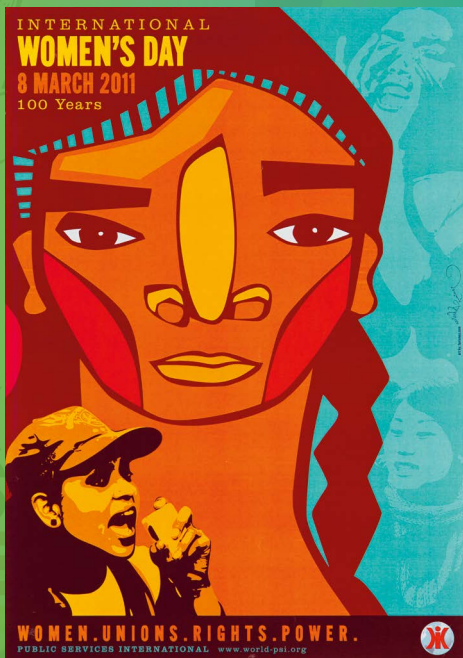
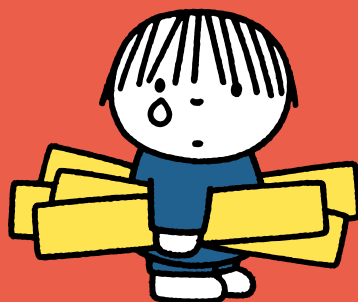




GROOT VERDRIET



STOP KINDERARBEID



Karen Brouwer on
the future of Mondiaal FNV

50 years of international
solidarity in posters

A step closer to the protection
of workers in shipbreaking



Bekijk de film op
www.mondiaalfnv.nl

Mondiaal **FNV**

Mondiaal **FNV**

MONDIAAL FNV: WHAT WE DO AND WHY

Mondiaal FNV is the organisation for international solidarity and support affiliated with the Netherlands' largest trade union, the FNV. We believe that everyone has the right to a living wage, social security, decent working conditions, and collective bargaining. In other words, the right to decent work. We want prosperity to be achieved in a fair way, not through exploitation elsewhere in the world.

We support trade unions around the globe. Why? Because trade unions can improve work and life at the grassroots level for many people. We strengthen the capacity of our partners, conduct influential advocacy, and connect local trade unions with the international labour movement. Our focus is on global supply chains in the garment, agriculture, and palm oil sectors.

Cover

A few FNV and Mondiaal FNV campaign posters from the past 50 years
Poster Miffy: Dick Bruna
Poster Welcome to Qatar: mrlee.tv
Poster International Women's Day: Public Services International

50 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Can you believe it? Mondiaal FNV is turning 50! And what do you do when you reach such a 'wise' age? First, you look back – at the highlights and the achievements we've reached together with our partners. Just think: how many people's work and lives have improved thanks to a strong trade union? How many have benefited from better labour laws, collective agreements, or constructive dialogue between unions and employers? An example: In 2023, through our Trade Union Cofinancing Programme, we helped improve working conditions for more than 244,000 workers via 915 collective labour agreements, and we contributed to positive changes for at least 5.1 million people through improved policies and legislation. That's no small feat.

And then you look ahead – to the next 50 years, because there's still a great deal of work to be done. Here's to building a fairer world!

IN THIS MAGAZINE

In this magazine, we usually present a selection of stories from our fieldwork. This edition marks a special occasion – the anniversary of Mondiaal FNV. You'll find an interview with our director Karen Brouwer, reflecting on what Mondiaal FNV has achieved and the role it continues to play:

"We will continue to strengthen our role as a facilitator, uniting different actors." We also explore the use of campaign posters over the years: discover how imagery, language, and themes have evolved over time. Of course, we also include a concrete example of our ongoing work – a story of collaboration and perseverance, from the shop floor to the international lobbying arena.

A major success we achieved with our partners: one of the most dangerous professions in the world – shipbreaking – is becoming safer, cleaner, and better regulated thanks to the Hong Kong Convention. How brilliant is that?

You'll find more on this and other stories at mondiaalfnv.nl.

We hope you enjoy the read!



Marjan Brunner
Communications Advisor



**FIFTY YEARS OF BETTER
WORK WORLDWIDE**

For 50 years, Mondiaal FNV has been working together with trade unions across different parts of the world to achieve a living wage and a safe working environment. Director Karen Brouwer looks back and looks ahead. She also explains why the organisation is still very much needed today.

