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Increasing alliances between union leaderships and political parties

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT

The year of 2012 started with a minimum wage of R\$ 622,00. A nominal growth of 211% and a real growth, higher than inflation, of 65,96%, from 2002, when the minimum wage was equal to R\$ 200,00, and now, ten years later.

Results of paternalist actions of the government or actions of a generous elite? Neither one of them.



All of the advances that we achieved in the minimum wage and in several other social, political and economic issues resulted from the democratic inclusion of Brazilian trade union leaderships.

It's not a coincidence that these advances were preceded by the fact that the elected president of Brazil was an ex-metallurgist and an ex-unionist. It was not by chance that we managed to get a recognition of the trade union centrals.

Brazilian trade union centrals learned how to articulate themselves through the civic resistance to the military dictatorship. By the re-democratization of Brazil, it was clear that through consistent actions within the National Congress we were able to ensure, for example, a real raise of 65,96% in the minimum wage, that would benefit, at one time, 48 millions of workers, out of which 13 millions of retired workers and pensioners.

It's becoming clearer that in the Brazilian democratic game, without the votes and the involvement of the social pyramid base, parties have little chances of keeping and / or increasing their respective slices of power.

And that is why some of our colleagues and me, affiliated with the Social Democratic Party (PSD). It might be added, to our decision, the possibility of interacting with independence, loftiness and patriotism with colleagues that were historically organized in other bodies at the National Congress, it excites us to call out national leaderships to pay more attention to a democratic inclusion, which is only possible through an alliance of the trade union movement with political parties.

It's more and more essential that we achieve a supporting point, that should be created through an increase on the range of alliances between the trade union militancy and partisan bodies, so that we may change, quickly and favorably, our social and economic realities.

We will be able, through these alliances between trade union leaderships and political parties, to answer our expectations and consolidate the social and economic advances, with income distribution through jobs with respectable salaries, and public policies that enable development with social justice.

Brazil might achieve more

New minimum wage proves that it's possible to advance towards the constitutional minimum wage

Marcos Afonso de Oliveira, press secretary of UGT

The minimum wage required to supply basic needs for a worker, such as food, housing, health, education, clothing, hygiene, transportation, leisure and social security, as determined under the Federal Constitution, should be R\$ 2.349,26. These numbers were calculated by the Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies (Dieese). That is, 3,77 times the current minimum wage of R\$ 622,00, which is effective as of January, 01, 2012.



The impact that is expected in economy and in the lives of at least 48 million Brazilian people should, at the same time, be used as a warning of a Brazil that would be achieved with a minimum wage that would respect the Constitution and that would improve, automatically, the quality of life, either social, educational and cultural, of millions of Brazilians that are still kept in the survival routine, and aren't able to have access to true citizenship, or provide their children with it.

We still salute the current minimum wage that rescues part of a historical debt that Brazil had with its most humble workers. But we should be aware and we should be mobilized to achieve more, which is not only possible but defined under our Constitution.

R\$ 622 minimum wage accumulates 66% of real raise since 2002

The Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies (Dieese), calculates that, since 2002, the minimum wage had a 211% nominal growth, raising from R\$ 200 to R\$ 622, as of today. If the inflation of this period is not considered, there was a 65,96% real gain. The percentage of real raise of 2012 (9,2%) is the second largest of the last decade, according to the Law number 12.382/2011, which establishes the restitution of loss of the inflation rate of the previous year plus the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that was researched last year by IBGE.

Technical note of Dieese estimates that the minimum wage should be equal to "the highest real value of the series plus annual rates since 1984". The department will also calculate that with the new minimum wage, it will be possible to purchase 2,25 basic needs assistance kits, the highest proportion since 1979.

IRS is still unfair

Reajuste de 4,5% na Tabela do Imposto de Renda não esconde defasagem de 50% em 15 anos

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT

Workers are still having their income transferred to public coffers. Besides the inflation rates, that remain worrisome, what made the salary negotiations of last year hard, really hard, we must live with a negligible 4,5% adjustment in the IRS table, that unfortunately is marked by a 50% discrepancy over the last 15 years.

