



BUILDING DEMOCRACY TOGETHER

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

UNION
TO UNION

LO, TCO & SACO GLOBAL



UNION TO UNION

LO, TCO & SACO GLOBAL

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Cover photo: Burhaan Kinu/PSI. Photo taken at a gender equality workshop in Chennai, India, where global union federation PSI together with local trade unions and Swedish trade union Kommunal, supported by *Union to Union*, run a project aiming at strengthening healthcare workers.

Union to Union is the Swedish trade union movement's organisation for international development cooperation. We work for decent work, democracy, equality, a fair distribution of resources, reduced poverty and sustainable development. To create a decent life for all, we promote human rights at work and support the creation and the strengthening of unions.

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Foreword

As I write this, my first full financial year as Head of *Union to Union* has come to an end. At the time of writing, we are in the midst of a whole new situation to all of us – a pandemic that has paralyzed many communities. The new coronavirus is a challenge for health care systems worldwide, but it is also causing millions of people to lose their jobs and livelihoods, many in developing countries without social safety nets.

However, now is the time to look back at last year at *Union to Union*. In 2019, we saw a strong political focus on social dialogue, and thus on the role of trade unions in international development cooperation. For example, the government launched its democracy initiative, which emphasizes that trade unions play a crucial role in expanding people's opportunities to influence their day-to-day lives. The fact that trade unions are being highlighted in the democracy initiative is an important statement of position, not least because workers' rights are being violated to a greater extent today than they were a few years ago. Last year's Global Rights Index, which measures the right to organise in trade unions around the world, showed a decline for trade union rights.

Union to Union worked intensively in 2019 to continue to develop and improve support for partners in low- and middle-income countries. For example, the organisation took important steps towards country focusing, extended financing and a sharper focus on outcomes. We also continued to push for Sweden to be an actor for human rights at work, through advocacy and communication activities. A green and equitable response to climate change – a Just transition – was a key issue.

Sustainable global development, which excludes no-one, is the basis for our day-to-day work with our partners – the Swedish and global unions, but especially the local unions in countries

with widespread poverty. Last year I had the privilege of visiting several of our projects.

The women I met at Vegpro in Nairobi, a company packing vegetables for export to Europe, symbolise to me the importance of the work being done. The efforts of the Kenyan trade union, with the support of the Swedish unions, have led to more and more people, especially women, becoming involved in the union. At Vegpro, they have negotiated a collective agreement that provides greater security, including for those who work part-time and are informally employed. Employees testify to better overtime conditions and active work on combating sexual harassment in the workplace. It was clear in particular how the women I met had become more confident and gained the courage to stand up for their rights. It is incredibly inspiring to see the effects of trade union development cooperation on individuals and communities.

In 2019, we reflected at *Union to Union* on how changes in the labour market – globalization, technological development, climate change and demographic challenges – are affecting countries with widespread poverty, and the role that trade union development cooperation can play in the labour market of the future. Now, there is another variable to consider. The new coronavirus will be a test in collaboration – at local, regional and global levels. Actions on a broad front will be required to maintain jobs and protect against loss of income. A fundamental prerequisite for this is strong, independent and democratic unions throughout the world.

Sofia Östmark
Secretary General
Union to Union



PHOTO: STEFAN TELL



المرشداء الشجرة
عليهم السلام
مصين الطار
عمر زكريا
علاء أبو فخر
أحمد توفيق

بنان
نور داس السنة

Street view from Beirut, Lebanon.

This is Union to Union

Union to Union is the joint international development organisation of LO, TCO and Saco and their affiliates. Its focus is on promoting decent working conditions and strong and democratic unions, as well as on disseminating knowledge and exercising influence to achieve a fairer and more equal world.

Union to Union's mission is:

- > to support and coordinate LO, TCO, Saco and their affiliates in international trade union development cooperation,
- > to secure and develop methods and processes for implementation and quality assurance and to evaluate outcomes and impacts,
- > to communicate and conduct information initiatives in Sweden, with the aim of increasing knowledge of and strengthening confidence in and support for international trade union development cooperation.

Union to Union is a strategic partner organisation of Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). Operations are financed via grants from Sida and funds from the Swedish trade union

movement. The organisation is politically and religiously independent.

Background

In the 1970s, as more and more countries became independent from their colonial systems, the worldwide International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the Global Unions began to organise trade union aid activities.

Initially, the financial resources came exclusively from trade unions. But in Sweden, the aid budget increased and in 1970, LO and TCO contacted the aid agency Sida, to investigate the possibility of also obtaining grants for trade union education activities in countries with widespread poverty.

In 1977, the Secretariat was allocated a block grant for the first time, and the LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Cooperation was established. Since then, the process has continued. In 2015, the central organisation Saco joined the organisation. Upon Saco becoming a member, the organisation changed its name to *Union to Union* and adopted new articles of association.

How we work

Union to Union's work is primarily aimed at strengthening the capacity for organising, negotiating, advocacy, gender equality and democracy in unions in low- and middle-income countries.

Activities are conducted via an extensive international network consisting of *Union to Union* and Swedish trade unions – in collaboration with global union federations and the International Trade Union Confederation (GUF, ITUC, see page 10). The focus is on strengthening local unions in countries with widespread poverty. The international network of free, democratic unions and federations makes trade union development cooperation possible.

Union to Union also supports and initiates knowledge-enhancing activities in Sweden. The aim is to increase awareness of and commitment to international trade union development cooperation, as well as to develop an understanding of how this is linked to sustainable development around the world. *Union to Union* also supports various initiatives and organisations,

including Fairtrade and the *Schyst resande* (Fair Travel) network. Read more on page 28–29.

