

More members, more united



Jennie Skene, President of the FIIQ, began the Federal Council by greeting the new delegates of the *Association professionnelle des inhalothérapeutes du Québec* and the *Alliance professionnelle des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec* who were present for the first time at a FIIQ+ Federal Council.

"Welcome among us. Welcome to your federation", she said. Jennie Skene also highlighted the presence of Claire Caron, President of the *Association des perfusionnistes du Québec*.

There were many reports on the agenda and the President pointed out that these would draw a picture of the work of the different sectors of activities of the Federation in the past months and that, through the follow-up on the various reports, including the plan of action for FIIQ Tomorrow, we would learn more about what lies ahead. "We will have a better idea of how it will evolve, how it will be implemented and the steps that lie ahead in the coming months", she indicated. "Although we have been in the voting process since the fall, this must not make us forget our priorities, those that we set ourselves as opposed to those that were imposed on us by the government. With the arrival of new professionals in our ranks, the Negotiation Sector had to work to harmonize our three collective agreements. You will be called upon to vote on certain additions that will complete our integrated draft collective agreement," she added.

Madam Skene also took advantage of the opportunity to announce that the counting of the votes of the second wave for Category I personnel was almost over and that we were once again the winners. The delegates applauded the results. However, the FIIQ lost one institution. "This illustrates, once again, the failings and incoherence of Bill 30. As we

have already pointed out, the rules set out in Bill 30 concerning the votes are such that a union organization can obtain the union certification without having obtained a majority of the votes of the nursing and cardio-respiratory care personnel. This is why it is crucial to have only one FIIQ union on the ballot in order not to divide the vote and thus enable a rival organization to squeeze in without having obtained a majority."

"Nurses, nursing assistants and respiratory therapists identify with our union action", she added. "They understand that the FIIQ is the organization that can best respond to their needs and that it has developed unique proficiency for care providers. We must keep up the work in order that the results of the coming waves may meet our expectations." The President told delegates that they would have the opportunity to discuss the measures that need to be implemented to compensate for the incoherence of Bill 30 and to develop our solidarity until the end of the allegiance campaigns.

At the end of the meeting, Jennie Skene paid a tribute to one of the delegates, Claire Tougas, who will retire after 15 years of service. On behalf of all delegates, she wished her a good retirement, that is an active and socially-involved one. The President reminded delegates that the coming debates around the convention theme "Working on projects to build the future together" would be held with new colleagues and that they would serve as a beacon to build the future of the Federation together.

In closing, Jennie Skene stressed the power of the talk delivered by the guest speaker, Robert Jasmin. "His message was a message of hope. We see growing solidarity between the peoples of the world. This solidarity is the seed for a better world", she added. "Closer to home, by various channels such as the Réseau de Vigilance and the Intersyndicale, we can move ahead in this direction. We share issues of concern and we make decisions. More numerous and more united, we have greater chances of finding the right solutions and I am certain that, together, with our new members, we will find the way to build an even better organization," she concluded.

Robert Jasmin, a motivating talk



There was absolute silence during the talk given by the guest speaker, Robert Jasmin, and when he concluded delegates gave him a standing ovation. Lawyer, sociologist and writer, he is President, spokesperson and main speaker for ATTAC-Québec (*Association québécoise pour la taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens*), which he represented at the 5th World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre from January 26 to 31, 2005. The 155,000 participants at this forum attended conferences and workshops on the struggle against poverty, development aid and the debt repudiation for poor countries.

Created by Brazilians in 2001, the World Social Forum takes place each year at the same time as the World Economic Forum in Davos where powerful economic and political decision-makers meet and discuss the world economy, according to the precepts of neoliberalism. The WSF is a meeting place for groups and movements in civil society who oppose neoliberalism and the domination of the world capital and all forms of imperialism and who are engaged in the construction of a society focused on the human being.

Mr. Jasmin explained that the 200 wealthiest people of the planet engage in criminal-like economic practices and that several social movements are working to set up an International Tribunal for economic crimes to rule on the responsibility of banks, multinational corporations, governments in the North, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international financial institutions with regard to the illegal indebteding of the countries and peoples of the South.

The 5th World Social Forum ended with these words: "Another possible world depends on us." Mr. Jasmin insisted on sharing these words with the delegation which are, in his opinion, one of the most beautiful slogans. On the basis of his experience, he stressed that we are not alone, that everywhere people are struggling. "The knowledge of what is happening in the world is a wealth and all wealth must be shared" he said. Mr. Jasmin concluded by pointing out that information is the starter for action and that it is by becoming involved that we will be able to bring about this new world.

