the lunchroom after signing an agreement that puts in place an equal pay system for casual workers and converts casual to permanent positions after 12 months. The IUF thanks affiliates who signed the international petition in support of NUW members.

A worker at the Olam International sugar mill in Kolhapur which supplies to major food transnationals in **India**, including PepsiCo, was killed by falling sugar bags in a workplace accident on August 8 which also severely injured two other workers. After publishing a news story on the IUF website about the fatal accident, PepsiCo responded with an explanation posted on Business and human rights resource center. Under tremendous pressure Olam management proposed a Memorandum of Understanding on health and safety. The union at the sugar mill is negotiating to secure improved language on the responsibility of the company to guarantee a safe workplace, specific references to health and safety rights, free provision of adequate PPE and training as well as the rights of union safety representatives and the right to convene a joint health & safety committee to investigate health and safety issues.

## **BREWERIES**

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### **AB Inbev**

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Two IUF affiliates in **Uruguay**, Union of Northern Workers and Employees (SOEN) and the Gremial Centre of Maltería Uruguay (CGMU) organised in ABInBev operations have negotiated an agreement with the company

seeking to end discriminatory practices. Read more [here](#).

## **Heineken**

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Through the support of Teamsters Canada, the IUF Secretariat is investigating allegations of human rights violations in Heineken's **Haiti** operations. 1200 workers at the Heineken plant (called BRANA) have been trying to form a union but the company has been actively discouraging workers from exercising their right to do so.

## **SABMiller**

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IUF organised a **1st International Conference for unions representing SABMiller employees** to improve active trade union coordination on November 3-4, 2014 in Greensboro, North Carolina-USA. IUF affiliates identified key issues as anti-union culture of the company, outsourcing and precarious employment, deteriorating health & safety standards, World Class Manufacturing based on benchmarking and performance based wage system. Unions further agreed on action points for more effective communication and coordination, for winning recognition from SABMiller and for better mobilization.

The IUF Secretariat drafted a manifesto of demands from SABMiller unions, including recognition of the IUF as the international organization of SABMiller unions mandated to raise rights issues in different countries with SABMiller corporate management.

In **Honduras**, Cerveceria Hondurena fails to comply with working hours and risks workers' safety through excessive workloads. SABMiller breaches the collective agreement and other legal and constitutional provisions and deliberately and maliciously generates tension and division between workers. IUF affiliates who joined the international conference for unions representing SAB Miller employees have sent a joint letter to the SABMiller CEO calling on the company to intervene in Honduras and to start negotiating a new collective agreement with the IUF affiliated Honduras Union of Beverage and Related Industry Workers as soon as possible. Demands include deduction of union dues of pre-sellers and re-assignment back to their hometowns for those who have been displaced in retaliation for becoming union members.

The IUF secretariat will continue its efforts to pressure SABMiller Honduras to respect human rights in Honduras.

Visit our [Beer Workers' Web Site](#) for more brewery sector news.

## **CATERING**

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### **Autogrill**

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The German Food Workers Union (NGG) successfully concluded their fight for a first-ever collective agreement at Autogrill **Germany**, where workers in Bavaria and Thuringia held sporadic strikes between April and September 2014

On September 9 Autogrill Germany announced it would be joining the national employer organization in the sector, which would bring Autogrill employees under the national collective agreement for the sector. The IUF supported the Autogrill workers through two online campaigns.

### **Sodexo**

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The IUF continues to support the fight by ODT in **Morocco** for the reinstatement of its Sodexo union General Secretary who was unjustly dismissed following his union activity. The company has replaced its Morocco country director and the IUF is planning the next steps with the ODT in the fight for justice.

In **India** former members of the Sodexo Pune union who lost jobs when Sodexo lost the contract with General Motors have unsuccessfully sought alternative employment with the company despite there being vacancies appropriate to their skills and experience.

The break in employment between Sodexo contracts denies Indian workers accumulated benefits in their provident funds

These are two of the issues the IUF will be discussing with Sodexo when a meeting is held in the company's national office in Mumbai in February.

## **DAIRY DIVISION**

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### **Danone**

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The joint investigation into employment practices at Danone will continue with visits planned to **Morocco** and **Mexico** in preparation for a

discussion at the next Global Meeting, scheduled on 9-10 April 2015.

69 workers of Danone Dumex **Malaysia** resigned from Chemical Workers Union of Malaya (CWUM) and joined the IUF-affiliated Food Industry Employees Union (FIEU) in June 2014 but the local management refused to recognize FIEU. Following IUF intervention with Danone global management, Danone Dumex Malaysia sent a letter to FIEU confirming recognition of the union as the collective bargaining unit in October and FIEU started to bargain a collective bargaining agreement.