Project activities

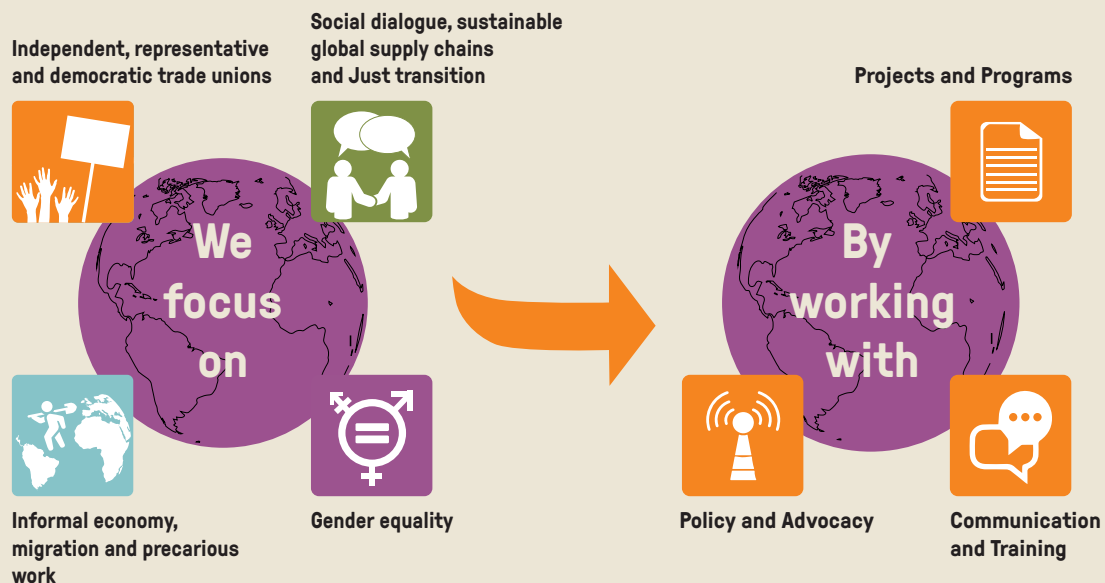
In 2019, *Union to Union* supported 120 projects/programmes in 97 countries. In Sweden, 26 unions were involved in development cooperation projects. Swedish unions have an important role to play through their contributions of expert experience and knowledge. Projects are grouped into four main thematic areas. See the infographic below, and read more on the following pages.

Staff and organisation

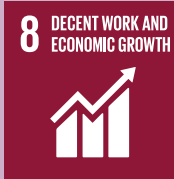
Union to Union has an office with about 20 employees in Stockholm. The office coordinates and conducts activities, for example by offering expertise in methodology, financial monitoring and training to Swedish unions and global union organisations. The board (see page 32) consists of representatives from Swedish trade unions and is appointed by LO, TCO and Saco. The board determines the main focus of activities.

UNION TO UNION

Organising for decent work, democracy and social justice



Agenda 2030



The global trade union movement has an important role to play in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 8: **Decent Work and Economic**

Growth is of particular relevance to trade union organisations.

To achieve the goals established for Agenda 2030, work going forward must secure decent working conditions – including the informal sector, and fair pay. Forced labour, modern slavery and child labour must be eradicated.

Other important objectives of the work of *Union to Union* are:



Decent Work

Decent working conditions and human rights are fundamental to reducing global poverty and inequality. Today, 300 million employees live in extreme poverty. As many as 2 billion employees work in the informal labour market.

ILO (the international Labour organization) has produced a global action plan entitled “Decent Work Agenda”. The agenda has four pillars:

- > Employment creation
- > Social protection, including protection for employees
- > Promotion of social dialogue and tripartism
- > Respect for, and promotion of, human rights at work

PHOTO: PATRIK BERGVALL



Just transition

If the UN's goals for sustainable development are to be achieved, progress will be needed in the form of reduced emissions, changes in production chains and new technology. This is what the term “Just transition”, which was coined by the trade union movement, deals with: the creation of a fair adjustment process that does not disregard the rights of employees.

As a union-based aid organisation, *Union to Union* recognises the importance of employee rights not being neglected in the work of climate conservation. On that basis, we focus on Just transition, a framework for transition that binds together environment, climate and social justice. We follow the guidelines established by ILO and are actively engaged in the field.

207 million members



120 projects



97 countries

26 swedish trade unions actively participated in development projects during 2019

Akademikerförbundet SSR
 Fackförbundet ST
 Fastighetsanställdas Förbund
 Finansförbundet
 GS-facket
 Handelsanställdas förbund
 Hotell- och restaurangfacket
 IF Metall
 Livsmedelsarbetareförbundet
 LO & TCO Projektkansli
 Lärarförbundet
 Seko, Service- och kommunikationsfacket
 Svenska Byggnadsarbetarförbundet
 Svenska Elektrikerförbundet
 Svenska Journalistförbundet
 Svenska Kommunalarbetareförbundet
 Svenska Musikerförbundet
 Svenska Målareförbundet
 Svenska Pappersindustriarbetareförbundet
 Svenska Transportarbetareförbundet
 Sveriges Ingenjörer
 Sveriges Läkarförbund
 Teaterförbundet för scen och film
 Unionen
 Vision
 Vårdförbundet

What do you want to highlight from your international trade unions development cooperation 2019?

Therese Svanström, President TCO

PHOTO: EVA EDSJÖ



“ In many of our partner countries, we are fighting against a shrinking space for actors in democracy, such as trade unions. This is true in Guatemala, but there we have also seen positive outcomes from our work. In Guatemala, TCO, LO and the main labour organisations in the country are operating the Labour Law Development Programme (LLDP), which is helping to develop the unions' legal capacity.

Over the past two years, LLDP has played a vital role in establishing the tripartite Commission on Labour Market Relations and Freedom of Association, which is now operating, and important issues have been addressed there. This is an important development in a country that unfortunately is still characterized by a very high level of threats and violence – even murder – against trade union activists and where trade union rights are severely compromised.

Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, former President LO

PHOTO: FREDRIK HJERLING



“ Our long-standing education project in Africa, PANAF, celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019. PANAF has played a crucial role in union development in many African countries since its inception and has enabled an average of 70 000 people per year to participate in

study groups. In all, more than 2 million union activists have been given the opportunity to develop their union skills. I myself have visited several study groups and am impressed by the energy shown by the participants and the union unity that PANAF is building at grassroots level. PANAF is also important in terms of union strength and unity at high-level, as many of today's union leaders in Africa took their first union steps through a study group at PANAF. PANAF is also one of the first examples of genuine North-South cooperation, as PANAF has included CUT Brazil as donor in the project since 2014. I look forward to many more years of activity in this important educational project!

