

Public Services International – Korea Council

## **PSI-KC News : March, 2007**

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### **Public Services International - Korea Council (PSI-KC) News 2007-1**

March 20, 2007

The PSI-KC held its monthly executive committee meeting at KGEU office on March 13. Following is a brief report of the meeting including trends and union activities in the public sector.

#### **The Federation of Korean Public Trade Unions (FKPU)**

The federation took part in the FKPU's Women Workers' Rally at a university conference hall in Seoul in commemoration of the 99<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day on March 8. The FKPU also launched the campaign, "getting clean water is one of basic human rights" during the rally in accordance with PSI's Water, Women and Workers Campaign.

And the FKPU is planning to hold a daily rally from March 29 in front of Ministry of Planning and Budget. The main slogans of the rally will be abolition of government directive on budget compilation, no to government manipulation on public corporation through management evaluation system and withdrawal of arbitrary introduction of the retirement pension fund.

From April 9 to 14, the FPETU from Mongolia will visit Korea to conclude the MOU with the FKPU on exchange programme, which started in 2006.

#### **The Korea Federation of Public Services & Transportation Workers' Union (KPTU)**

The Korean Public & Social Service Workers' Union (KPSU), a newly formed industrial union in the federation, elected its leadership through a general vote in which more than 25,000 members participated recording 81.63% of voting rate. The president elect Bro. LEE Young Won and Director General elect Bro. KIM Myoung Cheol won 66.7% of the vote. The vice presidents will be elected in the end of March by union delegates.

The federation is planning to hold a national congress in the end of April, at which the KPTU is expected to elect the president of the federation. The former KPSU (federation) and other federations of freight, bus and taxi workers have been consolidated into the Korean Federation of Public Service & Transportation Workers' Union (KPTU) since January 17, 2007.

#### **The Korean Government Employees' Union (KGEU)**

The KGEU joined the National Women's Rally at the public square in front of the Seoul Station in commemoration of the 99<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day on March 8, coorganised by the KCTU, the Korean Women Peasants Association (KWPA) and the Korean Democratic Labor Party (KDLP). The main slogans of the rally were abolition of discrimination against irregular workers, realisation of substantial minimum wage, strengthening of maternity protection, guarantee of women peasants' legal status, no to Kor-US FTA negotiation, and opposition to war.

On March 6, the National Assembly passed a bill of “the Act on Establishment and Operations of National University Corporate Ulsan University of Science and Technology”. The KGEU stated that the corporatisation of national universities is part of serious attacks on public services without any consensus and that it would cause deterioration of public education and democracy in universities, structural adjustment of the staff and soaring of tuition fees. The KGEU will fight back the wave of corporatization of national universities with other trade unions and civic organisations. In 2005, the KGEU, the Korean University Workers’ Union (KUWU) and the Korean Professors’ Union (KPU) etc formed a coalition to stop corporatisation of national universities and to strengthen public education.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) issued another directive on “Promoting the Transformation and Legalisation of Illegal Organisations in order to Establish a Sound Public Officials Industrial Relations” on March 7, 2007. The ministry warns local governments that re-used KGEU offices should be closed down by March 30, 2007 under responsibility of mayors or governors. Moreover, the ministry demands local governments to ‘guide’ KGEU members to withdraw from illegal organisations and to join legal ones instead, to discipline again those reinstated, and to ‘recommend’ the stop to payment of membership dues to the KGEU by cancellation of individual cash management system (CMS).

### **The Korean Health & Medical Workers’ Union (KHMWU)**

The union held the annual congress on March 8 to confirm its 2007 activity plan and budget. The 6 major activities of the union in 2007 will be as follows; 1/ Organising irregular workers, 2/ Guarantee of basic labour rights, 3/ Impediment of Worsening of Medical Service Act, Kor-US FTA negotiations and introduction of profit-oriented hospitals, 4/ Winning of industrial collective bargaining, 5/ Empowerment of the union as an industrial union, 6/ Strengthening of solidarity activities. The union will hold another congress in April to confirm the 2007 collective bargaining draft.

The delegation from the Federation of Hospital Workers’ Unions in Thailand visited the KHMWU for exchange programme and also participated in the congress in March 8. Most members of the federation are irregular workers suffering from serious discrimination in job security and wages. Of 150 thousand workers at national hospitals in Thailand, 80 thousands are irregular workers.

### **The Korean National Electrical Workers Union (KNEWU)**

In January, the Solidarity Network of Trade Unions in Electricity Industry, in which 9 unions including the KNEWU are taking part, formed the preparation committee to establish an industrial union in electricity industry. The committee is expected to propose a concrete draft for an industrial union based on the consensus among the 9 unions by the end of 2007. If the draft is confirmed by the unions, a single industrial union in electricity industry is expected to be established by 2009.

### **Solidarity Action against labour repression and political killings in the Philippines**

The PSI-KC also decided to organise a solidarity action against labour repression and political killings in the Philippines. The PSI-KC will organise a protest rally in front of the Philippines Embassy in Korea and deliver protest letters to the embassy. At the same time, the affiliates decided to get more members involved and aware of the situation in the Philippines by organizing campaigns including sending protest letters to the Philippines government and one-person demonstration in front of the embassy.

KIM Seok

Director General of PSI-KC

C.P. : +82-(0)16-237-5940

email: kisto jinbo.net kisto kgeu.org

Executive Director of International Relations

Korean Government Employees' Union

Tel: +82-2-2631-1948 Fax: +82-2-2631-1949

Web: (Kor) <http://www.kgeu.org>

(Eng) <http://inter.kgeu.org>