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**SOCIAL AND LABOR
PROGRAMS AND CONDITIONS
EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION
REPORT**

EMBRATEL

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AEBT – Associação dos Empregados da Embratel [Embratel Employee Association]
Anatel – Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações [National Telecommunications Agency]
Cedec – Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea [Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies]
CI – Comunicação Interna [Internal Communication]
Cipa – Comissão Interna de Prevenção de Acidentes [Internal Accident Prevention Commission]
CNMT – Comissão Nacional da Mulher Trabalhadora da CUT Brasil [National Commission of Women Workers, CUT Brazil]
Coppe/UFRJ – Coordenação do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Engenharia da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro [Coordination of the Graduate Engineering Program of the Federal University at Rio de Janeiro]
CUT – Central Única dos Trabalhadores [Single Workers Center]
CVM – Comissão de Valores Mobiliários [Securities Commission]
Desep – Departamento de Estudos Sócio-Econômicos e Políticos [Department of Social-Economic Studies]
Dieese – Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos [Interunion Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies]
DRT – no texto da pesquisa, refere-se ao Departamento de Relações de Trabalho da empresa [in the text of the study, refers to the company's Labor Relations Department]
Feema – Fundação Estadual de Meio Ambiente [State Environmental Foundation]
Fittel – Federação Interestadual dos Trabalhadores em Telecomunicações [Interstate Federation of Telecommunications Workers]
INSS – Instituto Nacional de Seguridade Social [National Social Security Institute]
INST – Instituto Nacional de Saúde no Trabalho [National Institute of Labor Health]
ISO – International Standardization Organization
MBA – Masters in Business Administration
ILO – International Labor Organization
UN – United Nations
PRL – Profit and Income Sharing
RH – Human Resources
Rima – Environmental Impact Report
SHF – Flexible Hour System
Sinttel/RJ – Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Telecomunicações do Rio de Janeiro [Telecommunications Workers Union of Rio de Janeiro]
Telos – Fundo de Pensão Fechado Multipatrocinado dos empregados da Embratel [Embratel employees closed, multi-sponsor pension fund]
Unitrabalho – Rede Interuniversitária de Estudos e Pesquisas sobre o Trabalho [Interuniversity Network for Labor Studies and Research]

1. COMPANY EVALUATION

The Social Observatory's study of Embratel, Brazil's largest telecommunications company, sought to develop a profile of the company and analyze its activity in relation to basic labor rights and the environment, as established by the Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Embratel is the only company in the telecommunications sector that has a national and international telecommunications network that is directly linked to tens of thousands of companies in Brazil and abroad. It is also the leading company provider of high speed data and Internet services in Brazil, with the largest wide-band fiber optic network, covering more than 26,000 kilometers.

Embratel was indicated by Fittel (Federação Interestadual dos Trabalhadores em Telecomunicações) [The Interstate Federation of Telecommunications Workers] to the Social Observatory as a research priority. In fact, it is one of the Brazilian companies most involved in the globalization process. Its importance in the Brazilian economy and its acquisition by the U.S. *MCI Communications Corporation* justifies observation of its behavior in relation to compliance with basic labor rights and environmental principals. By showing the profound changes through which this sector is passing, in Brazil and throughout the world, this initiative should contribute to the union movement, to the employee associations and to others interested in the themes considered here.

The ILO Conventions which establish basic labor rights considered in this Observation are specified at the end of this report. In addition to this observation the study seeks to:

- promote the participation and involvement of the workers and their union organizations in the observation;
- contribute to the organization and action of these workers given the effects of globalization;
- generate information about the company to feed the Social Observatory database; and generate a follow-up proposal for Observation.

The study was conducted by the staff of The Rio de Janeiro Satellite of the Social Observatory/Unitrabalho, through an agreement with Coppe/UFRJ and collaboration with Sinttel/RJ (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Telecomunicações do Rio de Janeiro) [Telecommunications Workers Union of Rio de Janeiro]. The activities were undertaken between July and October of 2000.

The Social Observatory, an organization created to generate sound and reliable information about the social and labor performance of companies and governments, arose from the debate about the adoption of social and environmental clauses in international trade agreements. In 1997, CUT Brazil sketched the general lines of the proposal for the Social Observatory.

The creation of the Social Observatory was an initiative of CUT Brasil and the *Escola Sul* [its Southern Education Center], in cooperation with the Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea (CEDEC) [Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies], Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos (Dieese) [The InterUnion Department of Statistics and Social Economic Studies and Rede Inter-Universitária de Estudos e Pesquisas

sobre o Trabalho (Unitrabalho) [Inter-University Network for Labor Studies and Research]. These organizations are represented on the Observatory's board of directors.

The goal of the Social Observatory project is the construction of a permanent and cumulative body of reference of knowledge and information to support the effective activity of social movements, in particular, the union movement, in the context of the deepening of world economic internationalization. It seeks to strengthen national and international union activity, providing workers a instrument that can contribute to the promotion and respect of social rights. It represents the political will to analyze and verify, in the national and international arenas, the application of social and labor principles and rules by companies and government.

The Social Observatory is sustained by the vision that the responsibility for the development of mechanisms that encourage the globalization of rights in a context of economic globalization is up to workers and their partners. The aim of the project is to make proposals, to the degree that it seeks to conduct analysis and study and provide support for union and social action programs. In order for society and the union movement in particular to be able to respond more efficiently to new processes, it is important to monitor them, and above all to be prepared to make adequate assessments of the consequences of government and company policies.

The importance of the initiative to create the Observatory is supported by the following bases:

- the importance, need and urgency for concrete actions promote the globalization of rights in the national and international realm;
- the defense of social and environmental clauses in international commercial accords and in the constitution of trade blocks, in order to stimulate the production of information and knowledge that is essential for the proper action of political and social subjects in the struggle for protection and broadening of union and social rights;
- the importance, need and urgency for movements, activities and initiatives that combine the strengthening and preparation of the union movement in articulation with other social subjects and the involvement of society in general, giving potential to broader movements through the universalization of citizenship and democracy.