Global unions building the future together

With 207 million members globally, the trade union movement is the largest social movement in the world. Sweden's trade unions are part of this network and have always cooperated internationally. As companies and the labour market become globalised, this international cooperation is becoming increasingly important. Against that background, global framework agreements have come into being, establishing fundamental conditions (see info box).

Most of *Union to Union's* projects are performed in collaboration with Swedish unions and a global union. The global unions are categorised by sector. The Swedish unions are members of one or more global unions.

In addition to the global unions, there is the ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation). It is the world's largest trade union organisation. The principal members of the ITUC are central union organisations – in Sweden these are LO, TCO and Saco.

Global framework agreements

In the early 2000s, several global unions began to negotiate agreements, known as global framework agreements, with multinational companies as a direct response to the globalisation of the economy.

These agreements establish conditions that must never be breached within a corporate group, regardless of where in the world business is conducted. The conditions must be specified and supplemented by national agreements. The agreements also counteract social dumping, by which companies relocate their operations to countries where working conditions are poorer.

In addition to conducting development projects, the ITUC and the global unions maintain a watch on common union issues and represent their members in various international arenas. They also monitor and influence decisions within the ILO (International Labour Organisation), and other UN agencies. The global unions have regional and, in some cases, sub-regional offices around the world.

Global Union Federations

BWI – Building and Wood Workers' International

Organises the building and wood working industry.

EI – Education International

The education sector.

FIA – International Federation of Actors

The actors union.

FIM – International Federation of Musicians

Musicians – stage workers and the entertainment sector.

IndustriALL Global Union

Mining, energy/chemistry and manufacturing.

ICN – International Council of Nurses

Healthcare.

IFJ – International Federation of Journalists

Journalists and media.

ITF – International Transport Workers' Federation

A union federation within the transport sector.

IUF – International Union of Food, Agricultural,

Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied

Workers' Associations

Hotels, restaurants, tourism, catering, tobacco and agriculture.

PSI – Public Services International

Workers in public services.

UNI – Uni Global Union

The global union for the skills and services sector.

ITUC – Världsfacket

Organising the central union organisations.





Workers at the York Farm in Lusaka, Zambia.



Smritee Lama from the nepalese construction workers union CUPPEC.

THEMATIC AREA 1.

Union rights: organising independent, representative and democratic trade unions



Objective: To strengthen trade unions as independent, representative, and democratic organisations that are efficient in organising workers and exercising trade union rights at the workplace.

Strong organisations are key to success

The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention are core documents for the realisation of workers' rights.

Over the past 20 years a general trend of diminishing civic space has been gaining momentum. This creates additional obstacles for democratic trade unions. Ignorance of the internationally recognised legal frameworks, or indifference to their enforcement on national and international levels, opens the door for endless breaches of workers' and human rights. Unions face prosecution, threats, and violence when attempting to organise and represent workers.

For trade unions to be independent and strong actors, administrative and financial stability is of major importance. Efforts are needed both in facilitating enabling environments for organising, and in strengthening innovative and inclusive organising techniques. Training is an essential component. In the longer perspective, the effects of these programmes will lead to the combined global trade unions, with their 207 million organised members, growing stronger to remain the largest democratic movement in the world.



“Everyone should be able to work without being afraid”

Joyce Mapeshoane.

Nthati Joyce Mapeshoane works in electronics assembly in Lesotho. She is a union representative for the Independent Democratic Trade Union of Lesotho (IDUL) and has her own goal of achieving transparency and fairness in all corners of the workplace.

“I want everyone to be able to work without being afraid and without being abused by their employer. For example, they should not be afraid to point out that a machine is broken”, she says.

There was a lot that wasn’t working before. For example, for more than ten years employees received no salary increase. Now Nthati, who is a safety representative, finds that the union has managed to bring about change. Safety risks and work environment issues are no longer swept under the carpet.

“Employers will not fix things like that without our union fighting for it”, she says.

Through the union, employees have been informed about their rights. Previously, they only heard, from their employer, what rights the employer had.




“In our sector, the union has had a positive effect. We are now sitting down and negotiating wage increases, which is an improvement. We can get wage increases without a battle every time!”

Last autumn, Nthati took part in a training course for safety representatives. A course that is part of the “Union Building Sub-Saharan Africa” project, run by the global trade union IndustriALL in collaboration with IF Metall, Unionen and the Swedish Paper Workers’ Union, with the support of *Union to Union*.



Results in 2019

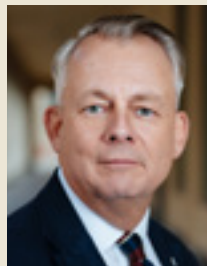
Education, recruitment and the establishment of free, democratic and representative unions are key in this program. The activities helped to equip trade unions to overcome obstacles, but also provide enhanced knowledge and methods to harness their own power to improve working conditions.

-  **150 000 new members** have been recruited and some 50 new unions have been formed and recognised by employers through *Union to Union* projects. This has been possible through innovative ways of reaching out to workplaces, including engagement strategies and organising new groups, for example, employees with insecure working conditions. Successful outcomes have been achieved at an Ericsson plant in Indonesia, at DHL in Malaysia, among hotel chains in Tanzania and in many other companies around the world.
-  **2 461 new collective bargaining agreements** have been signed directly at workplaces. These agreements cover hundreds of thousands of workers and are the result of training in negotiation techniques and trade union rights. The agreements include protective measures in the use of chemical pesticides, wage increases over statutory minimum rates, the right to sick leave and protection from sexual harassment.
-  In many countries, the trade union movement is divided politically and organisationally. **Collaboration and networking** between unions is important for achieving rights at work. Results have been achieved in Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Honduras, Kenya and Tanzania, where unions have concluded cooperation agreements with each other to have a greater impact together.
-  **Capacity development** for joint campaign work by the unions has helped improve coordination and concrete campaigns, such as when affiliates to the global industrial union IndustriALL in the Democratic Republic of Congo collaborated with other unions in the country on working conditions at the multinational mining company Glencore.
-  **Unions are in a constant process of renewal** with the support of their international partners. In Egypt, four trade unions affiliated to the global union for civil servants have received training in union organisation and have established new union committees in workplaces where they are not as severely limited by the restrictive trade union law. This has led to increased commitment and higher representation of women.