Thet Hnin Aung is a trade union leader from Myanmar and one of the partners of Mondiaal FNV. "He has been in prison for years now," says director Karen Brouwer. The reason? "His fight for more rights for workers there. One of our colleagues knows him well and occasionally receives updates about him through the union."

Since 1975, the organisation has been strengthening workers and their unions around the world. Decent working conditions are still far from guaranteed everywhere and, in some places, union work is actually dangerous - even in 2025. "The rights of workers are under pressure across the world", says Brouwer. "Forced labour still hasn't been eradicated, and trade unionists are regularly prosecuted and even killed." She refers to the Global Rights Index of the International Trade Union Confederation which highlights the countries where standing up for workers' rights is especially dangerous for union leaders and workers. Bangladesh, Belarus and Colombia, to name a few.



APARTHEID AND CHILD LABOUR

In the organisation's early years, protesting against Apartheid in South Africa and the dictatorships in Latin America were high on the agenda, says Brouwer. In the 1990s, the fight against child labour became a major theme. The organisation was, for instance, involved in the creation of an important International Labour Organisation convention in 1999, which prohibits the worst forms of child labour. Brouwer: "Our work certainly contributed to that."

At the start of the century, Brouwer was involved in setting up the Observatório Social, a trade union network of workers from major companies in Brazil, Germany and the Netherlands, such as Philips and AkzoNobel. "The power of multinationals was growing rapidly," she explains. "This collaboration helped to improve working conditions and labour rights."

LASTING IMPROVEMENT

In the years that followed, one-off projects increasingly evolved into long-term partnerships. What sets Mondiaal FNV apart, Brouwer emphasises, is that - unlike many other organisations - the main focus is always on what local unions themselves want to improve - in other words, on their needs.

The organisation strives for systemic change: lasting improvement within a country. For social dialogue to take place, various systems need to be in place, Brouwer explains - a functioning government, the right legislation, and organisations representing both employers and workers. "That foundation is something we can contribute to," she says.



In the future, we will work even more closely with our strategic partners to define clear, concrete goals and combine our strengths for global impact. In doing so, we will create lasting change for workers across the world.

BLUEBERRIES AND BLOOMS

A prime example of this approach is the creation of the Labour Foundation (STAR) in Peru, modelled on the Dutch social-economic advisory body Stichting van de Arbeid. Brouwer: "We brought the parties together, and now employers and workers in Peru (see cover photo) are engaged in constructive consultations." This has already resulted in improved working conditions - for instance, workers on blueberry plantations continued to receive their wages even during a lockdown.

Another recent success is the flower workers' union in Uganda. "There is now a very active union led by young people that negotiates collective agreements," says Brouwer. "In general, both workers and employers benefit

from this dialogue: workers are more satisfied and there has been a noticeable drop in absences."

LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

In many of the countries where Mondiaal FNV was active in its early years - Latin America, for example - trade unions are now functioning well, 50 years on. But in many other places, conditions for workers remain downright poor, or even dangerous. In short, there is still much work to be done. At the same time, Brouwer notes, there is less support for international collaboration within Dutch society - and recently, Mondiaal FNV's government funding was cut as a result.

Hence, the organisation will be looking to focus its efforts more clearly in the time ahead. "In the future, we will work even more closely with our strategic partners to define clear, concrete goals and combine our strengths for global impact. In doing so, we will create lasting change for workers across the world."

That's exactly what happened in the palm oil network uniting trade unions from Indonesia, Ghana and Colombia. "They tackle key issues in the sector together - pesticides, for example. The economy is global, and this means you don't have to reinvent the wheel yourself." The director emphasises: "We don't have all the answers. What we do is facilitate - together with FNV - so that trade unions can learn from one another and work together." ■

SOLIDARITY IN PICTURES

To mark its 50th anniversary, Mondiaal FNV released a special calendar featuring twelve campaign posters from five decades of international trade union solidarity. From brightly coloured posters of the 1970s to more recent campaigns, these images tell a visual story of struggle, cooperation, and changing times—both in design and language. Some of the posters might not pass today's standards, but they reflect the causes FNV stood for at the time.



Poster 'No more sorrow - stop child labour', from 1999. Created by Dick Bruna on behalf of FNV. It was released to mark the discussion of Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).



