

## VERY SUCCESSFUL GENERAL CONFERENCE IN PORTUGAL

**Aslak Leesland**

Oslo, October 14, 2003

To All Affiliates

IFWEA's 19th General Conference was a resounding success. It ended in an optimistic tone on Sunday October 5 after having elected a new leadership, agreed on a budget and adopted a strategic plan for the coming four years. All decisions were unanimous, and there are excellent prospects for solving the debt crisis.

The new President is João Proença of UGT- Portugal. New General Secretary from January 1, 2004 is **David Spooner** who will be working full-time for the organisation with a full-time assistant. The office will be moved to Manchester, England.

IFWEA will from then on have to stand on its own financially, without resorting to any open or hidden support from a host organisation.

Furthermore, the Constitution was changed at the conference, allowing the organisation to operate under English law, but without changing the independent basis of IFWEA. The organisation remains under the full control of its affiliates.

The following were elected as members of the new Executive Committee:

- **President**  
Joao Proenca, UGT-Portugal
- **General Secretary:**  
David Spooner
- **Vice-Presidents:**  
Sahra Ryklief, LRS, South Africa  
Namrata Bali, SEWA, India  
Karoly György, MSZOSZ, Hungary  
José Pereira Dos Santos, Forca Sindical, Brazil  
Susan Schurman, George Meany Center, USA
- **Members:**  
Mike Chungu, WEAZ, Zambia  
José Marcos-Sánchez, PLADES, Peru  
Elizabeth Tang, HKCTU, Hong Kong/China  
Bente Gyp Wilhelmsen, AOF, Norway

- Jorma Turunen, TSL, Finland  
Michel Bradley, GFTU, UK  
Rudolf Helfrich, DAA, Germany  
Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, ABF, Sweden  
David Joyce, ICTU, Ireland  
Hasan Barghouthi, DWRC, Palestine  
Giampiero Alhadeff, SOLIDAR  
A representative from the Global Union Federations
- **Internal auditors:**  
Björn Wall, ABF, Sweden  
Joe Holly, WEA, England & Scotland

Aslak Leesland will continue to act as General Secretary on a part-time basis until the end of this year based in AOF's office in Oslo.

Conference adopted an extensive strategic plan of activities for the coming period in which, with the increased capacity of the Secretariat, all affiliates can expect a far higher level of regular communications, news and opportunities to engage in education programmes. In addition to endorsing the continuing growth of regional activity, Conference also supported the launch of new common action around Basic Skills, Trade Union Education on Workers' Rights, Workers' Education to Support Organisation in the Informal Economy, and Women Workers' Education provision.

### **The budget is very tight.**

2004 will be a very difficult year financially. Traditionally, only about 80 % of expected affiliation fees are paid, It is crucial to raise this percentage. In order to start implementing the work plan from January, it is absolutely necessary that all affiliates that have not yet paid the affiliation fee for 2003 do so now, and the fee for 2004 early next year. Otherwise, the new Secretariat could stop functioning immediately for lack of cash.

A reminder of the affiliation fee for 2003 will be sent towards the end of October to affiliates that have not paid yet. All affiliates will be invoiced for 2004 before Christmas this year.

In Solidarity

Aslak Leesland  
Acting General Secretary