In 2006, the World Social Forum will be decentralized to different parts of the world. In 2007, it will be held in Africa.

For more information:

<http://www.quebec.attac.org>

<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/>

A government under surveillance

The Finance minister's refusal

The Charest government needs to be under constant surveillance. This is why the *Réseau de Vigilance* is working to propose another diagnosis of Quebec society and to deconstruct the government's arguments and neoliberal analysis. The *Réseau de Vigilance* asked for a meeting with the Finance Minister in order to present its demands regarding the next provincial budget. Following the Minister's refusal to meet representatives of the *Réseau* in the context of the pre-budgetary consultations, the *Réseau de Vigilance* called a press conference on March 13 in order to make public the orientations it upholds for the 2005-2006 budget. The message is clear. The Quebec government must preserve the integrity of public finances in Quebec and proceed rapidly to repair the damage done, in particular with regard to public services and social protection measures.

Call for mobilization

The *Réseau de Vigilance* calls for actions on April 14 to make known the devastating effects of the policies put forward by the Charest government. Actions are planned to be held in various regions of Quebec such as the Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean, the Ottawa Valley, Eastern Townships, Quebec City and Montreal. The members of the Federation are invited to participate in these activities. You can call the FIIQ office in your region or visit the website of the *Réseau de Vigilance* at www.vigilance.cam.org for more information.



INSIDE Parliament

For the Federation, presenting a brief at legislative hearings is nothing new. On February 17, the Federation once again appeared before a parliamentary commission, this time to express its numerous concerns with regard to Bill 83, the *Act to amend the Act respecting health services and social services*. The Federation presented to Minister Philippe Couillard its major apprehensions with regard to such a bill. Among its concerns, the FIIQ highlighted the notion of user consent, the decentralization of management responsibilities to the local and regional level, and the question of workforce planning and the development of human resources.

The FIIQ also presented a memorandum on the prescription drug policy. This policy was greatly anticipated but it is highly disappointing on more than one count. Indeed, it rapidly becomes apparent that this policy is not based on a public health approach. It is essentially designed to support the original drug industry rather than the citizen and the patient. The memorandum was tabled in February but we do not yet know what will be the outcome.

These two subjects raise many concerns for the Federation. They will thus be the subject of a special publication in the next issue of *FIIQ Actualités*. Keep an eye out for this publication!

Against violence IN THE WORKPLACE

The time has come to take stock of the safety audits. As you may remember, these safety audits were part of the FIIQ plan of action to counter violence in the workplace. Sylvie Boulanger, FIIQ Vice-President, presented the results of these audits.

A time-independent manual

Respondents' comments were unanimously positive. These audits enabled us to raise awareness among some employers on the issue of safety inside and in the vicinity of institutions, and to introduce, when possible, corrective measures. It is important to note the quality of the *Audit Guide – Workplace Safety – Taking Action*. This guide is a serious and efficient tool which continues to identify, two years after its publication, problems that had never been suspected. It is therefore a reference tool for local teams that did not have the opportunity to carry out the safety audit.

Places and problems

Many sites have been audited. Some seem to be more popular than others. Parking lots, basements, hallways, ambulatory services and women's lockers are among the places where the greatest number of problems were identified. But what are the dangerous or unsafe situations which arouse fears? The most frequent ones were able to be corrected easily, quickly and without any significant financial investment.

There is no doubt that the highest number of unsafe and hazardous places were located outside the institutions. The lack of proper lighting, corner-mounted mirrors, signposts and panic buttons are problems that were easy to remedy. These improvements obtained as a result of the safety audits are not to be minimized. They improve the quality of life and the increase the feeling of safety among the personnel.

And now ...

In some places, safety audits led to recommendations that require more considerable budgets. In these cases, the corrective measures are still not implemented. As a matter of fact, several respondents pointed out that it might be time to follow up with employers.

What should we do if the situation persists? The brochure entitled *Follow-up on the safety audit – Workplace Safety* contains information that will help local teams to ensure that the employer takes the needed corrective measures. Do not hesitate to call your union consultant for advice.

At The FIIQ

Regional tables

for MOBILIZATION, EDUCATION and ACTION



Michèle Boisclair, executive officer in charge of the Union Organizing service, presented a recommendation to the delegation designed to set up regional consensus-building tables within the FIIQ. The political context and all the upheavals caused by the adoption of Bills 25 and 30 (creation of networks, creation of agencies, union mergers, new union certifications, new Federation members, local negotiations) require new methods to encourage and support union activity based on local, regional and FIIQ collective action.