Poster 'And WHERE do we think we're going?!!!' - This cartoon from 2005 by Maarten Wolderink was part of the information pack "Trade unions and Social Enterprise - Teaching Multinationals Some Manners", produced by Observatório Social Europe, FNV Mondiaal and FNV Bondgenoten.



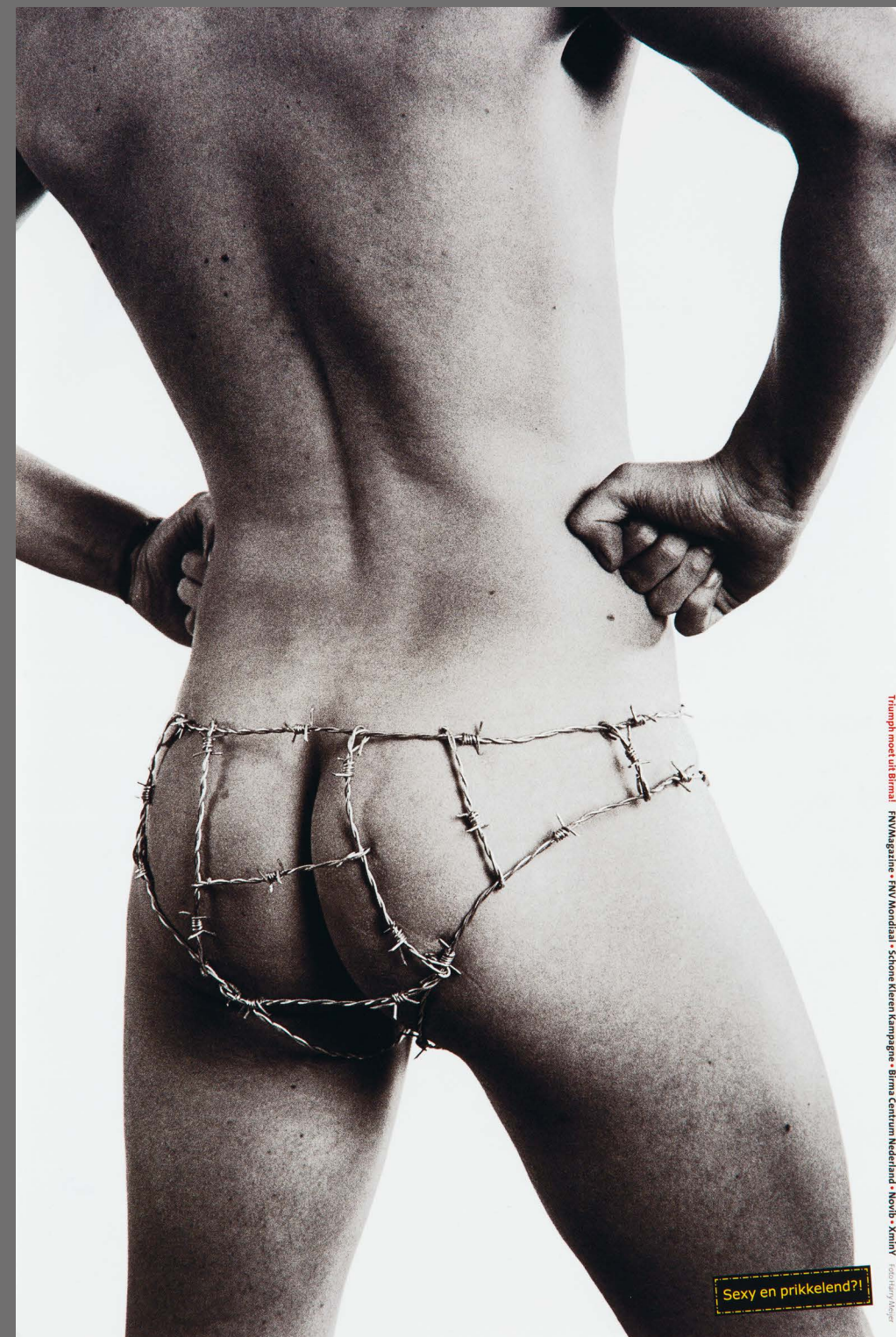
besmet fruit

FNV-BOV WERKGROEP CHILI
Postbus 2392 3000 CJ ROTTERDAM

Poster 'Apples from Chile - Contaminated fruit' - Call to a boycott of Chilean apples in response to General Pinochet's coup and the brutal dictatorship in Chile. This campaign, launched in the mid-70s, was carried out without formal support from the trade union movement.



