

## **Brief Report of Metro Agitation**

As a result of consistent efforts by UNIDOC, UNICOME Metro Hyderabad Branch was formed on 27-05-08 headed by Mr.Ch.Prabhakar and Mr.S.Subhash Kumar as President and General Secretary respectively.

From day one office bearers concentrated and focused on Membership enrollment. I am happy to inform that within few days more than 100 workers enrolled as Members.

Mean while Two Senior Managers were forced to resign on framed up charges.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June (Sunday) more than 25 workers visited UNIDOC Office. We had a very long meeting, where in I have explained structure of UNI Global Union, policies and various other Organising initiatives and also how Global Union can ensure respect for Labour Laws and human dignity.

I have also clarified various doubts expressed by Metro Workers, and formulated a charter of demands and decided to submit to Management.

Accordingly on 2<sup>nd</sup> July the charter of demands were submitted to Management for early discussion and settlement.

The Important points are:

- Job Security of Employees
- Require Proper Conditions of Working
- Reasons for Termination of 2 Senior Managers without following any standard Operating Procedure
- Security harassment on Employees of Metro
- Eight working hours to be followed – Eight Hour working for all Workers
- No-Harassment on Women Employees.
- No-Politics within the Store (Open Working Culture)

Apart from submitting charter of demands office bearers also tried their level best to contact Management for their redressal, but in vein.

Instead of attending to problems raised by workers, management started forcing UNICOME Members to give in writing that they were forced to join Union and they are not willing to continue.

The matter was brought the notice of Bro.Philip Bowyer, and he immediately took action and addressed a strong communication to CEO METRO India, no doubt the communication soothed the attitude of Management and a reply was sent to Bro.Philip, reiterating METRO Group's commitment to Labour Laws and Human dignity.

Again on 10<sup>th</sup> June UNICOME office bearers addressed another communication requesting for settlement of problems listed in charter of demands. When they tried to hand over this communication to acting General Manager and HR Manager, they not only refused to receive and misbehaved with them, which resulted more than 100 workers walked out and started protest demonstrations and DHARNA in front of main gate of METRO Hyderabad.

On second day of Agitation Management tried to coerce workers by threatening that they will be terminated if they don't join work, and the General Manager of Metro Hyderabad came up to tent and requested them to join back. But workers stood firm.

Sensing militancy, Management took further step and complained to POLICE that agitating workers are preventing loyal workers from attending their duties and behaving unruly.

May be due to this impression I am perplexed to receive a mail from Bro.Jakob advising me to ask agitating workers to withdraw and call off agitation.

But the situation is otherwise Hyderabad METRO is located in an area surrounded by many Industries where all major Trade Unions are present. By second day some of them visited camp trying their best to interfere, due to my consistent advise Metro workers did not entertain them; further local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) also visited the camp and spent nearly 3 Hours.

Therefore in those circumstances if I ask workers to call off their Agitation, workers may not heed my advise without settlement of any of their problems and secondly the Political Trade Unions will take advantage of it and definitely attract them towards their Organisation.

As such I could not act on Mr.Jakob's advice.

Finally on 4<sup>th</sup> day of Agitation (13.06.08) Mr. Christopher N G, Regional Secretary UNIAPRO took initiative spoke to METRO Ms.Bettina Scharff, Head Corporate Organisational and social development for getting pressure on local management. I was in constant touch with him, and finally Mr.ALEC BOOTH, Director Operations METRO India invited UNICOME representatives for talks at about 13.10 PM.

Workers representatives along with UNIDOC National Director participated in prolonged discussions ( 3 ½ hours).

The negotiations concluded around 5 PM and Management agreed for all the demands except reinstating two sacked managers who are facing criminal charges. Their case will be dealt separately.(They have filed complaint with Labour Department, Copy enclosed).

We went back to workers and explained details of the long discussions clarified all their apprehensions, and convinced them to call off their Agitation.

The Agitation was called off at about 8 PM.

#### Immediate Result

At the end of Agitation the office bearers handed over another 45 enrollment forms duly filled up and signed by Metro Workers. Now the total Membership strength reached approximately 145, may be by the end of June the figure will reach 200 + .

Immediately after conclusion the office bearers met, and decided to initiate steps to Register UNICOME as a Trade Union with Labour Commissioner, from 16.06.08 onwards.

HOPE WE MAY SEE METRO HYDERABAD (UNICOME) AS REGISTERED UNION By 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2008..

Finally all the workers conveyed their gratitude to UNI Global Union, particularly to Bro.Philip Bowyer, Bro.John Fursten Borg, Bro.Jakob and Bro.Christopher NG, Regional Secretary UNI APRO for their unstinted support and all the help in resolving the issue.

Best Regards  
Prasad

P.S: Photos covering all the activity will mailed separately.