The recent experience of the sixteen regional respondents working in the various regional coalitions also confirms the necessity of establishing mechanisms that make it possible to convey information, organize mobilization activities in their territory via local respondents and expand the Federation's power to influence. This is why delegates voted in favour of setting up a regional consensus-building structure with the following main objectives: consensus-building on union action among ourselves and with other union organizations; territorial solidarity; political education; grassroots mobilization. The achievement of these objectives should allow better consensus-building among the unions in each territory, increase territorial mobilization and solidarity, and give a regional colour to the struggles waged by the organization as a whole.

This consensus-building forum should promote analysis, discussions of the issues that concern members as union members, women and citizens and make it possible to make the necessary representations before the territory's agencies or other bodies. It will also allow cre-

ation and maintenance of ties with other groups, to better defend our social gains and express our disagreement with certain policies.

Each FIIQ regional action and consensus-building table will be composed of a local respondent per "site" on the territory, a representative of the regional or sectional unions present on the territory, a representative of the FIIQ Executive Committee and a union consultant for the territory. By fall, these regional action and consensus-building tables will be set up. For the Federation, the future calls for structuring methods by territory, which should make it possible to increase territorial solidarity, enhance solidarity among institutions in the same territory and achieve greater awareness and greater mobilization. The FIIQ regional action and consensus-building tables will be yet another experience for the delegates who get involved in them. This experience can only be positive because these tables will be yet another tool to reach out to members more effectively in their work environment.

The members of the Negotiating Committee

From left to right, first row:

Diane Bouillon, CLSC de la Vallée, Isabelle Gauthier, CHUM — Pavillon Hôtel-Dieu, Johanne Martel, CH Jean-Talon, Édith Pouliot, CH Pierre-Boucher, Diane Gaze, Pavillon Albert-Prévost, Claude Simard, CHUQ — Hôtel-Dieu de Québec.

From left to right, back row:

Christiane Sanoïdo, CLSC Maria-Thibault, Hassan Douali, CHSLD Pavillon Bellevue, Mireille Bélanger, CHUM — Hôpital Notre-Dame, Daniel F. Carpenter, CLSC René-Cassin, Stéphane Gagnon, CH régional De Lanaudière, Jacques Bélanger, CHSLD Idola St-Jean, Réjean Constantineau, CH Laurentien.

Were absent :

Véronique Foisy, substitut CHP, CSSS Haute-Yamaska, Raynald Lapalme, CLSC-CHSLD Thérèse de Blainville, Marlène Bourgelas, substitute for CLSCs, CLSC Beauce-Sartigan, Linda Lapointe, substitute respiratory therapist, CHUQ — Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, Sylvie Poirier, substitute nursing assistant, CHSLD Ste-Dorothée.



The second WAVE OF VOTES COMPLETED



The executive officer in charge of the Union Organizing Service, Michele Boisclair, accompanied by all the union consultants for the Service, took advantage of the Federal Council to present a report on the allegiance campaign. Highly satisfied with the results of the second wave of votes since FIIQ+ won almost all the votes for the nursing and cardio-respiratory care personnel, the Vice-President congratulated the union representatives and welcomed the new members.

During this discussion period, delegates reasserted the principles that govern the Federation's union action during this campaign, namely the respect for union democracy and the preservation of union unity during the process of the amalgamation of union certification units, as well as the reinforcement of union solidarity in view of the first local negotiations. Delegates also reasserted the importance of having only one FIIQ union on the ballot.

It is with a lot of enthusiasm and solidarity that delegates are preparing for the next waves of votes.

FORUM NATIONAL

on nursing workforce planning

The *Forum national sur la planification de la main-d'œuvre infirmière* was set up in fall 1999 in the framework of the general nursing workforce planning process put forward by the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS)*. The work of the task force helped to draw a picture of the situation and to establish the quantitative and qualitative needs with regard to the nursing labour force for all of Quebec in the coming years. An annual update of the planning process was carried out and a report was presented to the MSSS.

Daniel Gilbert, executive officer in charge of the Labour Relations Sector, presented the last report tabled by Suzanne Jean from the MSSS on February 11, 2005. He was accompanied by Thérèse Laforest, consultant for the Task and Organization of Work Sector, and member of the task force on the nursing workforce planning. The report and update are based on the experience of the past two years. The data were compared with the projection presented in the August 2003 report.

