

Symposium on the Protection of Whistleblowers

30 October 2017 – Geneva, Switzerland

Background

Fraud and wrongdoing are more likely to occur in organizations that are closed and secretive. Whistleblowers play a pivotal role in supporting transparency and accountability in both the public and private sectors – whistleblowers bring to light illegal activities such as tax evasion, collusion and others that are contrary to the public interest. Whistleblowing can save lives, the environment and money. However, in disclosing relevant information whistleblowers often risk their jobs, freedom, or even their lives.

Despite the progress achieved in the implementation of whistleblower protection frameworks, some high-profile cases have also evidenced their shortcomings – the lack of dedicated and comprehensive laws is one of them, whereas the frameworks that protect them from harassment and threats fail to protect their jobs.

PSI with the support of its affiliates aim to elaborate further on the key elements that should be included in a robust whistleblower protection system and to campaign for an international legal framework that builds upon national or regional (e.g EU level) initiatives, ensuring that workers who disclose wrongdoing – especially those of the independent audit institutions, customs, tax revenue agencies, and judicial bodies – are protected from reprisal and are rewarded for doing what is fair and just.

Workplan

A one-day event with key speakers and panellists to raise awareness, provide information, debate issues and agree on actions.

The symposium will be held at the **International Labour Office (ILO), Room IX**, from **09:00 to 17:00**.

Facilitated by **Ms. Nozipho Mbanjwa**, author and journalist for CNBC Africa.

Interpretation in **English, French** and **Spanish** will be available.

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Programme

08:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Accreditation</i> ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BRING A PASSPORT / OFFICIAL ID
09:00	<i>Opening and introductory remarks</i>
09:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PANEL 1: Heroes and Villains: are whistleblowers heads and tails of the same coin? While contributing to a critical and charged debate, by revealing uncomfortable facts whistleblowers are often perceived as either patriots or traitors. Panellists will shed some light on the myriad of approaches.
10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PANEL 2: Challenging power: a whistleblowers (un)fairy tale. Whistleblowers have provided many of the most important revelations in recent decades, exposing facts that criminal bands, corporations or even governments tried to hide. These panellists will reveal the dangers and consequences of their courageous actions.
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PANEL 3: Preventing, detecting and fighting corruption: emerging trends in effective whistleblower schemes. Panellists will discuss how the protection of whistleblowers has evolved and present state-of-the-art legislation that effectively protects them.
15:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PANEL 4: PRIVATE SESSION - FOR PSI AFFILIATES ONLY Unions as a force for transparency: how to strengthen the successful partnership between unions and whistleblowers. This closing session will examine the ongoing campaigns by UITOC, Whistleblower EU, and others, and address the insights that emerged during the symposium and how these translate, with help from the audience, into shared efforts and directions for the unions to follow-up and to build future alliances.
17:00	<i>Closing and final remarks</i>

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