



NEWSLETTER

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ICFTU President Fackson Shamenda Invited to Japan

Jointly invited by JILAF and RENGO

JILAF and RENGO jointly invited ICFTU President Fackson Shamenda, who is also the President Emeritus of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions, to Japan from June 10-16, 2004. This marked the first visit to Japan for President Shamenda since he was elected ICFTU President in May 2000. The 18th ICFTU Congress is scheduled to be held in Miyazaki City, Japan, in December 2004, and President Shamenda accepted to come to Japan to call on relevant parties in the host country to ask for their cooperation in convening the Congress and to get familiar with the actual situation in Japan, including the trade union movement. Programs during his stay were prepared by JILAF and RENGO.

On the first day of his stay in Japan, he and nine English-speaking Africa Team members (who were also participating in the JILAF Invitation Program during the same period) met with JILAF executives, including President Teruhito Tokumoto, and attended a lecture given by President Tokumoto, entitled Present Situation and Problems Which the Trade Union Movement in Japan Faces Now. This lecture helped to promote a greater understanding of the trade union movement in Japan.

Meetings with RENGO Leaders, the Minister and Business Organization

President Shamenda was able to meet with top leaders from the world of politics as well as those from labor and management, through arrangements by RENGO. First, he visited RENGO's head office and talked with President Kiyoshi Sasamori and General Secretary Tadayoshi Kusano. On June 15, he addressed to a meeting of the Steering Committee of RENGO and also spoke at a RENGO Secretariat meeting. In these meetings, he expressed his appreciation to RENGO for hosting the Congress and called for further cooperation to promote its success. In the meeting with Chikara Sakaguchi, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, President Shamenda extended his thanks to the Japanese Government for its cooperation



▲ Talking with RENGO President Sasamori

and asked for further support. Moreover, he invited the Prime Minister to attend the opening ceremony of the Congress. He also met with Hiroshi Okuda, Chairman of the Japan Business Federation, and invited him to attend the Congress.

Visit to the Congress Venue and a Trip to Hiroshima

During a visit to Miyazaki City, the site for the 18th ICFTU Congress, President Shamenda had the opportunity to meet with the president and the general secretary of RENGO Miyazaki Local, as well as with the Vice Governor of Miyazaki Prefecture, the mayor of Miyazaki, and other relevant officials. He thanked RENGO Miyazaki Local, Miyazaki Prefecture and the City of Miyazaki for their cooperation and support for the World Congress, and called on them to lend further assistance. He later paid a visit to the Miyazaki International Convention Center, the venue site for the upcoming Congress, and expressed his satisfaction at the progress underway for the preparations.

According to his request, a visit to Hiroshima was also arranged and there he was able to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and received a guided tour from the director of the Museum. Later he met with the president and the general secretary of the RENGO Hiroshima Local, as well as the mayor of Hiroshima City. This gave him the opportunity to learn more about Hiroshima's strong desire for total elimination of nuclear weapons from all of the world. He also learned of the fervent hopes for world peace that Japan's trade union

movement shares. He commented, "Although I have learned about the tragic outcome produced by nuclear weapons from literature, my visit to Hiroshima has made me realize what fatal and awful consequences they produce. I recommend that all Congress participants pay a visit to Hiroshima while in Japan."

Significance of the 18th ICFTU Congress Emphasized at a Special Lecture

On the morning of June 15, President Shamenda gave a special lecture at RENGO headquarters on the theme of *A New Challenge for the International Trade Union Movement*. The lecture was attended by approx. 50 people, including officials from RENGO and its affiliates, JILAF staff, officials from related ministries and agencies, and scholars and journalists. President Shamenda mentioned that the key slogan of the coming ICFTU World Congress was *Globalization of Solidarity: Creation of the International Trade Union Movement for the Future*, and he noted that the challenge is how we can overcome the negative aspects of globalization. He then emphasized the significance of the upcoming Congress.

President Shamenda stated that it is important to strengthen solidarity not only among ICFTU affiliates but also among international organizations and with NGOs through better communication. He added that he hopes the Congress will serve as a forum for advocating the strengthening of the international trade union movement.



▲ Special lecture by President Shamenda

Project Evaluation Meeting in the Philippines

JILAF has continued to work with the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) to carry out projects in the four areas of occupational safety and health, productivity and labor-management relations, women's rights, and organizing, dating back to 1994 when JILAF first launched its Field Project program. In June of 2004, JILAF and TUCP held a meeting to conduct project evaluation for the first time in the two regions of Luzon and Visayas/Mindanao. Evaluation was made with regard to seminars in three of these project areas (excluding organizing).