Overall, the situation evolved positively in the course of the last two years and we note improvements at various levels. The outlook is more optimistic than it was in August 2003, but we must pursue the actions undertaken after the workforce planning exercises. We see, for example, that there were, in 2004, 63,894 nurses in employment as compared to 62,991 in 2002, which means an additional 903 nurses. This gap can be explained by, among other factors, a better retention

of new nurses, a better rate of graduation, a greater number of graduates from outside Quebec and the return of retired nurses. By considering the projected forecast, revised to take into consideration the trends observed during the past years, the number of nurses will increase from 63,894, in 2004, to 70,788 in 2020. However, we anticipate that the number of nurses required will be 87,907 in 2020, which would mean a shortage of 17,119 nurses. Despite these figures, the situation is relatively stable for the three coming years. The forecast points to a shortage of 1,600 nurses in 2006, 2,100 in 2007, and 2,800 in 2008. There will then be a gradual deterioration on account of the greater number of departures for retirement.

An evaluation was also made of the evolution of the organization of work in the health and social services network, where adaptation strategies in the context of the shortage were introduced: reduction of the pool of inactive nurses, increased recourse to other job titles and increase in the number of hours worked by nurses. Until now, it was mainly the rise of the number of hours worked by nurses, including the increase in overtime hours, and the increased recourse to other job titles, that made it possible to compensate the relatively low increase in the number of nurses in the past years. In the coming years, we anticipate a shortage of nurses that will result from the gap between the expected rate of increase in needs and the rate of increase in nursing personnel.

The Federation will, for its part, continue to participate in the Forum since it is an important source of information on the evolution of the nursing workforce, and provides useful tools for action.

FIVE DEMANDS and one large action



On last International Women's Day, the five demands put forward by Quebec women in the context of the 2005 World March of Women were officially made public. This date marks the beginning of the political pressure campaign to win these demands. The women of Quebec aspire to:

- **EQUALITY:** adoption of a global policy on the status of women; the preservation of the missions and mandates of the *Conseil du statut de la femme* and the *Secrétariat à la condition féminine*
- **FREEDOM:** an agreement with the Government of Canada to protect the rights of migrant women who are victims of trafficking, and prevent any expulsion or deportation of these women
- **SOLIDARITY:** coverage of the essential needs of people whose incomes come from Income Security or the Loans and Bursaries Program.
- **JUSTICE:** abolish disparities in pay for atypical workers; the recognition of employee status for persons who participate in work integration measures
- **PEACE:** national awareness and education campaign conducted over a ten-year period to fight violence against women

The Global Charter in Quebec City

A major event will take place on May 7, at 1 p.m. in Place de Paris in Old Quebec. Women's Global Charter for Humanity will arrive by boat after having travelled through one dozen countries and it will be greeted by women from all regions of Quebec. A long human chain will carry the Charter to the National Assembly. This will be an excellent opportunity to make our voices heard and to give the Quebec government a clear message. The FIIQ considers this to be an important event and invites its members to mobilize and come to Quebec City to show our determination and support for the five Quebec demands. To sign up for the relay march, you can communicate with your regional table of women's groups or visit the web site of the *Fédération des femmes du Québec* at www.ffq.qc.ca.

Ten years after Beijing

The FIIQ, represented by Sylvie Boulanger, executive officer in charge of the Status of Women Sector, participated in the forty-ninth session of the *Commission on the Status of Women* held from February 28 to March 11, 2005 at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Ten years after the fourth *World Conference on Women*, held in Beijing, delegations and thousands of representatives of civil society drew a mitigated portrait of achievements in favour of women.

Improvements have been noted with regard to the access of women and girls to health-care and education. However, new challenges lie ahead like the fight against the rise in the number of women with HIV/AIDS, the feminisation of poverty and the trafficking in human beings.

A democratic structure for local negotiations

The iniquitous Bill 30, passed by the Charest government in December 2003, obliges the Federation to adapt to this new situation despite current or future legal actions. As in the case of the merger of certification units, we must reflect and take measures in order to succeed in these local negotiations as FIIQ+, regardless of the scope of these negotiations, whether there are 5, 10 or 20 matters on the bargaining table. At the time of going to press, there was no common understanding of the level of decentralization, quite the contrary...

In spite of the reserves we still have with regard to this unintelligent and imposed decentralisation, the Federation's responsibility with regard to its members, makes it imperative to put in place the necessary elements to face up to this new reality. It is important to set the groundwork before we begin these first local negotiations and to set up local negotiation structures that are democratic, representative and adapted to this new reality.