1973: NKV Solidarity with Christian Trade Unions in Developing Countries - Us and Them.



This poster from 2001 was part of the campaign 'Sexy and Provocative?', targeting lingerie manufacturer Triumph. The call to action: "Triumph out of Burma!" This campaign was organised by the Clean Clothes Campaign, Burma Centre Netherlands, FNV, Oxfam Novib, and XminY.



ON COURSE TOWARDS SAFE SHIP SHIPBREAKING

20 YEARS OF UNION STRUGGLE:
HONG KONG CONVENTION OFFICIALLY COMES INTO FORCE

On the beaches of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, decommissioned ships are manually dismantled. Workers on the yards labour amid asbestos, toxic fumes, explosions, and falling steel. They risk their lives for poverty wages – the result of a toxic mix of cost-cutting, weak regulations, and lack of knowledge. Employers look the other way, and governments fail to act. But change is underway. Thanks to FNV/IndustriALL training programs, workers are standing stronger. And the Hong Kong Convention finally offers hope for real protection.

EXPLOSION IN GADANI

In November 2016, disaster struck at a shipbreaking yard in Gadani, Pakistan. An oil tanker exploded during dismantling, killing at least 26 workers and seriously injuring 47 more. Many others had been inside the vessel at the time, but the exact number remains unknown – many workers had never been officially registered. The cause? Toxic fumes had built up in the ship's holds, which ignited when cutting work began. A grim detail: just two days earlier, workers had staged a protest against the unsafe working conditions at the yard. Gadani wasn't just an accident: it was a disaster that could have been prevented. One of many on the shipbreaking beaches of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh – where workers continue to pay with their lives.



WAKE-UP CALL

The disaster in Gadani was not unique. But the incident made headlines around the world – turning a blind eye was no longer an option. For years, Mondiaal FNV had been supporting local unions in their fight to improve the deadly working conditions in shipbreaking. Gadani was yet another stark reminder of how urgently that support was needed. In the aftermath, governments and employers began to move. For the first time in Pakistan, talks were held with unions about workplace safety.

"For years, the ministry ignored us. But after Gadani, we finally had a seat at the table. We presented our own draft law: comprehensive safety standards, written by the workers themselves. At last, our voices were heard."

Nasir Mansoor

President of the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), Pakistan

unsafe, and the commitment of trade unions continues to be just as vital as ever.

CONVENTION FOR SAFE SHIP RECYCLING

The disaster in Gadani gave new momentum to the Hong Kong Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships. Negotiations for the convention had begun back in 2009, but progress was slow. A joint call from trade unions in 18 countries following the disaster underscored the urgency. A breakthrough came in 2019 when India became the first major ship-recycling country to ratify the convention. The Netherlands also ratified it that same year – thanks in part to the intensive advocacy efforts of Mondiaal FNV.

With support from IndustriALL and FNV, shipbreaking workers now have a voice. The collaboration between unions in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan is groundbreaking. The ratification of the Hong Kong Convention is the tangible result of that effort.

Vidyadhar Rane

General Secretary, Alang Sosiya Ship Recycling and General Workers Association (ASSRGWA), India

The disaster also sparked more dialogue in India and Bangladesh between unions, employers, and governments. Nevertheless, working conditions at many yards remain

"The Netherlands was initially hesitant. But together with IndustriALL and others, we lobbied across the board – in ministries, with shipping companies, and at banks. Everyone had to be convinced that ratification was in their best interest too."

Wilma Roos

FNV Policy Officer for South Asia

'TRAIN THE TRAINER': SHARING KNOWLEDGE IS SHARING POWER

Since 2012 – and online since 2020 – FNV members from Dutch shipyards have been delivering safety training at shipbreaking yards in Asia. They teach their colleagues there how to work safely: how to lift properly, to stay alert for falling steel, and to remember to look up. They explain what the colours on pipes mean – so no one mistakenly cuts through a gas line with a torch – and how to extinguish different types of fires.

It's a grassroots movement: 183 local workers have taken part in the training so far, and 65 of them have gone on to train others. They now pass on practical knowledge about asbestos removal, emergency procedures, and the proper use of protective gear. As a result, the number of accidents has decreased – and workers on the yards are becoming more confident in standing up for their rights.



Shipyard in India where shipbreaking is now better organised, safer and more sustainable.