What do you want to highlight from your international trade unions development cooperation 2019?

Göran Arrius, President Saco

PHOTO: KNUJ CAPRA PEDERSEN



“ The most important international trade union issues right now centre on democracy and human rights, linked to academic freedom. We have noted increased pressure on academics, including professional teachers and researchers, in countries with authoritarian regimes. Many of

them are forced into silence or are harassed in the practice of their profession.

Several of the projects of the Saco associations focus on sharing experience and strengthening the professional role in different countries. International trade union cooperation is also about learning from each other. I find it extremely rewarding to share our experience with people who work differently to how we work here in the Nordic countries. We are often convinced that our own labour market model is the best. This view sometimes makes us a little blind to solutions from other parts of the world.

The strong union commitment we encounter in many partner countries is also very inspiring. In many countries, our colleagues take great risks when claiming their democratic and trade union rights. This fact makes our global cooperation in *Union to Union* even more important.”

“ I find it extremely rewarding to share our experience with people who work differently to how we work here in the Nordic countries. We are often convinced that our own labour market model is the best. This view sometimes makes us a little blind to solutions from other parts of the world.”



Around the tanneries of Dhaka, Bangladesh, waste is piling up along the streets.

THEMATIC AREA 2.

Social dialogue, sustainable global supply chains, and Just transition



Objective: To strengthen the capacity of trade unions to engage effectively in social dialogue on issues relating to economic and social policy, and to contribute to sustainable global supply chains and Just transition.

Just transition for sustainable development

Effective social dialogue is key to sound and productive employment relations and decent work. Social dialogue includes all types of negotiation, consultation, or exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, employers, and workers. Global Supply Chains (GSC) contribute to economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. Still, the GSC's have failed to protect rights at the workplace.

To tackle these problems, trade unions and Global Union Federations have been working on Global Framework Agreements (see page 10), in order to achieve new collective bargaining agreements, and as instruments for tackling anti-labour attitudes. The term Just transition (see page 8) is included in many climate agreements, thanks to the work of trade unions. A transition is not only possible, but also necessary to achieve the UN's Global Goals for Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Trade unions are already working to change rules and legislation, to add environmental and climate causes to collective agreements, and to develop green profiles to strengthen their position at the negotiating table.



Improved dialogue in Colombia – but the challenges remain

In Colombia – as in large parts of the world – the situation of journalists in their work is insecure. The advent of new technology, with digital news media at the centre, is creating new conditions and changes in conditions for journalism. In Colombia, cutbacks are extensive and fewer journalists are expected to do the work of several, while wages stagnate or fall. In addition, Colombia is still one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists, even after the end of the armed conflict that plagued the country for many years.

But there is progress. The trade union movement is growing – not least among young people – and dialogue with the big media companies is showing clear signs of improvement.

“This increases the chances of establishing a constructive dialogue on freedom of expression and workers’ rights,” says Azael Carvajal, a member of the board of Colombia’s journalist

association FELCOPER, and long-time teacher at the Medellín College of Journalism.

Azael notes that one reason for the improved dialogue is that FELCOPER has grown stronger every year. As a result, media companies now see it as a serious actor. He also mentions the work of reaching younger journalists and students to create awareness and knowledge of trade union rights.

This is where the development project “Strengthening Journalists’ Safety and Trade Unions” enters the picture. The project is being run by IFJ – the International Federation of Journalists – with support from the Swedish Union of Journalists and *Union to Union*. The project aims to strengthen the Colombian journalism union FELCOPER, for example by training organisers and trade union leaders, and by setting up local associations.

“We need strong trade union organisations if we are to look after the interests of journalists”, says Azael Carvajal.



Results in 2019

Every collective agreement at sectoral level or within a multinational company is an important step towards Goal 8 of Agenda 2030. Through training courses, conferences and the sharing of experience, unions improve their skills and negotiation techniques to represent the interests of employees.

✔ It has been reported that **113 new sector- or industry-level collective agreements** entered into force in 2019, negotiated by hundreds of trade unions participating in *Union to Union* projects around the world. The main focus of the collective bargaining agreements was to raise wages, fight insecurity of employment and increase the number of jobs with fair conditions.

✔ For the local partners of the global construction trade union, **global framework agreements** are making a difference in resolving labour conflicts and securing workers' and trade union rights at 11 workplaces in 11 countries. For example, the unions in Indonesia have been trained in and have used a global agreement with IKEA to review its subcontractors as part of the negotiation process.

✔ The content of collective bargaining and the demands of the unions have been strengthened on the basis of **increased knowledge of regulations and complaint mechanisms**. Trade union representatives monitor compliance with ILO Conventions and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Companies. In Egypt, the pressure from national actors, together with advocacy work and international attention, has forced the government to resume dialogue with the unions and abolish imprisonment for involvement in independent unions.

✔ As a result of **training in ILO Conventions**, the trade union's requirements for workplace inspections have been augmented. Regular inspections have yielded results in the construction and timber sector in Ukraine and Turkey, as well as in Morocco's shipping industry. Workplace inspections conducted in collaboration with trade unions are an important tool in formalising employment and applying fair working conditions.

✔ There has been an active initiative to **include Just transition (see info on page 8) in the trade unions' global agenda**. Three projects involving unions in 18 countries, as well as extensive regional networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have shown increased capacity to promote Just Transition. Two trade unions in the Caribbean are actively contributing their expertise to the work on national climate plans – an important result of the capacity-building activities that have been performed.

What do you want to highlight from your international trade unions development cooperation 2019?

Karin Båtelson, Vice President The Swedish Medical Association

PHOTO: STEFAN TELL



“ We have come a long way in enabling our partner organisation in Cuba, the Consejo Nacional de Sociedades Científicas de la Salud, to become a more independent organisation so that they can join the World Medical Association (WMA). Our role is to support Cuba's medical association in its work of reorganising its internal structure to make WMA membership possible. We are also trying to raise the issues relating to doctors' working conditions, as the Cuban organisation's activities are mainly focused on scientific work and research. This is especially important in view of the pandemic situation that currently exists in the world.”