The specific objectives of the Social Observatory are:

- to observe the performance of companies and or organizations in relation to compliance with basic labor rights, contemplated in the international conventions of the ILO, and in relation to the environment, as well as the general profile and other specificities of the company;
- produce and publicize reports and issue opinions and reports about companies and organizations observed;
- produce and publicize studies and research about the object-themes of the Observatory.

1.1 FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The goal of the investigation was to verify if within Embratel there is freedom of association of workers without interference from employers.

In all of the steps of the investigation, we verified that the company places restrictions on this indicator; thus, it clearly interferes with the right to union freedom. It was determined that the lack of respect for the freedom to organize dates back to when *MCI WorldCom* first took over company management.

In fact, the activity of the workers representative entities has been prohibited on company property. In relation to the circulation of information, the company has prohibited the distribution of newspapers and bulletins by Sinttel, AEBT and Fittel on company property. It was recently recommended that the Intranet only be used for business purposes. Both in the case of this study, as well as that conducted by AEBT, the company did not participate, nor did it authorize research on company property.

Recently, important leaders were fired because of their union activity, although the company attempted to use administrative sanctions and other methods and allege that it is impartial to the union.

With the same intentions, Embratel has restricted the number of union representatives and has not respected criteria of labor stability. The Internal Accident Prevention Commission has been manipulated so that workers are not able to enjoy the stability to which they are entitled if they form part of the Commission.

This coercive practice has led employees to avoid open demonstrations of adhesion to the union or the employee association so that they are not vulnerable to the process of personnel cuts; even the most simple associative activities (payment of monthly dues, newspaper distribution, etc.) need to be conducted off company property, or in the offices of the representative entities.

In addition to these forms of restrictions to affiliation or union militancy, Embratel has demonstrated that it has adopted a managerial strategy to neutralize unionism on company property, in an attitude that certainly corresponds to the dictates of the central offices, and which was not found at the company before it was privatized. In order to compensate, but in contradiction with reality, the company attempts to publicly establish an image as a “citizen company”.

1.2 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The goal of the study of this indicator was to determine if the right of all workers to collective bargaining, as well as to organize for this purpose, has been realized without company interference.

We have verified that Sinttel and Fittel have been present at the bargaining table, both in the collective work agreement as well as in profit sharing. The company has also informed its employees of the progress of negotiations during the entire process, through customary internal communication channels, and the Intranet.

Nevertheless, we also can affirm that in this situation as well, the company has restricted its workers, because in relation to the formal continuation of collective negotiations, the changes in the outcomes of the negotiations have been consistently favorable to the company, demonstrating a sharp deterioration of the bargaining terms. The very goal of negotiations has been restricted to a minimum, increasing the space for unilateral decisions by the company (for example, in relation to profit sharing).

In addition to the effect on the capacity for negotiation of the above mentioned practices in the field of union relations, the company has induced its managers to participate in the assemblies, seeking to quicken the conclusion of the negotiations, which goes directly against the right to collective bargaining.

According to the union, the negotiations have been difficult and take place only in relation to formal issues. Embratel frequently has imposed its proposals and revealed little will to negotiate.

1.3 GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The objective was to verify if reproductive rights are guaranteed; the existence of daycare, the rights of children and worker safety; the health of women at the workplace and, finally, the guarantee of equal access of women to employment, to positions, to equal salary and to professional training.

The declarations reveal that the workers positively evaluate, in relation to other companies, the observation of reproductive rights, the reimbursement for daycare costs (although the value of the support was frozen) and assistance for handicapped children (also frozen); however, there is no certainty concerning the continuity of this favorable situation, due to the general behavior of the now privatized company in the field of labor relations. Despite some exceptions, working conditions and the health of women workers are considered to be suitable.

There was a report that one manager was transferred because of accusations of sexual harassment, but the company does not appear to have a policy about this problem.

Concerning the guarantee of equal access to women to employment, positions, equal salary and professional training, the situation is not positive. There has been an increase in the number of women in all areas, but this is explained more by the nature of the labor market than by a company option. According to the historic nature of the engineering field, there is a predominance of men at the company, which continues to permeate interpersonal relations and influences the evaluation mechanisms, access to training and criteria for promotion, with "subtle prejudices", such as a woman's need to constantly prove her capability to colleagues. These prejudices have not impeded women from occupying important management positions. But, in a high technology company, promotions are closely associated to the possibility for training which thus assumes an important role in the issue of gender.

Finally, the regression in labor relations is highlighted by the termination of the commission with equal company-union participation to address gender issues.

Concerning the situation of sub-contracted women, however, the situation is totally different and much more serious. It can be affirmed that there is disrespect in all indicators (working conditions, health exams, day-care, benefits, promotions, professional training, mass layoffs followed by new hirings with lower salaries, etc.). In the best hypothesis, there is obedience to the minimum legal requirements (right to maternity leave, for example) but at times not even this is recognized.

1.4 ENVIRONMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The goal was to verify the suitability of the internal and external environment to the occupational health and safety of workers and neighbors.

In relation to the external environment, through all the phases of the study we found that the company had complied with the legal requirements and formalities, but does not go beyond this. It displays no broader concern for environmental education or for preservation, as do many other comparable companies which have environmental action programs.

Also in relation to the internal environment, the company seeks only to follow the limits of the legislation and of the working conditions characteristic of companies in this sector, without seeking any higher distinction. However, in the case of the internal environment, even the simple objective of keeping up to date with customs and practices at similar companies is not fully realized.

Despite the fact that the physical status of the working environment offered by Embratel to its employees is positive, organizational factors cause discomfort and restraints among the workers.

The excessive workload has made the environment tense, which has been aggravated by the climate of insecurity over the maintenance of existing employment. The fear of layoffs has caused the internal environment to become hostile to Embratel workers. The climate of confidence between working colleagues that was maintained throughout the company's existence, that had established a strong *esprit do corps*, appears to have been diluted by the new form of management.

Concerning Occupational Health and Safety, the company has respected the right of workers in relation to basic legislation. It also maintains the medical assistance and dental plan which existed before the acquisition by *MCI WorldCom*.