The next full **Danone International CIC meeting** will be organized in Geneva on 19-22 October 2015.

Teamsters Local 997 members at Danone's **Fort Worth, Texas**, plant have ratified an agreement with the company, winning participation rights in the Western Conference of Teamsters pension fund, the largest multi-employer pension plan in the United States. The three-year agreement also includes wage increases and health care protections.

### **Monitoring IUF/Danone Agreements**

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The visit to the **United States**, including meetings at Dannon USA headquarters and the headquarters of IUF affiliates BCTGM and Teamsters, took place in October 2014. On this occasion, the joint IUF/Danone monitoring team was joined by 2 HR directors from Dannon USA. The plants visited were in Minster, Ohio, organized by BCTGM, and in Fort Worth, Texas, organized by the Teamsters. At both sites, the IUF representative participated in animated meetings with union representatives, which were then followed by de-briefing sessions with the HR representatives from Danone Paris headquarters and Dannon USA.

The venues and schedule of 2015 monitoring visits is still under discussion between the IUF and Danone.

### **Fonterra**

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Issues relating to timely provision of information and good faith bargaining during restructuring were raised by the IUF with Fonterra on behalf of our **Chilean** affiliate Fenatral. The company agreed to approach Fenatral with proposals to establish regular and formal dialogue between Fonterra (Soprole) and Fenatral at a national level in Chile.

### **Schreiber Foods**

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The IUF Secretariat is building a relationship with international management at Schreiber Foods Company. The secretariat will collect information from the affiliates organized at its operations in order to formalise future contact with Schreiber's international management structure. Schreiber Foods is expanding its operations largely through acquisitions and, following its earlier purchase of Danone plants in Europe has now bought Senoble International's subsidiaries in **Spain** and **Slovakia** (three plants).

In **India** the Schreiber Dynamix employees union signed a collective bargaining agreement which was negotiated for 16 months and won 45 permanent jobs and a significant increase in the monthly wages of permanent workers

### **Vita Milk**

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Also in **India** 225 precarious workers in August 2014 initiated a fight to win permanent jobs in **Vita Milk** factory in the northern state of Haryana with the guidance from DEFOI (see below)

### **IUF Dairy Division**

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### **Dairy Employees Federation of India (DEFOI)**

The Dairy Employees Federation of India has enjoyed a number of successes over the last 2 years (see above) as it strengthens its base and prioritizes its education program to develop leadership skills for women members and to face the challenge of an influx of TNC's into the Indian dairy sector.

### **FAST FOOD**

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### **McDonald's**

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In **Korea**, McDonald's dismissed a shop steward, Gahyun Lee, on September 15, 2014, following her visit to the US earlier that month to support the national action by fast food workers. Management had previously warned her about union activity in May. The IUF launched an urgent action campaign which has seen more than 10,000 emails sent to the company. Affiliates have also expressed support by sending pictures and video urging McDonald's to reinstate the worker and talk to the union.

# FOOD PROCESSING

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## **Mondelez (ex-Kraft)**

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In the last TNC update (#17) a settlement was reported in the long running fight for the 5 union leaders dismissed by Mondelez in Alexandria, **Egypt** with all 5 leaders reinstated into their previous employment.

Mondelez have since decided to close the plant in Alexandria and concentrate production in the nearby factory at Borg el Arab. Our affiliate, the Independent Trade Union of Workers Group Mondelez Egypt Foods, has negotiated the transfer of most workers to Borg El Arab but the process is not yet complete with the future employment of some of the union executive still in doubt. Despite the establishment of a management sponsored alternative union at Borg el Arab, our affiliate continues to grow and now has 177 members at the Borg el Arab factory. The IUF is supporting its affiliate to secure the jobs of union leaders and ensure all positions at Borg el Arab are filled by workers displaced at Alexandria who wish to continue employment with the company.

## **Nestlé**

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In 2014, two IUF/Nestlé Global Meetings took place: in May and in October. Issues on the agenda included health & safety with a focus on the prevalence of repetitive strain injuries amongst Nestlé workers in Brazil; Nestlé's "living wage initiative"; trade union rights in North America and ongoing rights violation issues in Latin America and Asia. The IUF emphasized that living wages are best secured through the process of collective bargaining and any 'living wage initiative should be linked to the promotion of collective bargaining as the wage setting mechanism.