Ann-Helene Westrup, international secretary, Unionen

PHOTO: UNIONEN



“ There is much to highlight. One example is our MENA project (Middle East and North Africa), where more young people – including many girls – have become aware of what union involvement can mean and how important the work of unions is to democracy. But I would also like to mention our bilateral project with SEWA in India, which made great strides forward during the year. Most workers in India are in the informal employment sector. SEWA, the Self Employed Women's Association, fights hard for all vulnerable women in this field. Three SEWA members also visited Unionen's Congress in Malmö to talk about their reality, which was very valuable. Last but not least, I would like to mention our Ericsson project, which works for fair conditions for Ericsson employees globally.”

THEMATIC AREA 3.

Organising in the informal sector, migration, and precarious work



Objective: To strengthen working conditions for informal workers, migrant workers, and workers in precarious situations.

Protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups

Precarious work is a term used to describe non-standard employment, those who are poorly paid, insecure, unprotected, and without a living wage. It is mainly a result of the shift from manufacturing to the service sector and the spread of information technology. These changes have created a new economy, which demands flexibility in the workplace and, as a result, encourages a decline in the standard employment relationship.

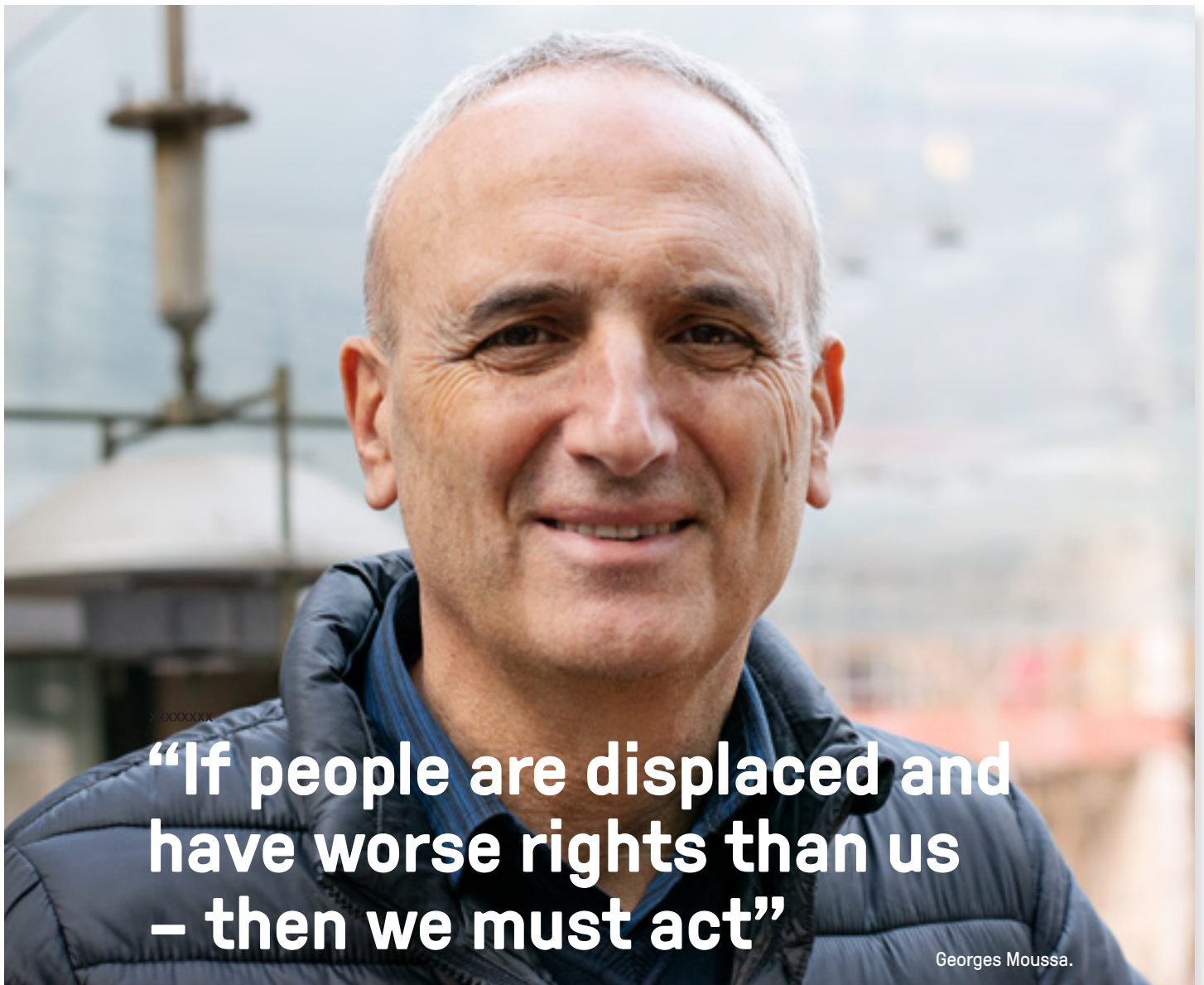
Informal employment accounts for more than 50–70 per cent of work in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. Informal workers are normally excluded from all forms of social protection and workers' rights. The transition to formal working arrangement is fundamental to achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development and making decent work accessible for all.

Today, more than 200 million people are working outside their country of birth or citizenship. Together with their families, migrant workers make up a large majority of all international migrants. Therefore, migration is first and foremost a labour issue. Unfair treatment of migrant workers undermines wages and working conditions for all workers. Trade unions are key to securing basic human rights and access to basic services for migrants and refugees.

Trade unions need to increase their focus on workers who are not in traditional forms of employment and/or migrant workers. One strategy is to organise informal workers by supporting the creation of independent organisations, and by opening up trade union structures for workers in the informal sector and exploring innovative ways of working.



Outside of Ulan Bator, Mongolia. A mining worker uses the winch to bring sand and gold ore to the surface. The photo is taken from a story in Dagens Arbete.



