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Subject: Health, Labor Unions and China- FYI

Thought this may be of interest given the Shanghai Benzene Study - note that China is on the list

ICFTU ONLINE...

ICFTU targets 11 key countries for grave violations 14/3/2003

59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights

Brussels, 14 March 2003 (ICFTU Online): Violations of trade union and other human rights in 11 countries as well as the issue of globalisation and its impact on respect for human rights will be on the ICFTU's agenda for this year's 59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The Brussels-based labour group has cited 11 countries whose cases it intends to raise before the Commission, ranging from dictatorial regimes infringing union activities and development (Haiti) to illegal arrests and sentences for labour leaders (Congo - DRC).

A list of the worst cases since last year's Session will cover among others:

- China where repression of independent workers' movements rose considerably in 2002, in the wake of workers' protests against the non-payment of retirement, bankruptcy, health, social and other statutory benefits. Social unrest reached unprecedented heights in the North-Eastern province of Heilongjiang (home to China's oil industry) and in the central province of Liaoning, where at least two independent labour leaders were tried in early January 2003, after having spent ten months in jail on trumped-up charges of "endangering state security".

Along with these specific countries where serious violations will be condemned, the ICFTU will be raising the issue of globalisation's impact on human rights. Accordingly, it will reiterate its concern that while the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has developed unprecedented powers to intervene in what were previously domestic concerns, this has not been accompanied by any social, development, gender or environmental dimension to its actions.

Other issues which will also be addressed by ICFTU include disappearances and summary executions, independence of judicial systems, gender issues and the situation of migrant workers.

For more information on the ICFTU' position at the 59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights:

The ICFTU represents 158 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 150 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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