It's a worrying situation because, by applying taxes on salaries (which is not income), the discrepancy kept year after year, harms the gains of the Brazilian working class. UGT will keep on protesting against this discrepancy and will mobilize its base so that justice is made by eliminating the discrepancy of the IRS table.

A message from Valdir

On the occasion of the celebration of 25 years of the Coordinator of the Central Trade Unions of the Southern Cone (CCSCS), the general secretary of this institution, Valdir Vicente de Barros, publicized a salute message to workers of the thirteen trade union centrals that compose UGT.

"The coordinator reaffirms its commitment to fight so that workers of this region would never feel helpless or powerless due to impositions of neoliberalism and the capitalist system, that submits them to the condition of a simple exchange currency. We have been working steadily, to reposition our CCSCS in the center of debates on the integration of Mercosur, and we are increasing our incidence beyond Mercosur, such as over UNASUL and all the other processes and demands that are presented to us as a challenge and a mission.



We are also looking over the economic crisis that began in Europe and North America, but now is extended all over the world, and we have proposals to fight against it, which should be presented under a constant way to politicians of our region.

Recent discussions that took place in Durban on climate changes and the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol draw our attention as well; we hope that in the Rio + 20 Conference, the voice of workers is listened by all of those that are responsible for deciding the future of our planet, because the political decisions of protecting the environment have a real impact on us, workers. We have a strong voice and we daily fight for a better quality of life for workers and their families, the society and the planet."

Valdir Vicente de Barros is general secretary of the Coordinator of the Central Trade Unions of the Southern Cone (CCSCS) and secretary of UGT's Public Policies Department

UGT participates in Trade Union and Social Summit

UGT participated in the Trade Union and Social Summits of Mercosur, that took place on December 18 and 19, in Montevideo, Uruguay.



The trade union meeting, led by the general secretary of the Coordinator of the **Central Trade Unions of the Southern Cone (CCSCS), Valdir Vicente de Barros**, defined action strategies of unionism in the region and established which ones are the main demands of the trade union movement for Mercosur.

A document with the demands presented by workers of the region was delivered to Mercosur presidents, on December 20. It's worth it to emphasize that, under the Trade Union Summit of Mercosur, the Gender Conference of the Coordinator was held, colleagues from UGT's Women Department were at the event and also in the meeting of the Youth Committee of the Coordinator, in which the colleague João Marcos Videal, secretary of UGT's Youth Department, participated.

Other colleagues strengthened the presence of UGT and brought their contribution to the debate, especially the delegation of UGT state branch of RJ, presided by Nilson Duarte Costa. *(Gustavo Garcia, UGT)*

UGT is getting ready for the World Social Forum



Another edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) will take place in Porto Alegre, from January 24 to 29, with the topic "Capitalist Crisis, Social and Environmental Justice". The meeting will give room for debate, reflection and creation of proposals, searching for alternatives to face neoliberal policies that were implanted over years in several countries of the world and that, since 2008, have been creating economic crises of huge proportions.

UGT, as an institution that represents the working class of several professional branches, will participate in activities of the Labour World, that will take place on January 25, 26 and 27 and will have the participation of international unionists to exchange experiences and debate on the construction of a fight agenda aiming towards an increase on the labour rights in developing countries. *(Mariana Veltri, UGT Press)*

Law guarantees equal treatment for distance work

Distance work have the same guarantees as the one performed in a company or in a house. The Law 12.551/2011, published in the Official Gazette on December 16, changed the consolidation of Labour Laws to include telework among labour relationships protected by the constitution.

By presenting the project that created the law (Complementary Law Project 102/2007), the ex-deputy Eduardo Valverde reminded that the changes in the labour world demand permanent changes at a juridical level. The Complementary Law Project 102/2007 was approved under the Senate on November 23.



Campaign of CCSCS



The Technical Department of the Coordinator of the Central Trade Unions of the Southern Cone (CCSCS) elaborated two audiovisual materials to spread two main issues of the regional trade union agenda: the sexual harassment and the wage equity among men and women.

These two material are available both in Portuguese and Spanish.



"The General Workers Union reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just. " Ricard Patah – UGT's President]

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