In light of this, delegates adopted the creation of local decisional negotiation structures. There will be other measures, such as training sessions for consultants to act as spokespersons and for local union representatives. The Federation will offer all the needed support to its unions throughout this long process.

A THREE-PRONG local negotiation structure

LOCAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Local council for negotiations

Local negotiating committee

Local general assembly

As the supreme body of the union, the local general assembly has the broadest and final powers on the negotiations and it is composed of all the professionals covered by the certification: nurses, nursing assistants, child nurses, respiratory therapists and perfusionists.

Local council for negotiations

The Local council for negotiations takes on overall responsibility for the progress of the negotiations, takes into account the diversity of members, missions and sites covered by the local negotiations in an institution and serves as a guarantee for members. It enables the local negotiating committee to validate its mandates and strategies and to circulate information more widely.

The Council is composed of the local negotiating committee, the members of the local executive committee or the local board of directors or the union council, as the case may be; the local information and support officer; the local status of women representative; in large centres or networks, we could add a certain number of department or site delegates.

Local negotiating committee

The local negotiating committee is the body that carries out all the activities related to the local negotiations.

It may be composed of:

- one executive officer (the regional or sectional unions in the networks should appoint one regional executive officer for each network if necessary);
- two (2) grievance agents for their knowledge of the collective agreement and local problems;
- the status of women representative to ensure that concerns such as job instability and casual employment, bridging work and family life and violence are granted warranted attention;
- the FIIQ consultant who acts as local spokesperson; and
- an information and support officer to ensure that the circulation of information and mobilization of all members on all the sites and all the missions. With the decentralization of a part of the negotiations to the local level, it is advisable that there be a second person in certain large centres or networks.

These local negotiation structures should be set up by local teams by the month of May since the training of union representatives will begin soon.

Family Medicine Groups WILL BE PERMANENT

Daniel Gilbert, executive officer in charge of the Labour Relations Sector, accompanied by the coordinator Sylvie Bissonnette, presented a report on the progress of the work on Family Medicine Groups (FMGs). The last report had been presented to the December 2003 Federal Council. Mr. Gilbert therefore reviewed the issue before presenting the most recent information.

Since the coming into office, of the new minister for health and social services, Philippe Couillard, at the end of April 2003, things have changed. Mr. Couillard has a different objective and hopes to set up 350 FMGs instead of the 20 that were planned in the management-union agreement. According to the Minister, this is the best option. Studies show that this project is a success. The FIIQ was therefore convened to a meeting at the end of January 2005 by the MSSS where it was informed of the decision of the Minister Couillard to make the FMGs permanent. The Minister thus wanted to determine the conditions for the transition with the FIIQ. At this meeting, it was also indicated that the academic profile for nurses to obtain a permanent position in the FMGs would be the baccalaureate. The FIIQ completely rejected this idea since there are currently nurses who do not have a baccalaureate who work in FMGs and the work is performed successfully.

However, an agreement was signed regarding the permanent status of the FMGs and the Federal Council invited delegates to explore with employers how they intended to implement FMGs on a permanent basis. As for the expanded role of nurses, the *Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec* and the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* are currently working to review the sharing of tasks between general practitioners and nurses. Last fall, they set up a joint committee in charge of proposing new forms of collaboration between physicians and nurses in the doctor's office, FMGs and CLSCs. Then, the committee will analyze the role and duties of the front-line nurse practitioner in Quebec and the committee will pursue its work until next fall. The FIIQ, by way of the Task and Organization of Work Sector, will keep a close eye on this question.

The work of the PAY EQUITY Committee takes shape



Lina Bonamie, executive officer in charge of the Negotiation Secotr, accompanied by the consultant, Sophie Fontaine, presented a progress report on the work performed on pay equity. She reminded delegates that Judge Julien's judgment, delivered in January 2004, significantly altered the context of this work, because one of the main aspects of this decision rendered Chapter IX of the Pay Equity Act unconstitutional. As a result, public and parapublic sector employees, including nursing and cardiorespiratory care practitioners, are now covered by the Act's general system and the *Conseil du trésor* can no longer evade its obligation to bring about pay equity for all of its employees.