Nevertheless, an investigation of the ergonomic factors identified an excessive work load and working hours, linked to the increase of the intensity of work and a competitive and insecure environment which provoke considerable stress among workers. It is not reasonable to accept that the mere inauguration of a fitness academy, an activity which *MCI WorldCom* considers itself to be pioneer, and which seeks to combat sedentary habits among workers, is a sufficient method to combat the stress provoked by the work itself. There was no mention made during the study about the existence of specific Human Resources policies that can have a suitable effect.

The canceling of the automatic registration of hours worked by the SHF (Sistema de Horário Flexível) [Flexible Hours System] at 7 PM is extremely onerous to the worker, not only in relation to remuneration to which they have a right, but also in terms of accident control and related issues, such as medical leave, etc..

There does not seem to be a specific program for professional readaptation. In the collective labor contracts, the words "whenever possible" are added to the specific clause concerning retraining and functional readaptation, revealing that Embratel has not made a commitment to the issue.

The sub-contracting of maintenance activities, principally in the energy sector, has jeopardized safety, to the point where there have been fires. In addition, sub-contracted workers suffer greater exposure to accidents and their working conditions are more precarious.

Finally, the very need that the company feels to intervene in the elections for the Internal Accident Prevention Commission, leads us to believe that the issue of security is not being treated with the severity that it deserves.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 WHAT IS THE SOCIAL OBSERVATORY

The Social Observatory is an initiative of CUT BRASIL in partnership with Cedec, Dieese and Unitrabalho. Its goal is to generate and organize reliable information about labor conditions and social policies at companies, considering compliance with the social and environmental clauses in international trade agreements. The analysis of the Observatory concerns the following rights: union freedom, collective bargaining, child labor, forced labor, racial and gender discrimination, the environment, and occupational health and safety.

2.2 WHAT IS THE ILO

The references for the Observatory's study are the basic labor rights defended by the International Labor Organization (ILO). ILO is a United Nations agency founded on a tripartite structure, in which governments, employers and workers join together to promote social justice and improved living and working conditions throughout the world.

2.3 THE GLOBALIZATION OF RIGHTS

Globalization stimulates brutal worldwide competition for investments from multinational companies, offering, as an attraction, continuous reductions in social and labor costs. As a consequence, there is a general trend toward the suspension of rights that causes the impoverishment of social indicators in vast regions of the planet. One of the ways to avoid this vicious cycle, is the observation of company activities in order to provide society with means to combat detrimental practices and, above all, to promote social justice.

The union movement is concerned with globalization for various reasons, among which stands out the trend toward reduction of labor and social rights, with a consequential deterioration in the living conditions of workers. For this reason, intensive studies are needed that conduct a permanent diagnosis and monitoring of the situations of labor rights, offering information and subsidies for effective social activities in this field. Another concern of the union movement, shared by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and by the academic community, concerns the difficulties that the lower and working classes in developing countries have to organize in defense of their interests before the effects of globalization. Technical and scientific knowledge is an important component of the organized action of the population before the problems that emerge with globalization.

The themes of basic labor rights and the environment are on the international agenda as priorities for a socially just world. Society is increasingly attentive to these issues, demanding more space in negotiations, particularly in the realm of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other multilateral organizations such as the World Bank (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This favors the establishment of concrete initiatives for universalization of these rights and for environmental preservation. Despite the resistance in many developing countries – which are against the establishment of minimal labor standards in world trade because they fear the possible increasing cost of their products and the consequential loss of competitiveness in international markets – there is considerable room to develop awareness about the conditions under which goods and services are produced and sold. Economic competitiveness should be

based principally on education, information technology and on the production processes and not on the reduction of rights.

The Social Observatory understands that it is necessary to develop mechanisms that encourage the universalization of basic rights in light of the negative effects of globalization and the free market. The data gathered reveals that, in many countries, the growth of economies is increasingly disassociated from improved social conditions. Many studies are confirming this evaluation, pointing in particular to the enormous distance between economic and social indicators.

The initiative for the creation of the Observatory is based on:

- *The need for urgent concrete actions to promote the globalization of rights nationally and internationally.*
- *Defense of the social and environmental clauses in international commerce and in the formation of economic blocks in order to protect and broaden union and social rights.*
- *The need for promotion of information, diagnoses, and understanding of economic and social changes.*
- *The need for urgent initiatives that articulate union activity with other social subjects.*

3. METHODOLOGY

The Social Observatory has adopted a theoretical and methodological chart which organizes the content of the ILO Conventions, the focus of observation of each of them and, finally, the indicators that allow constructing tools to collect the primary data and guide the collection of secondary data.

THEMES OF CONVENTIONS	FOCUS
Union Freedom	Right to Organize of workers without interference of employees.
Collective Bargaining	Right of all workers to collective bargaining without interference.
Forced Labor	Labor undertaken by coercion or punishment.
Child Labor	Effective abolition of child labor.
Race and Gender Discrimination	Equal Opportunity regardless of sex, racial origin, religion, political opinion, ancestry.
Environment	Suitability of the indoor and outdoor environment occupational health and safety of workers and of the surrounding area.

Based on the relationships between the ILO Conventions and their points of interest, it was possible to develop indicators that serve as a basis for the construction of questionnaires and to guide the research of secondary data. The scope of the study was limited to the company's central operation in Rio de Janeiro.

In keeping with the general methodology of the Social Observatory, based on the involvement of the workers unions in all phases of the study, the technical team conducted meetings with representatives of Sinttel/RJ, to present objectives and the methodology of the Observatory and to present a proposal for conducting a union workshop. Sinttel/RJ provided human resources from its Science and Technology Counsel and from the Union Training and Assistance staff, and made available documentation found at the union. It also sought to establish closer relations with AEBT [Embratel Employee Association]. The principal objective of this union workshop was to conduct a preliminary exploratory study to compile information and impressions to assist the preparation and analysis of questions to be used in interviews. Working with a group dynamic, a presentation was made about the Social Observatory and its research objectives. Then, the themes handled by the Observatory were discussed.

The participation of company management in the research was sought, through a registered letter that even requested a meeting to present the study and the objectives of the Social Observatory. Silence was the only response. Interviews were planned with company managers and executives in order to obtain precise data and information about social and environmental issues, as well as company strategies in these areas; this did not take place, given that the company did not respond to the letter and did not approve the request to conduct research on company property.