National seminars have been held annually in each of the regions over the past decade. And although an action plan had been drawn up for the duration of each seminar, there had been no

place for the participants to exchange views and information after the seminars. This meant a lack of opportunities to consider questions such as: What activities did the participants promote after returning to their federations or workplaces? What difficulties did they face? What results did they yield? Therefore, JILAF and TUCP decided to convene an evaluation meeting in June 2004 and in January or February 2005. Its purpose is to form a network to elucidate exactly what activities are being conducted, and to also help exchange information and discuss future projects.

At the June meeting, a report on specific results was presented by a participant from a certain union, and this report allowed us to confirm



that the knowledge/ideas provided by the seminars are helpful in improving working conditions and the work environment. Another report by a participant from an affiliated federation also showed that the seminars were useful regarding the federation's activities and organizing efforts. This first evaluation meeting has become a forum for assessing projects and analyzing problems from diversified viewpoints, in line with the characteristics of each of the project areas. Moreover, all of the participants helped to discuss, draw up and confirm a specific activity plan towards the second evaluation meeting. A network that links the secretariat and the participants was established so as to regularly report on activities and hold network meetings. Since July, the network has continued to receive reports from participants concerning what they gained through the seminar. Making full use of this network, JILAF and TUCP will hold the second evaluation meeting next year with the aim of improving and strengthening future projects.

NTUC/JILAF Holds a School Management Meeting in Nepal 75% of Program Participants Enter Public Schools

In fiscal 2004, fourteen non-formal schools are being operated in various parts of Nepal. Prior to the opening of classes, school directors, coordinators and teachers gathered together in Katmandu from June 23-25 to discuss school management.

This project was started in 1996 with the objective of providing children from poor families with the opportunity to obtain a basic education. It also aims to help children and their parents realize the importance of education and encourage program participants to matriculate to public schools.

According to meeting reports regarding the 14 non-formal schools, 716 out of 762 students who entered the schools last year completed the course, and 574 students in total (75.33%) matriculated to public school. The students who have completed the program are placed in classes for second to fourth-year students in the public school system, according to their scholastic ability. Some of the students are now in the ninth grade and have the chance to pass the SLC and go on to college in the near future.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that there are some cases where transferring to public school is difficult,

because certain public schools lack the ability to take in students who have completed non-formal schools. There are also some students

who gave up attending school because their parents changed jobs. The meeting also noted the problems that need to be addressed, including the improvement of public schools, how to strengthen a movement to help realize compulsory education, and how to provide vocational training courses for students who cannot enter public school.



International Cooperation in Thailand by Trade Unions

More than two years have passed since I came to Thailand in July 2002. I am in charge of a program called Grant Aid for Grassroots Activities and Human Security. This program is designed to directly support the small-scale projects implemented by NGOs, local governments, schools, hospitals and others. I am in constant contact with NGOs around the world, including those in Japan.

Here in Thailand, Japanese NGOs and volunteer workers are very active in promoting their initiatives. Japanese trade unions including industrial organizations and unit unions meanwhile also conduct activities here related to international cooperation. For example, RENGO FAN recently carried out their ninth local project in May of 2004. These efforts have certainly helped to contribute towards Thai society. Some people, however, believe that Thailand no longer requires assistance from abroad. In fact, supporting organizations, including trade unions, continue to shift their focus to other countries that appear to need more assistance. I have many chances to visit local regions on official business. I have seen roads that are well paved even in the mountains, and I sometimes see well built primary schools. It would appear that infrastructure and public welfare have reached a certain level.

Nevertheless, there remains a wide and significant gap between the rich and the poor in Thailand, and the country faces many problems such as AIDS, drugs, and issues related to ethnic minorities and refugees. And there are still areas that the Thai government alone cannot fully deal with. Therefore, the Section of the Embassy,

PROFILE



Tomotaka Inoue

Second Secretary,
Japanese Embassy in Thailand.
Joined the Secretariat of Goka Roren, formerly JEC RENGO. Later, joined Chemical League 21. Subsequently, assigned as second secretary at the Japanese Embassy in Thailand

which I belong to, provides support and assistance in such related areas. In my opinion, it is desirable for the trade unions that conduct international cooperation in Thailand to carefully select areas that are really important at the local grassroots level. Given this situation, I hope RENGO and JILAF can serve as coordinators among countries, NGOs and project areas, which need international cooperation and support. And I hope they will also serve as a mediator between these organizations and industrial trade union organizations as well as unit unions which aim to implement international cooperation activities.

International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions — No.5

Education-related Support by Teachers Unions

Norio Fukuoka

Director of Organization Bureau
Japan Teachers Union

The Japan Teachers Union first launched its international cooperation activities in 1991 under the principle of nonmilitary, civilian international contribution. The first initiatives were conducted in Cambodia in an effort to rebuild the education system that had been ruined under the Pol Pot regime. We worked with NPOs to open two schools, and since 1995 a teacher training project has been provided in cooperation with Rajapat Institute Buriram, a teacher training college in Thailand. Cambodia's Education Ministry came to play a major role in managing the projects in 2001, and they have been managed on an autonomous basis since 2002.