“If people are displaced and have worse rights than us – then we must act”

Georges Moussa.

As a result of the refugee crisis in Syria in 2015, more than 1.5 million refugees arrived in Lebanon (source: UNHRC). The change was immediately seen by those employed in water distribution; water had to be supplied both to locals and to all the refugees.

Agreeing to provide the same service to Syrian refugees as to local residents was a challenge, but the humanitarian aspect weighed heavily in the discussions.

“If people are displaced and have worse rights than us – then we must act”, says Georges Moussa.

Georges is unionised and a member of the project “Human Rights, Trade Unions and Quality Public Services for Refugees and Migrant Workers”. The project is operated by the global trade union PSI in collaboration with the

Swedish Association of Health Professionals, the Union for Professionals (SSR), The union of Civil Servants (ST), Vision and the Swedish Municipal Workers’ Union (Kommunal), supported by *Union to Union*. The aim of the project is to develop the union’s capacity to work on refugee and migration issues from a rights-based perspective.

The project has generated concrete knowledge on the rights of refugees and migrants.

“When the workers saw how the refugees were suffering, what they had to endure and how many people needed humanitarian aid, the union members wanted to work together to help”, says Georges Moussa.

The project is designed to develop awareness that every person has human rights – to dignity, decent living and working conditions and access to welfare.



Results in 2019

The Agenda 2030 principle that no one should be excluded is a guiding principle of this programme. The unions participating in the projects work with the most vulnerable employees on expanding the scope of organisation, and thus of collective agreements. The projects also include training in how collective agreements can be used to promote human rights, social inclusion and economic and social justice for all – irrespective of employment and refugee status.

✓ In nine countries, the projects have helped, through collective bargaining, to **improve working and living conditions** for vulnerable groups in the labour market. Improvements include wage increases, conversion of insecure forms of employment into permanent employment, accident insurance supplements, right to social insurance and protection of copyright and income for culture professionals.

✓ **Innovative practical training materials** have been developed and are being used by 21 unions in the MENA region and Nigeria to combine humanitarian assistance for migrants and refugees in the form of access to basic human rights such as water, energy and health care, with decent working conditions for those who provide these services.

✓ **More unions and union networks** are important actors in national and international dialogues in support of the labour rights of refugees. In Tunisia, trade unions in the health sector, together with the newly created trade union network for the Mediterranean and Saharan regions, have engaged in advocacy work. This has helped to enable Tunisia to conclude cooperation agreements that underpin the right of refugees and migrants to health care with WHO.

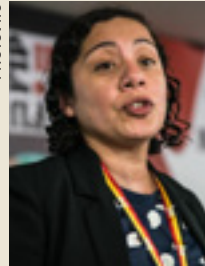
✓ **Higher levels of organisation among migrant workers** have enabled this vulnerable group to obtain increased protection and better organised working conditions. Two projects, spanning six countries, report that 6 000 migrant workers have been recruited. In Kyrgyzstan, a migrant workers' union has been formed and now has 2 000 members.

✓ **New strategies in the construction and timber sector in Asia.** The TEUPM union contacted migrant workers in their countries of origin in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar even before arriving at their HaveaPac workplace in Seremban, Malaysia. This made a difference in membership numbers and TEUPM became a recognized party for the company to deal with.

What were the biggest challenges in your union work in 2019?

Zuliana Laines, General Secretary, ANP in Peru and President at FEPALC

PHOTO: IFJ



“Insecurity and cyber-bullying were the most common scenarios for journalists and their unions in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019. Organising has been the most effective response. The voice of the unions was crucial in urging States to conduct open, rapid investigations that, for example, do not exclude professional motives behind the murder of a journalist. We have not always succeeded, but we have been a factor of pressure. There are also separate challenges to freedom of speech, such as censorship from governments and media groups. Fake news is another challenge. We need more and better journalism in this era of social networks.”

Vasyl Andreyev, President at PROFBUD in Ukraine

PHOTO: PRIVATE



“Eastern Ukraine is still an unstable area with daily shootings. The situation creates uncertainty for millions of people who are forced to flee within the country, which affects the labour market. Over the past two decades, Ukraine has lost about 7 million inhabitants due to labour migration, and the trade union movement is working hard to maintain the labour force within the country.

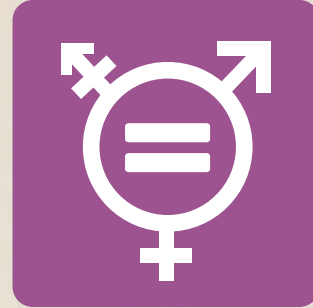
Privatisations in the construction industry are also creating challenges, as is the high proportion of casual jobs. During the year, we at PROFBUD worked with other trade unions to emphasize the importance of decent working conditions and safe workplaces, as it is precisely these issues that are the reason why so many well-educated people seek work abroad instead of staying.”



Photo taken at a gender equality workshop in Chennai, India, where global union federation PSI together with local trade unions and swedish trade union Kommunal, supported by *Union to Union*, run a project aiming at strengthening healthcare workers.

THEMATIC AREA 4.

Trade unions as actors for gender equality



Objective: To strengthen trade unions as actors for gender equality in the labour market and in society as a whole, and to increase the representation of women in trade unions' structures.

Economic empowerment is the key to gender equality

Women around the world face a wide range of structural inequalities in the labour market. 71% of men in the world, compared to only 46% of women, currently have paid employment, and women's wages are on average 23% lower than men's, even though they do the same job.

In 104 countries, legislation prohibits women from working in certain industries and professions, and in 18 countries a man has the legal right to decide whether or not his wife can take up employment. Promoting women's economic empowerment is central to the work of advancing women's rights and greater equality in society.

The unions have a key role to play – strong trade unions are important in securing greater equality in the workplace. On that basis, gender equality filters through to all aspects of *Union to Union's* work. The outcomes, achieved through collective bargaining and social dialogue, are often linked to gender equality and help to improve the situation of women, and thus in building better societies for all.

Union to Union is working to increase gender equality within the union structures. Globally, more and more women are becoming members of trade unions. Despite this, more men than women occupy leading roles in unions, even in female-dominated sectors. That's why *Union to Union* is working to increase the representation of women in unions both as members and in leadership roles.