Based on these results and on the indications obtained in the workshop, a basic set of questions was developed for union staff, employees (some in key posts) and ex-employees, outside of working hours and the workplace. The interview questions were formulated in order to cover the issues in the ILO Conventions and the relevant environmental issues. Some interviews were conducted by e-mail sent to the homes of those interviewed, since the company communicated to its employees that the Intranet could only be used for company activities. The workers interviewed were contacted through indications by union leaders, without affiliation or union

militancy used as a basis for selection. A total of 30 interviews were conducted. The methodology emphasized the collection of qualitative data. The goal was to raise the real or potential issues, more than to statistically prove the frequency at which the problems occur.

A review of secondary data was also conducted, in order to prepare a profile of the company, the services it offers, its history and economic and financial situation.

The secondary data was highlighted by the results of another study conducted simultaneously by the Associação de Empregados da Embratel (AEBT), in conjunction with the staff of the Laboratório de Trabalho e Formação da Coppe-UFRJ [Labor and Training Laboratory]. Based on responses to 361 questionnaires, this study sought to understand the Embratel workers perspective about the changes occurring in its management and to evaluate the conditions of operation of AEBT. At the same time that it offered new results and indicators, this secondary source confirmed the data obtained through the declarations and observations. The most important results of this study are:

- The most important issue for the respondents is salaries, mentioned by 78%; recognition and appreciation of labor, by 67%; and concern about layoffs, by 63%.
- In reference to remuneration, 80% of the respondents considered it to be unsatisfactory; nearly 77% consider the pay system to be arbitrary and not clearly and openly defined.
- Concerning hierarchical relations, nearly half of the respondents indicated that there were changes in relations with their superiors, given that the number of negative comments is nearly 3 times as high as the positive comments. Deterioration in relations with colleagues was also found: nearly 60% indicated that there was a greater lack of confidence; 78% judged labor relations to be strained; and 80% indicated an increase in individualism in relationships. Competition between employers at the same hierarchical level was mentioned by nearly 75% of the responses, principally related to the need for maintenance of employment, fear of layoffs, an individualist posture and exaggerated personal recognition.
- Concerning the participation in these decisions, it occurs principally in the technical and operational plans. Participation in decisions of an administrative, managerial or strategic character were considered to be infrequent. The fact that only 25% had responded to the question was considered compatible with a managerial style that does not encourage participation. This conclusion was confirmed by the fact that 61% believe that the level of participation decreased after privatization.
- Another factor that deserves emphasis was the presence of foreigners in the company. Nearly 46% considered this presence to be positive, compared with 43% of negative evaluations and 31% who see the foreigners as a threat to employment.
- The need to adopt complementary professional training was identified in 2/3 of the responses. Considering that the majority of those interested already have a college education, the principal demands for training are for specialization courses, or MBA or other graduate study, in addition to language improvement.

Nevertheless, nearly 44% of the respondents believe that there is little room for promotion and believe that the Human Resources policy does not appreciate employees, especially the older ones, and that the fact that some have special relationships complicates the opportunity for professional growth. On the other hand, among the new employees, the expectations for work have better indicators. Nearly 46% say they are satisfied and 24% partially satisfied; although there was some discontent among this group concerning the content of work, creativity, organization and the number of working hours. For the new employees, 57% believe that their salary has not grown as they would have liked.

Other secondary sources were used to verify the company's performance in relation to basic rights at work, the environment, and occupational health and safety. Documents from public agencies responsible for monitoring labor and the environment, Internet pages, and printed documents and publications from the union were also consulted. As mentioned, the attempt to obtain information from company records was not successful. The company did not make available specific data about its performance, such as the number of terminated and created workposts, or compliance with goals established in the privatization process, arguing that the information is classified.

We also sought information through the Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações (Anatel) [National Telecommunications Agency] the regulatory and monitoring agency for the sector, through a letter, and received only the following information;

1. Anatel does not have information about the Embratel staff, "because it is a private company";
2. "The goals are being reached gradually";
3. Anatel only regulates and monitors telecommunications services and is not involved in the administration of the concessionaire and authorized companies.

Visits were made to Anatel's website and to their consulting room in Rio de Janeiro.

4. COMPANY PROFILE

Since 1982, Embratel communications satellites have unleashed a revolution in the Brazilian television entertainment market, transmitting signals throughout the country. As a result, large TV national networks were formed as well as closed circuit television channels. Brasilsat satellites now transmit the signals of dozens of television channels, most of them with digital technology. These signals bring international TV signals daily to residences throughout Brazil.

Embratel offers national and international long-distance services, in addition to 40 other communications services and is only one with a point-to-point "all distance" network in Latin America. It is the only Brazilian telecommunications company to have a national and international network and is directly linked to thousands of companies, in Brazil and abroad. It is also the leading provider of high speed Internet data services in Brazil, with the largest broadband fiber optic cable network that covers more than 26,000 kilometers.

Embratel Participações S.A., created in May 1998 (one of the *holdings* that resulted from the process of the Telebras breakup), is the controlling company with 98.8% of the capital of Empresa Brasileira de Telecomunicações S.A. - Embratel. The company is publicly held; with approximately 80% of shares in public hands. Embratel, its subsidiary operator, is not registered with the Comissão de Valores Mobiliários (CVM) [Securities Commission], and is not publicly traded. In the privatization auction conducted on July 29, 1998, *MCI WorldCom* became the controlling shareholder of Embratel Participações.

On December 8, 1998, Embratel created the subsidiary BrasilCenter Comunicações Ltda., to offer client services, taking advantage of the *WorldCom* experience.

MCI Communications Corporation is the second largest company in the U.S. long-distance market with an estimated value of US\$ 80 billion. With headquarters in Washington D.C. it has annual income of US\$ 20 billion and 60,000 employees throughout the world. Based on its main activity, long distance services, *MCI* entered new market niches, such as systems integration, Internet and local telephone service in the United States. By means of *MCI One* and *Network MCI One*, created in 1996, *MCI* advanced in long distance services with local wireless services, Internet, data transmission, paging, teleconferencing and other international telecommunications services.