The working groups set up to investigate employment practices and gender equality reported at both meetings. In the case of the working group on employment practices, there is evidence that Nestlé is applying solutions unilaterally. The purpose of our work on this group is to promote and facilitate local collective bargaining to increase permanent work. The working group is currently in abeyance until we are able to support any affiliate who is in a dispute concerning employment practices. In the case of the working group on gender

equality and its work on a training tool on non-discrimination, we will seek guidance from the IUF Women's Committee as to substance and the involvement of resource persons from our affiliates, as well as the development of the training tool.

The IUF is in discussions with Nestlé concerning allegations of rights violations in **Turkey** and **Korea**. 28 workers dismissed last summer by Nestlé from its multi-product factory at Karacebey in Bursa, Turkey are supported by the IUF in demanding their jobs back. They were dismissed after protesting the outcome of collective bargaining and exercising their right to join an alternative union.

The Nestlé Lotte joint venture in Korea has refused to implement a Supreme Court ruling on the calculation of bonus payments as ordinary pay and collective bargaining has stalled after more than 6 months of protracted negotiations. There have been strikes, marches and pickets by the union in protest at the flagrant breach of the law by the company. The IUF has demanded Nestlé comply with Korean law through adherence to the Supreme Court decision, negotiate a timetable for back pay with the union and re-enter bargaining in good faith to conclude the collective agreement.

In conjunction with the **Nestlé European Works Council Meeting**, 17-19 November 2014, the union delegates held a workshop to examine working methods and identify priorities for future work. The input from the working groups will be evaluated and later presented to European management.

On January 13, the IUF facilitated an informal meeting with Nestlé European HR management and representatives of **Italian affiliates** FAI-CISL, FLAI-CGIL and UILA-UIL.

## **United Biscuits/Yildiz Holding**

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Turkey's largest food group Yildiz Holding has bought UK-based cookies and snacks maker United Biscuits on November 3, 2014. At present, there are a number of disputes in the **UK** and **Turkey**. There is a dispute over working practices and threats to outsource production at Aintree, UK and United Biscuits is to axe jobs at its McVitie's plant in Glasgow. 9 workers employed at a Ülker factory part of Yildiz Holding in Istanbul were dismissed on October 27, 2014 after they chose to resign from their existing union and join Gıda-İs (Food industry workers' union of Turkey affiliated with DISK Confederation). 8 of these dismissed workers have picketed in front of the factory at Topkapı-

Istanbul for 40 days calling on Ülker Company to immediately reinstate them and respect their rights to freedom of association.

The IUF Secretariat organised a conference call for affiliates representing workers at United Biscuits and Yildiz Holding operations and identified ways to get better organized internationally inside United Biscuits and Yildiz Holding. As part of the plan that emerged an international delegation of unions will visit the picket line of dismissed Ülker workers and show solidarity with their ongoing struggle on February 17, 2015.

## **Unilever**

IUF intervention helped secure a first-ever framework agreement establishing a process of annual wage negotiations between the IUF-affiliated Novoprof and management at Unilever's ice cream factory in Omsk, **Russia**.

With support from the IUF, the union was established following strikes in 2012 by women workers who had been outsourced to a labour hire agency but continued doing the same jobs at the factory on inferior terms. The union won recognition and two agreements on insourcing which brought the workers back as permanent direct employees at their previous wages and benefits. When the union demanded wage negotiations in 2013, management rejected the demand to adjust wages through collective bargaining, asserting that it was under no legal obligation to do so. The agreement on an agreed procedure for negotiating wages was signed on October 31.

Following agreement with Unilever in 2014 on the need for a company-wide policy on sexual harassment, the IUF and interested affiliates have developed a proposed text on a joint IUF-Unilever policy and submitted it to the company with the goal of reaching an agreement on policies and procedures in this area. The text should be discussed at the next IUF-Unilever meeting in Spring 2015.

The IUF is in ongoing negotiations with Unilever about two of its major suppliers **Crown Holdings** and, a more substantial supplier for Unilever, **Huhtamaki**. This is in support of human rights campaigns by the United Steelworkers (USA) in Canada and the United Metal Workers' Union in Turkey in the case of Crown and the USW in Commerce California in the case of Huhtamaki.

## **HOTEL CHAINS**

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After a long struggle, unions representing workers in Novotel Mississauga in **Canada** and Novotel Cotonou in Benin have been able to negotiate their first collective agreements. In 2012 the Canada Labor Relations Board ruled Accor must accept "automatic certification" of the union. This was followed by a productive meeting in January 2014 between the IUF General Secretary, Unite Here Local 75 and local management and a CBA was signed in November 2014. At the Novotel North York Toronto hotel Accor has agreed to voluntary union recognition and a final agreement is expected to be signed soon. At Novotel Ottawa, Unite Here Local 261 after difficult and protracted negotiations has reached a six month long neutrality agreement to run an organizing program and then hold a vote for union recognition in May 2015.

