

GMB**GMB@WORK**

The GMB International Solidarity Fund

GMB and Banana Link working together in solidarity

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



Many tropical fruit workers in Latin America live in poverty and their most basic rights fail to be respected in the workplace. The **GMB International Solidarity Fund** enables branches and regions to support directly the organising, legal and education work of Latin American agricultural trade unions. These unions need our solidarity to defend the rights of plantation workers and empower representatives to collectively bargain for Decent Work.

'As trade unionists we are fighting a veritable war against a pernicious capitalist system that puts profits before people, makes a virtue out of greed and is exploiting people the world over. Nowhere is this more graphically illustrated than in the plantations of the Americas where our fellow trade unionists struggle against overwhelming odds to improve the lot of their members producing fruit for British supermarkets'.

Bert Schouwenburg, GMB International Officer.

Delivering gains across Latin America!

The GMB International Solidarity Fund often provides support when partner unions have nowhere else to turn, and has enabled a number of gains in the past year, including:

Costa Rica: our partner union **SITRAP** has continued to make significant progress organising in an extremely hostile anti-union culture and has, with other project funding, achieved the legally required level of membership at Del Monte's Filadelfia plantation for union recognition and collective bargaining with the company. The **GMB ISF** has made a significant initial contribution towards the purchase of a motor bike for their General Secretary to enable him to continue leading SITRAP's organising work at more than 40 plantations. Further fundraising continues!

Honduras: with **GMB ISF** funding our partner union **FESTAGRO** has been able to convene a regional workshop on ratification of ILO Convention 184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture, produce awareness raising materials, and gain support within regional union confederations for further advocacy towards ratification. Our partners in both Latin America and Africa are prioritising ratification of this important Convention – Ghana is the only banana exporting country to have done so to date.



Peru: Executive Committee members of union **SITETSA** were sacked by agro-export company TAL S.A. in February 2016. The company has now put two of their key trusted workers in the union leadership positions! The sacked committee members are now facing criminal charges over claims that the union has defamed the company and forged signatures of attendees at two general assemblies of the union. The **GMB ISF** is contributing to the legal costs of **SITETSA** in fighting these charges. Peru could soon be one of the biggest exporters of agricultural products, from grapes to blueberries, in the world, with more than a million workers in the sector! However this current agro-export boom in Peru is based on special legislation that denies many basic labour and union rights.

Support our Urgent Action calling on TAL S.A. to reinstate the sacked union members and begin collective bargaining negotiations at www.makefruitfair.org.

Ecuador: the **GMB ISF** has supported the work of the Women's Officer of our partner union **FENACLE** for many years. We were delighted in 2015 to secure three years of project funding both from the UIA Charitable Foundation and the GMB to enable this programme to continue enabling the increased organisation of women workers in banana and sugar production, the empowerment of more women in leadership roles, and negotiation of gender clauses in collective bargaining agreements.

Sign up and help us to achieve more Funds raised so far have provided crucial capacity building but more is needed to help our union brothers and sisters in their struggle. Please fill in and post the slip below. For more info: email: info@bananalink.org.uk or visit: www.bananalink.org.uk/gmb-international-solidarity-fund

We would like to support the **GMB International Solidarity Fund** with the following amount (suggested minimum donation £8.25 per month or £100 per year).

£ Monthly donation Annual donation

Contact Name

Branch

Address

Email
(please write clearly)

I enclose a cheque payable to 'GMB International Solidarity Fund'

Please send me a standing order form

Post to Bert Schouwenburg, GMB Freepost (WC2268) London SW19 4YY

You can also donate by BACS transfer: bank Unity Trust Bank Plc, account name GMB International Solidarity Fund, account no 20271437, sort code 08-60-01