MCI offers long distance services from the United States to some 300 countries and locations, including countries of the Asian Pacific, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan and others. Its services are rendered through installation of *MCI's* own network and through networks of many global companies with which it has contracts. Within the process of world capitalist concentration, marked by mergers and acquisitions of mega-companies, particularly intense in the telecommunications sector, *MCI* has had aggressive strategies and the acquisition of Embratel was part of its global expansion.

MCI International became a subsidiary of *MCI Communications Corporation* after the purchase of *Western Union International*. In the past decade, *MCI* conquered 30% of the U.S. market for international calls.

After its merger with *WorldCom*, *MCI* began to call itself *MCI WorldCom* and became the second largest U.S. long distance telephone provider, with 25% of the market, currently estimated at US\$ 100 billion. With offices in 65 countries, *MCI WorldCom* will be the world's second largest telephone company of international voice traffic. The combination of *WorldCom* – with its Pan-European network and the expansion of its presence in Asia – and *MCI*, with joint-ventures and alliances in North and South America, including that with *Avantel*, in Mexico, *Stentor* in Canada, and *Telefónica* in Latin America, *MCI WorldCom* has become a powerful and influential competitor in the global telecommunications market, evaluated at US\$ 670 billion.

The expectations for *MCI WorldCom* for 1998 were that the company would complete the year with income of US\$ 32 billion, 22 million clients, 70 thousand employees, a presence in more than 300 countries, local networks installed in 102 U.S. markets and 25% of the long-distance market.

5. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results achieved in the three steps of the field research: a) The Union Workshop; b) interviews; and c) document research. These results will be presented according to the respective themes included in the ILO Conventions.

The themes included in the ILO Conventions are: freedom of association, collective bargaining, race and gender discrimination, the environment, occupational health and safety, forced labor and child labor. The debates of the Union Workshop quickly concluded that the last two themes were not pertinent in the case of Embratel.

5.1. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Embratel has created the greatest difficulty possible for the entities that represent its employees: Sinttel [The Telecommunications Union of Rio de Janeiro] and AEBT [The Embratel Employees Association of Embratel]. The company prohibits any union activity on its premises. Due to this ban, Sinttel leaders do not have easy access to employees. In the case of AEBT, the company has imposed various obstacles to the use of company resources such as meeting rooms, telephone, etc., as it did before privatization. The company does not allow the Sinttel newspaper to be sold at the building entrances. The position of the Union Delegate is not recognized by the company. The impediment to any form of internal union presence is radical: for quite some time, Sinttel has not had permission from Embratel to promote a campaign on company property to collect non-perishable food to assist laid off workers.

The hostility demonstrated by the company in these situations is even more dramatic in the eyes of employees and union staff, due to the contrast with the situation before privatization, when the legitimacy of union activity was recognized by company management. The company Labor Relations Department (DRT) currently maintains a distance from Sinttel.

Workers are uneasy, leading them to cover up their association with and participation in Union activities. For this reason, many Embratel employees preferred to go to the union to pay their monthly dues and get the union paper, avoiding identification with union affiliation and exposure to the layoff process. This uneasiness was revealed during the research: even small meetings with staff, called to discuss possible gender discrimination at the company, had to be held at the union office, which is rather far from the company, meetings that in previous years had been conducted without difficulty on company property.

The new management also does not recognize the representivity of AEBT [The Embratel Employee Association]. Monthly dues can no longer be automatically deducted from salary. When AEBT recently conducted a study in conjunction with Coppe/UFRJ, it was not permitted to distribute or collect the questionnaire on company property; the AEBT leaders distributed and collected the questionnaires at the plant gates, making participation in the study more difficult.

AEBT leaders also need to stay at the company gate to distribute the newspaper, or they use private delivery to reach those who are already affiliated.

This “union cleansing” includes layoffs, whenever possible and under any pretext, of those employees identified with the previous culture. Immediately after the acquisition by *MCI WorldCom*, union activists, leaders and ex-leaders were laid off, but the company never made

explicit the political motivation of the layoffs, alleging only that it no longer needed the services of these employees, due to the productive restructuring process, or, in some cases, a change in administrative procedures. Nevertheless, there is veiled political persecution. Embratel acted rigorously in two cases that involved recognized leaders in the company and within the sector. In the first case, the employee was fired for using Embratel resources (Intranet) to criticize company performance during the change of the operators code, in July of 1999; an event, in reality, in which the failure of the new company management was completely proven and which indelibly marked the image not only of the recently-privatized company, as well as the new model for the sector, to the point that the company received a heavy fine from Anatel. In the second case, the laid-off employee was a workers' representative at Telos, the private insurance company. In order to understand the causes of existing damages, he solicited some non-liberated contracts; but did not receive them, and entered a suit through the federal Attorney General's office. Company management was told and he was consequently fired, even if this was disguised as a simple layoff.

The declarations also indicate that various other workers known for their political or union activity retired, or left after the privatization, substantially reducing the level of internal organization.

Today the number of stabilized workers at Embratel is restricted to a much lower number compared to the period before privatization. In units such as Amazonas, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, the company laid off leaders before they achieve stability, which is against labor law.

Accusations have been made that Embratel has been manipulating the elections (and consequently the activities) of the Internal Accident Prevention Commission (Cipa). Once again, the contrast with the situation before privatization is considerable.

The barriers imposed by the company do not only restrict the union members and the "cipeiros" [members of Cipa], but also those who are undesirable because they exercise their right to use the Judicial system. There was a declaration that the company - which after numerous layoffs has constantly used sub-contracted services -vetoed sub-contracting (for consulting, assistance, training courses, etc.), of ex-employees who have suits against the company in Labor Court.

The flagrant contradiction between its attitude and behavior toward union relations and the image of a "citizen company" should be highlighted. The company has sought this image by supporting cultural activities and initiatives in the public interest, such as the registering of taxpayers who are exempt from filing. This is the company's public relations strategy to overcome spontaneous difficulties, in the public realm, with its denationalization, its higher tariffs than when the government was government owned, and even with new technical problems which are subject to fines(as in the case, reported above, of the change in the operators codes). To strengthen recognition of the Embratel name, the company has offered financial support to artistic projects (theater and art exhibits), which are in part reimbursed through tax benefits. Among the plays that received support are those which star the actress featured in company propaganda, thus joining the two portions of its public relations strategy, cultural support and advertising. There has also been a change in this type of strategy, because before privatization, the priority of the company public relations strategy was a technical and scientific development program in conjunction with public and private universities (support for artistic projects already existed).