In Conotou, **Benin**, IUF affiliate Synovo fought for more than 13 years to get its first CBA. The agreement has been signed and now sent to the Labour Minister for formal ratification and Accor has begun implementation of some aspects of the Agreement.

### **MELIÁ**

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In January IUF General Secretary met informally with national management in the **UK** to support Unite the Union's efforts to organize Melia's hotels in London. The company will allow the union to talk to workers, in the spirit of the International Workers' Rights Agreement.

In Latin America, the HRCT President Norberto Latorre, the Latin American Regional Secretary Gerardo Iglesias and the Secretariat have agreed to start an organizing initiative in the **Dominican Republic**. An initial visit, which will include a workshop for activists, should take place in the next weeks.

### **Starwood**

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As violations of workers' rights continue in the **Maldives** and abuses have been committed also in **Ethiopia** and **Fiji**, all in Sheraton-branded hotels, the Secretariat has decided to launch a

campaign against Starwood to end these human rights violations.

The Secretariat has twice contacted Starwood management but received no response. As a result we will be asking IUF members, especially those with members in the hotel sector, to start taking actions in support of the campaign.

## ***IUF Housekeepers' Campaign***

### ***“Make my workplace safe” – Dignity for Hotel Housekeepers***

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Thousands of hotel workers in dozens of cities around the world took part in the ***IUF Global Week of Action*** from December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, to highlight the abusive, unacceptable working conditions of housekeeping staff and to demand a safe, secure working environment from a global industry which depends on their efforts. IUF affiliates and their members are determined to change the situation, and during that week highlighted the urgent need for industry-wide change with a variety of actions, including workplace and public demonstrations, media events and educational activities. A power point presentation with photos of the various actions is available [here](#).

## **MEAT**

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### ***Hormel***

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In the **USA**, Meat TNC Hormel dismissed UFCW shop steward Jen Pulaski in retaliation for her standing up for the rights of fellow workers. The UFCW launched a campaign for her reinstatement which was supported by an IUF urgent action online campaign. **Danish** affiliate NNF expressed solidarity with Jen and the UFCW by publicizing her case to their members and requesting that **Danish Crown** protest to Hormel about the dismissal. Danish Crown produces Spam products for Hormel. UFCW negotiations with Hormel relating to the dismissal are ongoing.

### **JBS**

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JBS, the world's largest meat processor, and the largest distributor of fresh meat products in Australia, late last year acquired the **Primo Group**, the largest producer of small goods in **Australia** and **New Zealand**. This adds a further 3000 workers to the 8000 people JBS

currently employs in Australia. IUF affiliate the AMIEU represents workers in both companies in Australia and is carefully monitoring the merger to protect and promote direct hire regular employment. The JBS purchase of Primo gives the company a new platform to launch sales into the Asian market.

JBS now has an interest in the export oriented **New Zealand** meat industry which suffers from an overcapacity of processing facilities. At the time of the acquisition Primo in NZ was the target for a successful organizing campaign by IUF affiliate the **EPMU**.

The IUF regional office in Latin America offered full solidarity support to 5,000 members of **SINTIACR** in **Brazil** striking in December in protest at the breakdown of bargaining with JBS in the Brazilian State of Santa Caterina. The company requested conciliation in the Labour Court.

## **TOBACCO**

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### ***Imperial Tobacco***

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As part of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's campaign for rights and decent working and living conditions for migrant tobacco workers in the **USA**, FLOC president Baldemar Velasquez met with representatives of Imperial Tobacco in London in January 2015. The meeting was facilitated by the two Members of Parliament who travelled to North Carolina in July 2014 to see firsthand how the rights of tobacco farmworkers are being abused.

### ***Japan Tobacco International***

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On 7 October 2014, Japan Tobacco announced plans to restructure operations in Europe, which would eliminate the jobs of 872 workers in **Northern Ireland**; 132 in **Belgium** and 100 workers in **Germany** by the year 2017.

With local discussions ongoing, the IUF, EFFAT and our affiliates in the UK, Belgium and Germany have pledged full support for any proposals put forward and have requested a meeting with JTI international management. Coordination is taking place through regular conference calls and exchange of information. A solidarity visit to UNITE and its members at JTI in Northern Ireland took place on January 15 with representatives from the IUF, EFFAT, NGG (Germany) and CSC Alimentation (Belgium).