“We will ensure that members’ rights are respected”

Patricia Nyman.

PHOTO: LINA KARLSSON

The road to a working life free from discrimination is still long, but Patricia Nyman, national coordinator of the global union IUF’s Women’s Project in South Africa, is convinced that unions are playing an important role in driving LGBTQI issues forward.

In April 2015, IUF, the global food, farm and hotel workers’ union adopted a resolution on LGBTQI rights. The resolution states, for example, that IUL should focus both resources and effort into supporting LGBTQI workers around the world.

“The resolution has been an important tool in driving the issues forward,” says Patricia Nyman. For several years, she has been working actively for LGBTQI rights within various trade union networks in the region.

The project “Promote Women’s Participation in their Unions Africa” is operated by IUF, in collaboration with the Swedish Municipal Workers’ Union (Kommunal), the Swedish Food Workers’ Union (Livs) and the Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Workers’ Union (HRF), supported by *Union to Union*. Together with IUF’s regional agriculture coordinator, Mopholosi Morokong, Patricia Nyman is working to change attitudes within trade unions in the countries where homosexuality is still criminal.






“It is our responsibility to ensure that members’ rights are respected, regardless of what the issue is,” she says.

Patricia is convinced that the union is playing an important role in advancing LGBTQI rights. In addition to working for inclusive legislation, increased knowledge and awareness are important.



Results in 2019

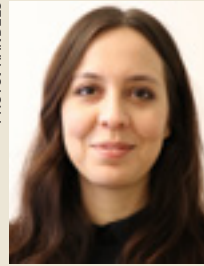
Over the past 10 years, unions around the world have worked intensively to raise awareness of the need to address gender-based violence at work. In 2019, these efforts culminated in the adoption of a new convention at the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Annual Labour Conference – C190 Violence and Harassment at Work. The Convention is intended to protect all workers – irrespective of employment contract – from violence and harassment at work.

-  **Three projects extending over 16 countries and two global projects** worked specifically on campaigns, material production, alliances with civil society organisations and advocacy activities to highlight the importance of the convention and get the ratification process under way in their countries. In Senegal and Tunisia, this work has also played a part in strengthening legislation, via written pieces condemning violence against women.
-  Work on C190 led to **domestic violence** being clearly established as a trade union and workplace issue in several countries and regions. In Brazil, through negotiations by unions participating in a gender equality project in the transport sector, the Supreme Labour Court included Article 12, which protects the rights of women who have been subjected to domestic violence.
-  *Union to Union* is working to **increase the number of women in senior positions** in unions. The number of women on union boards has increased in 15 countries where *Union to Union* has projects. Teachers' unions in five countries in southern Africa have now reached a 50/50 balance, and 103 more female leaders have been elected to national federal boards in the building and timber sector.
-  *Union to Union* supports projects that **provide training** in how work environment and gender equality are linked, and how to **negotiate and improve** collective agreements. In 35 of the countries where we operate, it was reported that integration of gender issues in collective agreements has improved.
-  One example of how collective bargaining contributes to better conditions for working women may be seen in the Philippines. The Swedish Teachers' Union's partner ACT (the Alliance of Concerned Teachers), negotiated a package of improved salaries and better compensation for overtime and overwork, for teachers in the country. The law on maternity leave was reformed, introducing 100 days of paid leave.

What do you want to highlight from your international trade unions development cooperation 2019?

Josefin Lundmark, international ombudsman, The Commercial Employees' Union

PHOTO: HANDELS



“ It is a well-known fact that the work of the Swedish Commercial Employees' Union's on solidarity does not stop within Sweden's borders. For example, we work with the commercial employees' trade union in Zimbabwe to strengthen the work of organising in multinational companies. Equality between men and women at work and society in general is a priority issue for the Commercial Employees' Union, not least in the work of trade union development. Our Zimbabwean sister union has long worked to enable men and women to engage in union work on equal terms. This hard work has now yielded results – in 2019, the union saw increased commitment among younger women. Many people are seeking out a trade union and more are also wanting to participate in trade union training and to get involved in the workplace. For the first time ever, a number of female members have joined the union's bargaining council.”

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Information and knowledge for commitment and change

Union to Union conducts communication activities in Sweden with the aim of strengthening confidence in, and increasing knowledge of, global trade union rights and the central role of unions in creating sustainable development. This is done in close collaboration with Swedish unions, the Global Union Federations and the ITUC. An important part of the work is the production of campaign, information and educational materials.

One of the higher-profile campaigns in 2019 was the annual publication of the Global Rights Index (see pages 30–31). 22 Swedish unions actively participated in the campaign, which on Facebook alone reached more than 45,000 people. Another successful initiative in 2019 was the production of articles and video interviews in collaboration with nine Swedish trade unions. The objective was to highlight the global commitment of the unions.

Via wide-ranging seminar and education activities, and participation in events such as the Almedal Week and the Gothenburg Book Fair, *Union to Union* reaches target groups beyond

the union sector. Our education programmes and seminars, which are regularly streamed live, attract keen interest. Our exhibition stand, “work-in-closet”, was a success that paved the way to in-depth discussions about the important role of unions.

Via *Union to Union*, trade unions can apply for funds for information and communication activities aimed at boosting members’ understanding and knowledge of trade union development cooperation. One vital channel for this is the trade union press, which publishes reports highlighting people and projects in low- and middle-income countries. To many, these reports bring a first realisation that their trade unions work globally, providing an initial or in-depth understanding of why it is important to cooperate internationally.

Union to Union also supports and finances organisations that disseminate knowledge about the importance of union rights globally and international development cooperation. These include the Schyst resande (Fair Travel) network, Fairtrade Sweden and Arbetet Global (Global Work), a thematic area in LO’s magazine *Arbetet*.

PHOTO: UNION TO UNION



PHOTO: UNION TO UNION



During 2019, *Union to Union* arranged several appreciated and well-visited seminars. One of them was about The Future of Work – how do we work towards a brighter future? In which Sofia Östmark, Philip Jennings, Stefan Löfvén, Kristin Skogen Lund and Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson participated.