In sum, after privatization, the company came to adopt a clear strategy to generate and create internal space free from union activity and at the mercy of its own internal communication; in

contrast to a public space, where it presented itself as a “citizen company” with no mention of union relations.

Nevertheless, the strategy of the privatized Embratel involves not only a restriction to union affiliation or militancy; it concerns an undeniable attempt to neutralize the very existence of the union on company property, in the mold of a management attitude that is very common in the United States, but which does not correspond to the company posture before privatization.

5.2 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Concerning Collective Contracts, Embratel continues to sit at the negotiating table with Fittel and Sinttel representatives. The character of the negotiations has been strictly formal. Until the last negotiation, the company maintained the habit of keeping the staff informed via Internal Communications and progress was reported on the Intranet.

Nevertheless, except for issues strictly related to the Collective Accord, it was realized that the entities that represent workers have lost space in other negotiating issues concerning employment and human resources development, as for example discussions about the requalification of personnel to deal with new technologies, profit sharing and other issues. Before the company sale, the habits were different: even during the preparation for the privatization process, the union was not isolated from the discussions about the issue, and participated in meetings in Brasilia, during the debate about constitutional reform. There has been a drastic change: there is no longer even access to company management.

The company does not want workers to be represented by a union, but individually. There have been an increasing number of opinion polls conducted within the company, but they are not always publicized. In the decisions about Profit and Income Sharing, the company has acted by “decree” according to the expression used by one of those present at the workshop: it takes a decision, mounts a commission, calls Fittel and Sinttel, and later communicates to employees. There are practically no negotiations.

An analysis of the Collective Work Contracts, from 1996-1999, shows that labor suffered clear losses on all issues after privatization. Despite formal maintenance negotiations over the Collective Accords, it can be said that, year by year, the result of the negotiations has been increasingly unfavorable to one of the parts, which indicates a deterioration in the bargaining conditions.

In 1999, at least 4.3% of the Embratel staff was laid off; in 2000 a nearly equal portion (4.0%) had been laid off in the first six months!

Within the company there is no cooperative effort to develop issues related to human resources. We must highlight that before control was passed to *MCI Communications Corporation*, Embratel already had been preparing to impose competitive policies in the services it offered. In the process of personnel training, principally of management, courses for the marketing sectors such as MBAs, have been given priority. The company has abandoned a business culture, built over many decades, that had a commitment to the objective strategies of the country and has assimilated a new technical culture aimed at the market.

5.3 GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The declarations show that, concerning the guarantee for reproductive rights, the company does not attempt to control fertility. Employment is not threatened during pregnancy, and after child birth, and there is flexibility for women employees to nurse their children. Women can take leaves for pre-natal care and can change their work sector or function if there is risk to the health of the mother or fetus. It is up to the immediate bosses to grant leaves so that mothers can accompany their young children on medical visits, which according to the declarations, are granted flexibly. We emphasize, however, that the increased pressure by the privatized company on workers, frequently mentioned by those interviewed, may in the future lead to a change in company behavior in relation to this issue.

The company offers reimbursement for day-care for children of women workers (or for men who have exclusive custody). However, Embratel, froze the value of the day-care payment, under the last collective agreement. But workers still see this assistance as positive, when compared with the benefits offered by other companies. The company offers support to disabled children, the value of which was also frozen, but also considered to be positive by the workers.

The workers considered their working conditions to be generally adequate. There were some reservations concerning the lay-out of the workplaces. They are rooms that have standardized modules, with low dividers causing a lack of privacy, stress and high environmental noise.

There were also complaints about the use of obsolete equipment and furniture that is not ergonomically suitable. There are women's restrooms, in suitable hygienic condition, even in remote locations. Those interviewed were not aware of a company policy concerning sexual harassment. There was a report of a case of a female worker who denounced her boss, and he was transferred from the sector. But, according to one woman who was formerly a union director, woman workers are generally silent about this issue because they fear the consequences of a charge of harassment.

Embratel promoted periodic health exams that were not mandatory. There are also promotional campaigns about health, including those especially for women. Nevertheless, the Internal Accident Prevention Commission, which according to the reports conducted important work in the health field before privatization, was weakened by the current shareholders, who even intervened in the process to elect commission members. In general, those interviewed evaluated the company activity in the health area as very positive, except for the competitive climate and the tension imposed by the company by demands for results, which has caused mental health problems among employees. Embratel tried to ameliorate this situation with the installation of a gymnastic academy on the premises, but workers cannot consider time spent there as time worked.

Given that Embratel is a company that operates in telecommunications, one of the traditional branches of engineering, it always has had a majority of men on its staff. This permeates interpersonal relations until today, influencing the evaluation process, access to training and criteria for functional promotion.

The admissions process is permeated by subjectivity in a way that is unfavorable to women, according to those interviewed.

Nevertheless, there is a perception that the number of women at Embratel has increased in all fields, most sharply in the fields of Marketing and Sales. In reality, these two areas grew after privatization and because of the nature of the workplace, are functions occupied by women, since these are low paying workposts with a work load of six hours per day.

Promotions, which in general at Embratel were always the target of criticism because of the variability of the criteria utilized, are also influenced by the subjective evaluation of workers, which can cause salary distortions between men and women performing the same function.

In relation to participation in specialized jobs, the responses always indicated that women constantly need to prove their abilities to their colleagues. The same is true in relation to the opportunities for functional promotion. Nevertheless, there are currently women occupying important managerial positions.

Embratel has an irregular policy for training its employees. Access to professional educational courses, training and requalification offered by the company is related to the importance of the job exercised. Because it is a high technology company, the higher the staff level and importance of the job, the greater would be the priority for training the worker, and this is not influenced by the issue of gender.

Six years ago a commission existed to handle the issue of gender, but it was made unviable by the company representative. Currently there is no commission with equal participation of the company and the union to guarantee the handling of questions of gender, principally in the current situation in which the representation of workers has confronted a tougher position from Embratel in negotiations, as well as serious restrictions to access to company property and to the circulation of information among the workers. Those interviewed see the difficulties related to the issue of gender as a lesser problem in the current situation of layoffs and work under pressure.