It was a close call: by the end of 2023, the negotiation window was set to expire. Thanks to Bangladesh and Liberia, the required support was secured just in time. After 15 years of lobbying, the convention will finally come into force on 26 June 2025. A milestone – but for Mondiaal FNV, not the final destination. The fight for lasting change continues.

A STAND FOR SAFETY

Since 2003, Mondiaal FNV has been working alongside global union federation IndustriALL to improve working conditions on the shipbreaking beaches of Southeast Asia – by strengthening local unions and giving workers a voice. The breakthrough came through a smartly chosen entry point: safety. No politics, no confrontation, just a shared interest. FNV trainer Joop van Oord recalls: “Over drinks in India, we came up with it together: safety would be our starting point. A way to bring about change without political hassle.” His fellow trainer Ruud van den Bergh adds: “We trained union reps to become safety trainers – to help workers deal with the risks, and to start a conversation with their boss.”

“Workers standing united. Knowing their rights. Daring to speak up – for better working conditions and enforcement of safety standards. That’s what the convention makes possible.”

Kan Matsuzaki - IndustriALL

It was a game-changer: workers started to gain real control over their work. Vidyadhar Rane, union leader at ASSRGWA in India, says: “Thanks to the safety trainings, we’ve seen a huge drop in accidents – and that’s fantastic.” Remarkably, employers also shifted their stance. Walter Pantland of IndustriALL recalls how one shipyard owner proudly showed off his safety manual: “It was literally the FNV handbook!”

FROM DANGEROUS TO GREEN

Employers were brought on board with economic arguments. “We showed them that safe work pays off,” says Walter Pantland. “Not just for the workers, but for the companies too – it’s good for their image,

improves access to new markets, and makes them more attractive to banks and investors who increasingly care about sustainability and safety.” That message has begun to sink in with shipbreaking companies. And governments are catching on as well: this is the future, and it brings opportunity. Vidyadhar Rane adds: “This industry has gone from dangerous to green. The Indian government is now a frontrunner in ship recycling. They see that it creates jobs and supports economic growth. We’re moving forward, step by step.”

VISIBLE IMPROVEMENT, LASTING COMMITMENT

Wilma Roos of Mondiaal FNV is proud of what has been achieved. “In the lead-up to the Hong Kong Convention, a lot has already changed. Many yards in India are now much better organised. Waste is stored separately, and workers have protective clothing. Heavy steel plates are no longer hauled on shoulders but moved with magnet trolleys. That’s a world of difference,” she says. Progress in Bangladesh and Pakistan has been slower, but change is happening there too. “Thanks to

years of work on safety training, social dialogue, and political pressure, issues like fair wages, social security, pensions, and compensation after accidents are finally on the agenda everywhere.”

“We’ve initiated a dialogue between the shipbreaking workers, the yards, the shipowners, and government agencies. That’s how we keep safe working conditions and environmental protection on the agenda. And our partners continue to apply pressure on enforcement – to ensure the Hong Kong Convention doesn’t become a paper tiger.”

Wilma Roos

At the same time, the job is far from done. In the downstream industry, for example – where ship parts are recycled and women in particular face harsh working conditions – there is still a long way to go. ■

Read the interviews with everyone involved at mondiaalfnv.nl

TIMELINE TO SAFE SHIP RECYCLING: THE HONG KONG CONVENTION

- 2003 _____ Mondiaal FNV begins supporting union strengthening for shipbreaking workers in India.
- 2009 _____ UN Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships adopted in Hong Kong. The IndustriALL/FNV project expands to Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- 2011 - 2012 _____ Mondiaal FNV develops safety trainings that are systematically implemented.
- 2015 _____ The first four Indian yards achieve HKC certification for safety and sustainability.
- 2016 _____ A deadly explosion in Pakistan underscores the urgent need for change.
- 2017 _____ Unions from 18 countries issue a call in Rotterdam to ratify the HKC.
- 2019 _____ The Netherlands and India sign the convention.
- 2020 _____ FNV launches online safety trainings in local languages.
- 2023 _____ With Bangladesh and Liberia on board, all ratification conditions are met.
- 2025 - 26 June _____ The Hong Kong Convention for Safe Ship Recycling officially enters into force worldwide.

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Colophon

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Photo on pages 4 and 5:
Managers and union leaders at a fruit
processing factory in Peru.

Photo on pages 14 and 15:
Shipbreaking yard in India.

