HANOI DECLARATION

The 9th Asia Pacific Regional Meeting of the Trades Union International of Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries (UITBB), the TUI (Construction) of WFTU was held at the Trade Union Hotel, Hanoi, Vietnam on 7.-8. October 2014.

This Asia Pacific Regional Meeting was attended by 28 participants from Unions in Vietnam, Japan, Bangladesh, India and People’s Democratic Republic of North Korea.

In this meeting an in depth exchange of views on world politics today has taken place. The capitalist class attack on the working class in almost all countries of the world and the snatching of trade union and democratic rights came in the discussion papers.

In their opening remarks, Brother Nguyen Van Binh, President of Vietnam National Union Building Workers (VNUBW) and of Brother Debanjan Chhabrabarti, UITBB General Secretary, expressed their deep concern over the world political situation and underlined the rich heritage of the world working class movement in confronting the Capitalist class, expressing their demands and also protecting their hard earned rights.
The papers on health and safety of the workers in construction industry revealed many factual facts. Discussion on these papers indicates the vulnerable working conditions of the workers in the respective countries. In spite of Government efforts to provide some basic facilities in Vietnam, the situation has not improved remarkably. In India and Bangladesh, the situation is worse. In Japan, the Government takes some steps in this respect due to constant surveillance of the union but that is not at desired level.

The participants presented ample facts on the deadly impact of all forms of asbestos, including so-called white asbestos (chrysotile), on the health of workers and everybody who is exposed to asbestos fibers. According to the World Health Organization about 125 million people in the world are exposed to asbestos at the workplace and more than 100,000 deaths each year are attributable to asbestos-related diseases (mesothelioma, asbestosis, lung cancer, etc.). The delegates underlined the longstanding position of the UITBB in favor of a total ban on asbestos. The Meeting firmly denounced and condemned developed countries such as Canada and their multinationals for continuing to produce and export to poorer countries this lethal material making millions of profit from this deadly trade.

In view of the fact that asbestos is still largely used and acknowledging the gravity of the situation and the level of threat posed by the continued use of asbestos, the meeting urged countries which still use asbestos to
- Give priority to safer alternatives and implement an orderly transition to these alternatives. Workers and the community must be protected from exposure to fibres during the transitional period.
- Establish a diagnostic regime so that victims can be correctly diagnosed and receive timely medical treatment and rehabilitation.
- Make financial restitution to victims of asbestos related illnesses by paying equitable compensation.
- Hold companies involved in the transfer of asbestos production to newly industrialising countries criminally liable in the country of origin and country of operation.
- Ratify the ILO convention 162 and work towards developing National Programmes for Elimination of Asbestos-Related Diseases (NPEAD) in a timely manner.

The discussion paper on a total ban on nuclear weapons reminded the participants of many unknown facts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing and its after effects.

The presentations on working women working conditions in the construction industry attracted the attention of all participants and expressed views to give more positive attention to protect the women workers legally.

The papers on migrant labour of different countries throw the light on the suffering of immigrants in the receiving countries. Respective Governments are yet to take adequate initiative to protect their own country workers abroad.
In the light of the rich exchange of views and on the basis of the suggestions made in the research papers, the Regional meeting unanimously took up the following programme of action and massive campaign within the rank and file members of UITBB affiliates:

1. A resolution on a total ban of nuclear weapons has been approved. This resolution is to be endorsed by all UITBB affiliates and sent to their respective heads of State. (Copy of resolution enclosed)

2. UITBB affiliates will carry out a signature campaign (Copy enclosed) for a total ban of nuclear weapons among workers. Copy of the collected signatures to be sent to the respective country head, to the Japanese UITBB affiliates and to UITBB by email, etc.

3. On 8th March every year UITBB will observe International Women Day to raise our voice for protecting Women Workers.

4. On 28th April, every year UITBB must gear as an International Day for safety and health for construction workers.

5. On 18th December, every year, we must observe International Day to Protect Immigrant Workers.

6. From 3rd October 2014 to 3 October 2015, the 70th anniversary of WFTU to be observed by UITBB affiliates in a befitting manner by organizing training events for union organizers, publishing booklets on WFTU history of struggle on class based politics, seminars, mass meetings, etc.

7. Launch preparations and an extensive campaign for the success of the 16th World Conference of UITBB to be held 15 – 17 April 2015 in Uruguay.