The situation of women who are sub-contracted is much more difficult. In the practice of sub-contracting, it is common to find differentiated treatment among company staff and sub-contracted workers. The study found a disparity in treatment between the Embratel staff and those who are sub-contracted, principally those that perform support functions (operators, janitorial staff, administrative assistants, etc.).

In summary, we can affirm that there are problems in all of the items considered in the study. For example, concerning the right to maternity, the minimal legal requirements are obeyed. There was a report of a firing immediately after birth of a contracted elevator operator. The working conditions are more precarious when there is a concentration of sub-contractees. A particular example was that of the Embratel operators, all of whom did not have stability, when it was a state company. The furniture, the room where they worked and the bathroom had lower standards than those offered to company staff. There are no promotions and they were transferred from time to time to different companies. There were also not offered professional training courses. With privatization there was a mass layoff and new women were contracted at lower salaries and placed in BrasilCenter, a separate company from Embratel.

In general, the sub-contractees are not recipients of the internal health campaign and do not undertake regular health exams. The benefits for day care and assistance for disabled children are also not offered, and there is great difficulty for mothers to make doctor visits with young children, even for pre-natal care. There are no promotions and salary increases are only possible through collective agreements based on the readjustment of the minimum wage.

5.4. ENVIRONMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

In the Workshop, we were told that Embratel does not have a significant problem with the question of external environment. In the perception of the participants, the company has fulfilled

its formal and legal requirements, for example, it conducts Environmental Impact Reports for large network installation projects. Phone interviews with some employees in the engineering and network installation field confirmed this perception.

In Feema, the state environmental agency, no cases were found against the company. We also consulted a specialist at the World Bank who had no information of problems related to Embratel. Embratel received ISO 14001, through the Fundação Vanzolini, for environmental protection systems installed at the Estação Terrena on the Fernando de Noronha archipelago.

The situation is different concerning working conditions, in which the company has some problems. Due to sub-contracting in the maintenance of electrical energy, the turnover of the workers has increased in these installations. Many who worked in maintenance as Embratel employees, were fired and today they offer services as sub-contractors, that is, with much more limited power of intervention. In addition to the drop in quality, there have been grave issues of safety.

As indicated earlier, there are declarations that the Embratel management manipulated the time period for registration as a representative in Cipa, so that employees it did not want could not use this right.

It is true that the internal environment of the company corresponds to that of a large company, which seeks to provide comfort and allow access to the newest equipment for its employees. The offices are large, well ventilated, air conditioned, have proper lighting, and new furniture and equipment to facilitate tasks at the workstations. The employees have computers, telephones with answering machines, Intranet access, printers, and other peripherals. However, this ergonomic change of the working environment has also caused some problems for workers. The fact that there are no room dividers causes greater noise and mainly limits the employees' privacy. Various declarations mention discomfort at times when an employee needs to address a personal issue. The proximity to their other colleagues has led many to use their cellular telephones for personal issues. On the other hand, the open environment interferes with the workers' concentration, requiring extra effort and generates an environment where the employee feels permanently watched.

The company considers itself to be a pioneer because it is inaugurating a gymnastics academy in the main building, following in the steps of *WorldCom*. It conducted a tremendous "endomarketing" campaign in which all of the employees received a folder in the shape of a battery. This is part of a program seeking to improve the quality of life of the employees, to combat sedentary habits, and attempt to decrease stress caused by work. Nevertheless, those interviewed said that to enter the academy, the employee passes through a turnstile linked to the Flexible Hour System (FHS), which computes the hours not worked.

One of the principal complaints of all of the employees interviewed was that of excess hours, due to the fact that the internal system of registering hours only functions until 7 PM.

According to Sinttel directors, the excess work hours have not led to corresponding remuneration. The company works with cost centers by unit and when the month is over, the employee responsible for the center is required to sign the records in concordance. If a manager authorizes overtimes, it is counted against the cost center.

When asked to explain how the company has proceeded concerning the registration of accidents while returning home from work, those interviewed affirm that the company recognizes the

accident but the worker does not have autonomy to directly consult Sinttel if it does not agree with the decision taken by management.

This increase in the work shift has caused stress and affected the health of employees. Those interviewed and the participants of the workshop indicated that the managers are also overworked, and can do little about the situation of stress among employees; the degree of understanding depends on the personal characteristics of each manager. In any case, there was unanimous agreement at the workshop about the fact that the managers are required to demand more work and Embratel does not have specific programs to serve employees. Once again the gymnastic academy was mentioned. It was also emphasized that, from time to time, the company distributes descriptive brochures about how to avoid stress.

Embratel has a health clinic only for emergencies. There are no longer doctors on hand to attend employees who turn to the clinic for small problems or simple illness.

There were also criticisms that the company maintains an INSS inspector at the clinic to authorize medical leaves.

The company has respected workers' basic legal rights. It maintains the Dental and Medical Assistance Plan which existed before the acquisition by *MCI WorldCom*, and offers personalized or pre-packaged plans, with reimbursement. There was some decrease in benefits and an increase in the percentage of the participation paid by the employee, nevertheless, these issues were not emphasized in the study.

The changes that occurred at Telos, the Embratel social security foundation, were considered to be negative and harmful by 76% of those who responded to the AEBT/Coppe-UFRJ study. In this theme, the main concerns of the employees concern medical help for retirees and the total loss of the contribution made during the time employed by the employee and the company, in case the employee leaves the company.

Concerning working conditions, the changes related to privatization have increased the working hours and their intensity. When asked if there have been recent changes at work, nearly 53.5% of those who said yes mentioned "more hours worked". When asked if, in recent months, the volume of work had grown, 85.9% responded yes, 73.4% responded that there was an increase in the number of hours worked and 72.0% indicated a greater intensity of work. Among the negative effects, stress (52.0%), anguish and poor health, were mentioned as the principal symptoms of the deteriorating health of Embratel workers. Nearly 49% said they lacked motivation to work.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are presented some recommendations of actions to be taken to overcome the problems found at the company, in terms of basic labor rights. The recommendations are aimed at the social actors involved in the situation studied, particularly the company and the workers' union entities, in order to develop or add to activities aimed at overcoming the problems identified in the study.

