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## Energy

PSI's work in energy is not as visible as our water work, in part because the energy sector is much more closed to outside pressure, there are many sub-sectors within energy, and there is little unity over national or international energy policy. This makes working on advocacy much more difficult.

As well, over the years, a number of multinationals have sold overseas subsidiaries, choosing to concentrate on fortress Europe. This was shown by Professor Thomas of PSIRU yesterday. The rapid merger and acquisition process makes it difficult to establish strong union networks, except within the EU.

PSI has been working for a couple of years on the newly merged Enel-Endesa, with a focus to creating a union platform in Latin America, where Endesa is historically strong. Our staff has met with the Italian and Spanish unions, but little progress can be cited. This is in part because the new company has not yet decided whether the Italians or Spanish will manage the Latin American subsidiaries. But we do need more union push from the home countries.

We are part of a working team negotiating with newly merged GDF-SUEZ for the creation of a social dialogue mechanism at global level. This is a delicate process as it might clash with the merging of the EWC in this company. PSI insists that the EWC be informed, as well as all of the unions in the company. But I am worried that we are getting caught up in management's desire for some window-dressing of socially responsible behaviour. I don't trust them.

We remain a signatory of the EDF social responsibility agreement, negotiated by the representative unions. However, EDF has sold most of its non-EU assets, other than in mainland China, where PSI has yet to have meaningful representation.

## Energy and Poverty

One of our biggest challenges is in the very many countries where modern energy services are unreliable and reach only a minority. Statistics tell part of the story. 2.7 billion people rely on bio-mass for cooking, causing more than one million deaths per year, contributing to deforestation, and keeping girls and women from school or productive activity. About 1.4 billion lack access to electricity, seriously eroding social and economic development.

One case we are working on is Nigeria. Here is a country with hundreds of millions of petro-dollars, yet the government has not built one new powerplant in the past 20 years. The lack of electricity is slowing the growth of jobs both in the public and private sectors. It is seriously undermining the health and wellbeing of all Nigerians. More than half of the population has no access to electricity. It would cost less than one percent of the country's oil and gas revenues.

The new Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan, has announced that, rather than solving this problem, the government will completely disengage from electricity production and distribution! What a novel approach for solving problems – quite innovative!

Our approach is to work with the energy union in designing a national campaign which will focus, not on the threat of job loss for their members, but on the importance of union and civil society unity to force the government to implement the necessary policies. The underlying fact is that private sector

will not invest in the generation capacity which the country needs, and to the extent that they do invest, for rich neighbourhoods, using combined cycle gas or diesel – not the sources needed to reduce the carbon footprint. But the privateers can't make enough profits from the poor, so they won't and can't invest.

Further, we will advise the union to develop a national campaign uniting all unions, public and private. As access to electricity is important to all, this campaign should create a political movement to clean up the politics. This is what QPS campaigns must do, in all sectors and in all countries. We must create the political pressure to counter the neo-liberal elite, whether domestic or foreign. The International Herald Tribune yesterday estimated that it would take less than one percent of the oil revenue to meet the electricity needs of the country.

## GRI

I would like to draw union attention to a new tool which PSI helped develop. It is the Electricity Utilities Sector Supplement of the Global Reporting Initiative, known as GRI. GRI is an NGO which focuses on convincing companies, both public and private, to change their annual reports in order to report on corporate sustainability.

We have all heard about sustainability. It actually has some fairly clear definitions, resting on three pillars, social, environmental and financial. Normally, corporate annual reports focus on the financial, and pretend to show social and environmental responsibility. The GRI process aims to ensure that social and environmental indicators are dealt with seriously. GRI has core reporting indicators which cover many aspects of labour relations. We wanted to strengthen these for the electricity sector.

Briefly, GRI brought together ten companies in the electricity sector, three investors, five NGOs and one labour rep – me. We spent two years in very heavy, and often heated debates over the social and environmental indicators which would inform the corporate reporting of public and private electricity utilities.

Through sustained effort, PSI won some very important principles. We focused heavily on two aspects, knowing that we could only win very little, and this only by focusing, preparing and insisting...

One focus was on the increasing use of contractors and sub contractors to do our work. What we tried to do here is to force companies to show how much of the total workforce is contracted out, through which mechanisms and in which categories. We also want companies to indicate whether they actually have any control over this workforce, whether it is in health and safety training or other forms of control.

A second focus was on training and staff retention, as many of the workers are aging, and companies have few policies to ensure that these skills are being passed on to the next generation, and not just outsourced. We also asked the companies to report on efforts to increase the gender balance of their staff.

I want to recognise the work EPSU has been doing in relation to the GRI EUSS. EPSU is linking this work to the corporate social responsibility discussions/negotiations, and I think we really need to check that the companies are honestly reporting using GRI. This is something each one of you can ask of management.

Climate Change : Global Climate Disruption may be the more appropriate term : ‘temperature change itself isn’t the most severe effect of climate change. Changes to precipitation and sea level are likely to have much greater human impact than the higher temperatures alone. “ NASA – Won’t say more on this, as others are speaking.

## Water

Lack of access to safe water is also killing millions each year. Lack of sewerage contributes to this death toll and pollutes many water sources. Again, the politics in this sector are wrong in many countries, focusing on market-based solutions rather than building strong public policies and institutions. This is driven in part by ideology, in part by big corporations.

