

## Highlight Global unemployment hits highest levels on record, warns UN labour agency

The mounting number of jobless people around the world has climbed to an historic high with nearly 212 million unemployed last year - or 6.6 per cent of the global workforce - and the situation in Europe is likely to worsen before it gets better, according to a new United Nations report. In its annual Global Employment Trends report the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that 34 million more people joined the ranks of the unemployed in 2008 and 2009, pushing the total number of out-of-work adults to a record high. The report painted a gloomy assessment for the labour market this year, predicting that unemployment figures will remain high through 2010 with an additional 3 million people losing their jobs in the European Union (EU) and other developed economies, while unemployment stabilises or declines only slightly in other regions.

[More details](#)

### FORMAL ECONOMY

#### Mexican Electrical Workers Fighting for All Workers

Members of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) are vowing to fight as long as it takes to defeat the government's heavy-handed, anti-union moves to break its independent union. Humberto Montes de Oca, SME's interior secretary, and union Health Secretary Pipino Cuevas said workers are determined to fight the privatization. Montes said "We are fighting for the rights of the 44,000 workers. We are using all means to resist the oppression of [the Mexican government]" Last October, federal agents and police seized the country's second largest electrical power distributor, Luz y Fuerza (Central Light and Power). President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa used an executive decree to dissolve the utility, but, in doing so, he also fired the entire 44,000-person workforce and disbanded their union, the 95-year-old SME, the country's oldest union and a frequent critic of the government's policies.

[More Details](#)

#### Workers Suffer as Japan Airlines Goes Bankrupt, Applies for Bailout

One of the more vulnerable to global financial crisis, the airline industry can't catch a break. Faced with in-flight terrorist plots, newer and more competitive airline packages and a general recession, airlines are struggling with revenue, security concerns and customer dissatisfaction. For the past decade airline employees have been feeling the pinch as carriers increasingly tightened their budgets. Japan Airlines (JAL) roiled its workforce with reports of 15,700 lay-offs and huge pension concessions.

Those issues have long been growing among U.S. airlines, but now the problem has extended to Japan's flagship carrier. Last Tuesday, Japan Airlines, Asia's largest airline by revenue, filed for bankruptcy protection after facing a debt load of over \$25 billion. The petition was the largest-ever filed in Japan by a non-financial company and the fourth largest corporate failure. In a move that largely resembles recent corporate blunders in the U.S., the petition sought a state-led bailout to undergo massive restructuring. Japanese taxpayers are footing the bill along the way as JAL unions suffer huge setbacks in job losses and benefits.

[More Details](#)

### INFORMAL ECONOMY

#### Migrants, Support Groups Push ILO Convention for Domestic Workers

On 04 November 2009, grassroots migrants associations, service providers, trade unions, including migrants advocates from the academe held a dialogue and strategy meeting in Athens, Greece. It positively came out with a communiqué in support for the recognition of domestic work as work, and specifically in pushed towards an ILO Convention for domestic workers. Participants came from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Philippines, Canada, US and Senegal. The activity was initiated and hosted by the CARAM-ASIA, Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD) and the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) who are regional members of the United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights (UFDWR).

[More Details](#)

### MIGRATION AND LABOUR

#### Housemaids' issue heats up

Saudi Arabia is seeking to stop the recruitment of foreign housemaids coming from certain countries. "We are serious in imposing a ban on the import of housemaids from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Cambodia and Vietnam," said Ali Al-Quraishi, vice president of the local Labour Recruitment Committee. "The main reason for considering such a ban is that the labour recruiters in those countries are not qualified enough to supply housemaids that suit the local culture and tradition. There is no proper selection process of housemaids to suit this market, nor are they given orientation before they leave their countries," he added.

Sri Lankan officials said they were not happy with the increasing number of complaints of abuse from their female migrant workers. "Some of them said that they are subjected to physical abuse and were harassed with delayed or non-payment of salaries, and made to work till late hours," said an official at the Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE).

[More Details](#)

#### Government Reaches Out to Thai Women in Finland

The Interior Ministry wants to reach out to Thai women who have moved to Finland in order to better inform them of their rights and give them information about living in this country. This would include giving them information in their native language about workers' rights and responsibilities and other legal and social matters. The aim is to reach these women as soon as they arrive in the country. The move specially targets women in "Thai massage" parlours, who often lead restricted lives and have no access to this kind of helpful information. Thai massage parlours are frequently fronts for brothels. The committee is basing its goals on reports that Thai women in Finland who have been marginalised often become the victims of domestic violence. Many of them live for years without learning the language and completely isolated from Finnish society.

[More Details](#)

### TRADE AND LABOUR

#### ILO: Decisiveness that saved banks is needed to save and create jobs

(International Metalworkers' Federation-IMF)

A jobless recovery is the scenario that appears from the just released ILO "Global Employment Trends 2010 Report". International Labour Organization 2010 data on employment trends do not come as a surprise. Still they are frightening as they show that there is no hope that employment rates will return soon to pre-crisis levels. Furthermore employment conditions are deteriorating constantly both in the North and in the South, with a shift everywhere to precariously employment arrangements.

The global crisis should and could be the opportunity to bring work back to the centre of economy. Trade unions are demanding that a new model of growth centered on quality employment be the exit strategy from the crisis. On the contrary, stimulus and emergency measures have addressed corporate and banking and financial sectors interests rather than objectives of recovery in the labour market. Stimulus plans must urgently address employment generation as the primary goal and the condition for economic recovery.

[More Details](#)

#### Garment worker unions demand higher wages in Cambodia

Chun Mum Thol, President of Cambodian Unions Federation (CUF) announced that the garment union representatives are to approach the industry leaders and the government to US \$93 per month to hike minimum wages in the sector from US \$50 per month to US \$93 per month to enable workers to have a better living standard. The issue is up for debate at a labour consultation meet in succeeding week.

The salary of \$93 per month was deemed sufficient to allow workers to pay for basic needs such as food, house rent, electricity and water. But industry officials questioned the demand for such a wage hike in light of the global economic downturn's impact on the garment sector.

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### CAW'S CALENDAR 2010



*Job and wage security for all*

2010

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WOMEN WORKERS AT THE FRONTLINE OF SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS. 

To download:



*Freedom of association & Rights to organise*

2010

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*Social security and child care for women workers*

2010

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