In Mongolia, we worked with Education International (EI) and Mongolian Enlightenment Federation of Trade Unions (MEFTU) to implement projects for children. A seminar for raising awareness concerning child labor was held for school personnel, parents and other persons involved in the field of education. Moreover, clothing and stationary items were provided to



▲ Staff of Rajapat Institute Buriram participate in the teacher training project in Cambodia.

disadvantaged children.

Currently, we are focusing efforts on a project for democratizing teachers unions in Indonesia. In 2000, we began to provide training for union activists related to trade union rights and the right of collective bargaining. This training aims to help the Indonesian Teachers Union (PGRI) transform into a genuinely free, democratic trade union in the era after the Suharto regime has collapsed. This project is

1.6 million, is able to transform it into a democratic trade union, then this may help the trade union movement in Indonesia to undergo significant changes. And if the awareness shared by educators can change, then the awareness of children — who will play a major role in building the future society — will also change. Therefore, the role of teachers unions is very important in promoting a free, democratic trade union movement.

New Labor Law in Indonesia

In Indonesia, a new Manpower Act (No.13/2003) was enacted in 2003. Eleven labor-related laws that had existed were consolidated into one with this new act.

Indonesia has adopted a direction of reform and democratization after the Suharto era, and has allowed free trade union activity. The country has ratified all of the eight core ILO conventions, including ones concerning freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, and the ban on gender discrimination, forced labor and child labor.

A gist of the new law, which incorporates ILO's principles and its spirit, is as follows.

1. To establish a tripartite cooperation body both at the central and local level, which discusses industry-related issues.
2. To set up a labor-management cooperation body at enterprise level, which discusses labor-management problems.
3. Trade unions can be organized with a membership of 10 workers or more. A national federation can be formed under certain conditions and is not required to register with the government.
4. Statutory working hours per week are 40 hours. The employer

is required to pay overtime premium, which in some cases appear disciplinary. For instance, up to four times the regular wage is paid for work on public holiday overtime work.

5. Workers are guaranteed the right to strike and may remain on strike as long as they desire without the fear of loss of wages, provided that seven days' notice is given to the government authority and the employer.
6. Workers who were dismissed on the grounds of the company shall be paid discharge and long-service allowances, and traveling expenses for their family members to return home.
7. Annual paid leave is fixed at 12 days. Menstruation leave can be taken two days with full pay. Workers can take two days of fully paid leave for circumcision for their children.
8. As to flexible work patterns, new provisions for apprentices, part-time workers and outsourcing were added.

Active national labor organizations are now inspecting and checking the observance of legal requirements by employers at the workplace, and promoting a nationwide campaign for fully exercising workers' rights that are specified by the Manpower Act.

Report on the 9th RENGOFAN Project

The 9th RENGOFAN International Support Project was carried out from 23 to 31 May, 2004. From Japanese side, nine people from industrial federations and JILAF participated in the program. They visited NPOs based in Laos and Thailand, and also had an opportunity to see the living conditions in the slums of Bangkok. This valuable experience made all the participants think about how they can better promote international cooperation activities.

The biggest event of RENGOFAN was a sports festival held in Thailand. This year 5,000 people participated, far exceeding the record attendance of 3,500 in 2003. The festival attracted such a great number of people partly because the event was held in commemoration of the Empress Dowager's 72nd birthday and Prime Minister Thaksin's sister-in-law, Weena Shinawatra, acted as the head of the executive committee. However, the Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT) as a national center certainly had a reduced

presence in the event to some degree. LCT is expected to take the initiative in managing this project next year.



▲ Sports Festival in Bangkok, Thailand.

JILAF Calendar (June — August 2004)

1. Invitation Programs

- Southeast/Oceania Team: May 27-June 9
- English-Speaking Africa Team: June 10-23
- Central America Team: June 24-July 7
- French-speaking Africa Team: July 8-21

2. Field Projects

- Philippines TUCP Project Evaluation Meeting (POSITIVE, etc.): June 1-19;

- Quezon, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro
- Nepal NTUC School Management Meeting: June 21-27; Katmandu
- Pakistan ICFTU-PC National Seminar: July 5-12; Islamabad
- Bangladesh ICFTU-BC POSITIVE Seminar: July 17-23; Dhaka
- Indonesia ITUC/ITF Basic Seminar for Trade Unions: July 27-August 12; Jakarta, Palembang, and Makasar
- Mongol CMTU Organization Manage-

ment Seminar: August 18-21; Ulan Bator

3. Surveys and Public Information

- Survey of Community Business in Canada and Scotland: July 17-30
- Survey of the Information Industry in the US: August 29- September 10
- 13th ICFTU-APRO/OTCILS/JILAF Advanced Leadership Course in Singapore: August 16-September 2