Fair travel for a sustainable tourism

There is an increasing emphasis and focus on the importance of globally sustainable travel. *Union to Union* supports the Schyst Resande (in English: Fair Travel) network, a collaboration involving Unionen, the Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union (HRF), Childhood, IOGT-NTO, Fair Action, Realstars and *Union to Union*. The aims of Schyst Resande are to inspire more people to travel considerably, and to spread awareness of sustainable tourism. The basic concept is that it is possible to experience the world at the same time as making a positive contribution to employment, the climate and the people in the place visited.

Schyst Resande conducts extensive training activities on sustainable tourism within Sweden's tourism training courses and in study preparation courses at upper secondary schools. A new training course for the travel industry was developed during 2019 and received a highly favourable response. Thanks to a new website, Schyst Resande recorded an increase of 91 percent in the number of unique visitors.



Photo from a seminar arranged by *Schyst Resande*.

“The day with the Schyst Resande instructor was very rewarding. Finally, I got a role model who both worked with travel and took climate threats and other ethical thinking very seriously. And made practical things so that travel would be better.”



Members of the Fairtrade-cooperative SCINPA in the Ivory Coast peel cocoa beans.

Fairtrade – the road to decent, sustainable work

U*nion to Union* supports Fairtrade, which strives for a stronger commitment to union rights, fair working conditions and sustainable supply chains in low- and medium-income countries. *Union to Union* and Fairtrade have a joint mission to increase the understanding and awareness of possible ways to achieve a decent and sustainable working life, under the Decent Work agenda (see page 8).

During the year, a report was launched, "Rätten till en levnadsinkomst: En förutsättning för Agenda 2030" (*The Right to a Living Wage: a Fundamental Condition for Agenda 2030*), which achieved widespread distribution. Fairtrade's ambassadors and member organisations serve a valuable function in the work of increasing commitment. For example, the Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (Handels) started up Fairtrade ambassador courses at all its 19 local branches, which it is assumed will increase awareness of Fairtrade through the organisation, and commitment, during 2020.

14 information projects during 2019

13 articles in trade union newspapers





PHOTO: LINNÉA DURAN

Photo from a protest in Uruguay, in which Industri-ALL participated.

Unions promoting democracy in a shrinking space

Building democracy is at the heart of the union mission. By organising trade unions, people gain an opportunity to influence their everyday lives and future. Being part of the world's largest social movement means acting to resist anti-democratic, authoritarian forces, which is becoming increasingly important.

In 2019, we saw a shrinking space for civil society in several areas of the world. The fact that democracy is in crisis is also confirmed by the annual review of trade union rights, the Global Rights Index, conducted by ITUC with funding from *Union to Union*. The survey measures how fundamental human rights in working life are respected in 145 countries.

The Global Rights Index is used by unions around the world to drive change. *Union to Union*, with LO, TCO and Saco and their affiliates, attracted a lot of media coverage at its launch, with features on SR (Swedish Radio)

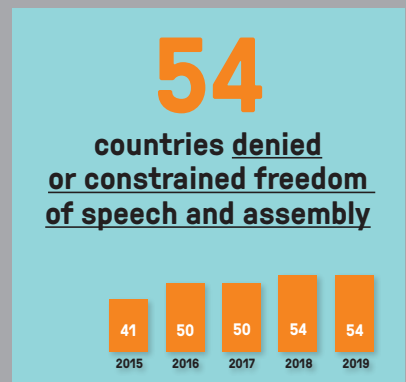
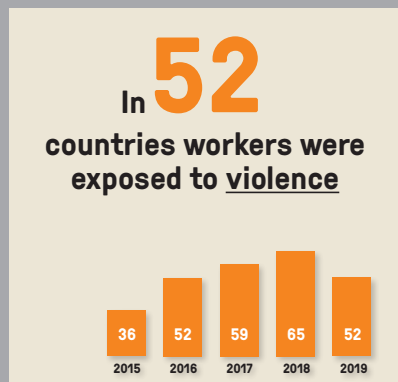
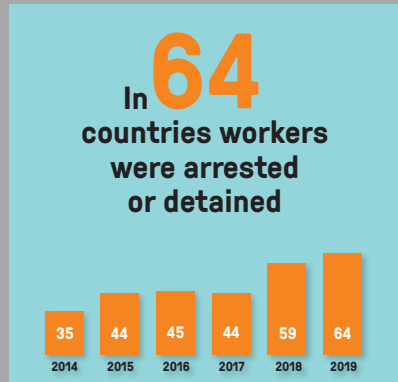
and SVT (Swedish Television), as well as a joint debate article in the *OmVärlden* online current affairs magazine. Last year's Global Rights Index found a serious negative trend. New to the list of bottom-ranked countries is Brazil, which under President Bolsonaro has introduced controversial laws.

Sweden, as an aid actor, must focus more clearly on the global work of unions. The basis of a democracy is that people are able to act as active citizens. The Swedish government's launch of a democracy initiative, with mention of the unions as a particularly important actor in the development of democracy, is therefore welcome.

The Swedish trade union movement, together with sister organisations in 80 countries, is playing an active role in this development. Democracy, human rights and a green and fair working life are vital to the survival of our planet.

Global Rights Index 2019

The ten worst countries for workers



The number of countries included vary between 139 and 145 #rightsindex

Source: ITUC

The Union to Union board

PHOTO: CAMILLA SVENSK



Chairman: Peter Hellberg,
1st Vice President,
Unionen (TCO)

PHOTO: MAGNUS LANJE



Vice Chairman: Heike
Erkers, President,
Akademikerförbundet
SSR (Saco)

PHOTO: FREDRIK HJERLING



Vice Chairman: Berit
Müllerström, 2nd Vice
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PHOTO: KOMMUNAL



Sofia Eriksson, Inter-
national Ombudsman,
Kommunal (LO)

PHOTO: BEA TIGERHELM



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Member of the board,
union Secretary IF Metall
(LO)

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Katarina Holmqvist,
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Torbjörn Bredin, Head of
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Anna Gustafsson,
International Secretary,
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Karin Bätelson, 1st Vice
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Laila Abdallah, Inter-
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