However, the mere disappearance of Chapter IX did not automatically allow union organizations to join together in view of achieving a distinct pay equity program. This obstacle to the efforts of the Intersyndicale (CSN, CSQ, FTQ, FIIQ) no longer exists, however, since a legislative amendment was adopted by the Quebec Government last December, allowing bargaining agents to join together, with the employer's consent, to request a distinct program in organizations of 100 or more employees. Last January 19 thus marked a major step on the pay equity issue. Since that date, the CSN, the CSQ, the FTQ and the FIIQ have been able to join together officially to continue work on this issue.

At this meeting, the Pay Equity Committee, composed of 12 members, eight of whom rep-

resent the union party, was officially formed. The FIIQ is represented by Richard Beaulé, coordinator for the provincial negotiations, and by Sophie Fontaine, consultant to the Negotiation Sector and responsible for the work on pay equity.

The first posting at last!

In the next few weeks, the Pay Equity Committee, as provided by the Act, prepared the contents of the first posting, which must present the first two stages of the pay equity program. This posting began officially on February 14, 2005 and includes the composition of the Pay Equity Committee and the identification of the job classes and their sexual predominance, the description of the evaluation method and tools, and the investigative approach used by the *Intersyndicale* and the *Conseil du trésor*. The list of job classes, the job evaluation system and the job analysis questionnaire are also attached. Persons who wish to send comments to the Pay Equity Committee must do so in writing within 60 days of a posting. The comments must be received no later than April 15, 2005.

Since February 14, only one **posting notice** has been affixed to the bulletin boards in the different work environments where there are nursing and cardiorespiratory care practitioners. However, the full version is available at the Human Resources Department of all institutions and from the unions. The local teams also received a copy of all the relevant documentation, and it is possible that some members have already consulted the posting documents at the

union offices. A version in Pdf format is also available on the FIIQ Web site.

This posting is important because it is evidence of the work accomplished at the *Intersyndicale* since April 9, 2001. The Committee has received some observations to date, but these are more questions of detail or clarification. Up to now, there has been nothing major. However, the full evaluation of all predominantly female and male jobs is not yet completed and is not covered by the current posting.

To facilitate the progress of the work, the Pay Equity Committee has set up two subcommittees to work at the *Intersyndicale* and with the employer party on evaluating the jobs. The first will deal with the health-care job classes and the second with the education job classes and the agencies covered by the program (RIO, Public Protector, etc.). In all, this involves evaluation of a little more than 450 female and male job categories. The discussions regarding the evaluation have resumed with the employer party and a work schedule, which could be described as sustained, has been agreed to.

The Pay Equity Committee is currently discussing more technical issues related to the points of interpretation of the plan. It is thus seeking to specify some more ambiguous elements and give clearer indications to the union and employer evaluators to facilitate their work and discussions. This Committee is also mandated to deal with the comments received during posting, evaluate their relevance and act on them.

IXth Inter-American Regional Conference

Two participants, Lise Martel, in charge of Solidarity work, and Lucie Mercier, consultant for the Health-Care Sector, represented the FIIQ at the IXth Inter-American Regional Conference (IAMRECON) of the Public Services International (PSI) held in Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil, from November 18 to 20, 2004. Under the theme "Unite, mobilize and organize for quality public services!", the two main questions discussed at this conference were the Quality Public Services Campaign and the triennial PSI regional Programme of Action.

The Vice-President, Lina Bonamie, and the consultant, Lucie Mercier, presented the priorities adopted for the 2005-2007 Programme of Action for the Inter-American region, namely: winning workers' rights; PSI global campaign for quality public services; public sector workers and their work; equality, equity and diversity; union development and international solidarity; international union work; and communication and information.

Thus, in order to counter the negative effects of globalization, in particular the flow of capital, the acquisitions and mergers of corporations, and the privatization of public

services by national and multinational corporations, the PSI Inter-American region works to protect the rights and working conditions of members, develop public service unions throughout the region and develop quality public services for the entire population of the continent. The long-term objective is to promote social justice, equality between men and women, and democratic structures throughout the Americas.

The Inter-American region includes 98 affiliated organizations in 35 countries, for a total of approximately 3,300,000 public service workers. The Inter-American Regional Conference (IAMRECON) is the highest-ranking regional PSI body, which meets once during the period between two PSI congresses, which are held every five years. For more information: www.world-psi.org.

Moreover, in support of the union activists murdered in Colombia, the FIIQ wrote a letter to the President of the Republic, Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, to express its indignation at the fact that the Colombian government does not respect its international commitments and does not show any will to inquire, take legal action against and condemn those who are responsible for these murders. The Federation called on its affiliated unions to do the same.



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