PSI’s global water campaign has focused on arming our affiliates to block the privateers and the policy makers supporting them. This includes all levels of government, but especially the IFIs, notably the World Bank, the EBRD and EIB and the EU its administrative arms.

One of our principal tools is to sponsor the work of PSIRU such that we (PSI and our unions) have empirical data and comparative analyses of the policies, their impacts, their sponsors, etc. This research allows unions to better develop their strategic plans and to strengthen their advocacy.

Another tool we develop is links, alliances and networks with civil society. This is because in many countries, the voice of the unions is not powerful enough to counter the many actors pushing pro-market policies. Many of the CSOs we work with are international. We have found working with civil society very challenging, but ultimately rewarding.

It requires that unions climb out of our collective bargaining box and address our workplace issues from the perspectives of those who depend upon these quality public services. When we stay within our box and talk only about wages, health and safety and job security, we remain isolated and allow our opponents to brand us a special interest group representing a conservative elite that wants only to protect and preserve its advantages. This is a specific strategy which the World Bank uses to marginalise union resistance to privatisation and restructuring.

Our critique of the privatisation agenda is the strongest in the world. We need to link our fights to those fighting privatisation in the form of bottled water, water markets, and virtual water (trade in foodstuffs). We also need to strengthen our capacity to address the multiplicity of bilateral free trade agreements which serve to restrict government capacity to regulate and to deliver public services directly. Again, for all of these, we need allies, and we don’t necessarily need to lead to be helpful.

## Human Right to Water (RTW)

PSI is supporting (not leading) the fight to have water and sanitation recognised as a human right within the UN Human Rights Charter. This campaign is growing, and in July, the government of Bolivia succeeded in having a non-binding resolution pass the floor of the UN General Assembly. This most recent success serves to propel the campaign forward, although there remain many obstacles. The governments of the UK, USA and Canada are especially opposed to having such a right enshrined, because it will carry with it specific obligations on governments. The French companies and their government support the RTW.

The Human Rights Council of the UN has appointed an independent expert – Portuguese lawyer Catarina de Albuquerque. She has spent the last 18 months examining the role of Non-State Service

Providers in the context of RTW. She invited PSI and Aquafed to participate in an expert working group and to testify before member states. She and her team have just published a very useful report and held a meeting during the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September – to which I addressed a number of concerns.

A number of PSI unions are also fighting to have the right to water (RTW) enshrined in their constitutions. The Uruguayan water union FFOSE succeeded in a national referendum and RTW is now enshrined in their constitution. Unions in Colombia, in a national coalition campaign, succeeded in getting 2.5 million signatures on a referendum, which their national government is currently marginalising and ignoring. The gov.t of Bolivia has passed a constitutional amendment. CGIL unions in Italy, also in coalition, got more than 1.4 million signatures in less than two months in a campaign to block the Berlusconi gov.t's initiative to impose privatisation on municipalities.

#### QPS policies in water

PSI is leading the fight to establish pro-public policies – as we know that merely resisting privatisation is not sufficient. Our biggest push is to develop the concept of public-public partnerships – PUPs - in distinction to the PPPs. We have succeeded at many levels, but challenges remain. The most fundamental challenge is to build links between the unions, utility managers and elected officials – mainly local/municipal governments. This is because we need this form of tripartite 'social dialogue' to enable us to break down the barriers around the normally isolated public utilities, in a manner that allows them to engage in direct bilateral assistance programmes, but also band together to develop independent public advocacy, which is currently dominated by the well-organised privateers.

#### What are PUPs?

PUPs are partnerships between public utilities, based on solidarity rather than profit. Their purpose is to increase technical, managerial and professional capacities among the partners. Typically, there will be one utility offering assistance and a second receiving. PSI, EPSU and our allies managed to get PUPs inserted into a number of international agencies, including the EC, which dedicated €40 million of its 2010-2012 €200 million global water fund for Africa, Pacific and Caribbean nations. As well, UN SG Kofi Annan appointed UN Habitat to establish a global presence designed to facilitate water operator partnerships, or WOPs.

We will also focus on labour-management cooperation (LMC), because we must manage to find allies among progressive public managers, for PUPs, to improve the public services, and not on the basis of lowest working standards and conditions. We will also need the support of the elected officials, both local and national.

So, in the water sector, because of the mandates from our various Congresses, and because of the dedication and focus on a specific sector, we have accomplished what was asked of us. But now, the unions must increase their support. Although we need your financial support, even in these difficult times, we also need your political involvement, and this remains weak. In part because unions are always fighting their own, domestic battles. But here we have taken on the global neo-liberal establishment and we are winning. We need your help if we are to cement this partial victory, otherwise, I have no doubt we will again lose to those who control the money.

We must continue to marshal political pressure in the various arenas where we can have influence, whether it is at local and national and regional levels, or the triennial world water forum (the next one will be in Marseille in March 2012), the world and regional social forum, on world water day –

22 march, and in the EC... BUT PSI cannot do this work alone, we need our unions to help. Many more actions must be taken in each country, and we need better coordination among the unions. For example, the vice president of the Asian Development Bank, which is one of the strongest privateers of all the development banks, is a German national. The head of the IMF is a French national... the executive directors of the development banks, the ones who set policies, are all from the richest countries... PSI needs to coordinate our political pressure in key countries in order to get support for our policy victories.