6.1 FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The focus of ILO Convention 87 is the freedom for workers to organize. In order for this right to be effectively respected at Embratel, measures should be taken so that the workers representative entities - Sinttel, Fittel and AEBT – can have free access to the company and can investigate the main points highlighted in this report; after this, negotiations should be opened between these entities and the company in order to restore the freedom to organize lost with privatization.

The main factors to be restored include: the company should allow union leaders to have free access to company property; it should not restrict the exercise of their activities, permitting distribution of bulletins and communications to the workers even on company property, as before; the company should not impede collection of union dues and those for AEBT, allowing them to be deducted from the paycheck, as before; it is also necessary to assure the follow-up by Sinttel and by AEBT of the activities of the Internal Accident Prevention Commission, as well as the electoral processes for the workers representatives to the commission and of the regulations and deadlines for candidate registration.

6.2 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

On one hand, Embratel should maintain a policy, based on that used when it was a government controlled company, of complying with the ILO conventions and collective agreements, and always resolve conflicts of interest through negotiations. On the other hand, it should abandon the policy initiated after privatization of limiting Sinttel and Fittel representatives at the negotiating table, and permit newsletters published by these entities about the negotiating process to be distributed on company property, as before.

The changes related to the transfer of control and management to a new controlling group should be discussed among the union entities, in order to reduce the impacts on workers and the communities.

The effectuation of the right to collective bargaining should also include issues related to working conditions, such as Profit and Income Sharing, the Health Plan and the Commission for Pre-Conciliation.

6.3 GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The employee-union parity commission to address gender issues should be reorganized, in order to deal with issues such as reimbursement for day-care costs, and for assistance for disabled children; the definition of a sexual harassment policy; the elimination of “subtle prejudice” in the mechanisms of evaluation and the opportunities for training.

The company should adopt coordinated efforts with the union entities and other organizations that seek to overcome inequality and impede discrimination at work, and can include, as a first step in this sense, the broad publication of the principles of conduct of the controlling group at the community level and for Embratel employees.

A question that deserves to be evaluated in detail is the subjective nature of selection criteria and practices for contracting, training and promotion. Nevertheless, the most urgent problem to be addressed is the situation of sub-contracted women, which deserves urgent attention from both the union and the company.

6.4 ENVIRONMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Embratel should, in the first instance, guarantee the independence of the Internal Accident Prevention Commission, as determined by law.

It should also create participate forms to resolve problems in the work environment – which have caused discomfort to workers, principally concerning the lack of privacy – and above all, the high level of stress and excess hours, which can cause serious damage to workers health.

The company should also respect guidelines for sub-contracting. The company has the clout to demand that the companies which work for it comply with all of the legal requirements, and that labor relations do not become weakened.

THE RIGHTS BEING STUDIED

The rights studied by the Social Observatory are guaranteed by norms, codes of conduct and principally ILO Conventions. The principal Conventions observed are presented here:

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

- **Convention 87 – Freedom of Association and protection of the right to organize**, passed in 1948, guarantees the right to the free exercise, by workers and employers without any distinction, to organize, promote and defend their respective interests. Brazil did not ratify this convention and the national right to unionize is established by professional category, with a limit of one union per category, representation limited to the municipality and the establishment of a mandatory financial contribution to the union (the so called union tax).
- **Convention 135 – Workers Representatives**, of 1971, ratified by Brazil in 1990 guarantees the protection of workers representatives at companies and establishes the types of activities that they should be allowed to conduct.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- **Convention 98 – Freedom of association and collective bargaining**, of 1949, ratified by Brazil in 1952, protects union activity from discrimination in relation to employment and promotes collective voluntary negotiations between employers or employer organizations and workers organizations.
- **Convention 151 – Labor Relations (Public Service)**, of 1978, protects the right to unionization and negotiation for government employees. It has not been ratified by Brazil.

FORCED LABOR

- **Convention 29 – Forced or Compulsory Labor**, of 1930, ratified by Brazil in 1957, proposes the abolition of the use of all forms of forced or compulsory labor.
- **Convention 105 – Abolition of Forced Labor**, of 1957, ratified by Brazil in 1965, reaffirms that certain forms of forced or compulsory labor constitute human rights violations and must be abolished. It determines that each member nation must not use forced labor as a measure of coercion or political education, as a method of mobilization or for the use of labor power, as a means of discipline or punishment for participation in strikes or as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.

CHILD LABOR

- **Convention 138 – Minimum Age for Admission to Employment**, of 1973, ratified by Brazil in 2000, establishes the abolition of child labor and fixes the minimum age for admission to employment or work not lower than the age in which obligatory schooling ceases. At the end of 1988, when the Brazilian National Congress approved Constitutional Amendment no. 20, the minimum working age was fixed at 16 years. Brazilian legislation

prohibits youths of less than 18 years old to conduct work considered to be dangerous, taxing or unhealthy; and the work conducted within education and professional training programs must be submit to pedagogic criteria and must have the supervision of competent authorities.

- **Convention 182 – Prohibition and immediate actions for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor**, of 1999, ratified by Brazil in 2000, determines that every member country should adopt immediate and effective measures to assure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor for youth up to 18 years of age. The worst forms include slavery, prostitution, production of pornography, utilization of children for illicit activities and labor and those that are harmful to health and safety.

RACE AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

- **Convention 100 – Equal Remuneration**, of 1951, ratified by Brazil in 1957, concerns equal pay for men and women for equal work, and determines that member countries should promote or guarantee compatible means and methods that assure such equality.
- **Convention 111 – Discrimination**, of 1958, ratified by Brazil in 1965, promotes equal opportunity and treatment for employment and occupation.

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Various ILO Conventions and other international documents concern the environmental and health and safety factors of labor. The principal ILO conventions are:

- **Convention 148 – Working Environment**, 1977, ratified by Brazil in 1982, seeks the elimination of risks caused by air pollution, noise and vibration at work sites.
- **Convention 155 – Occupational Safety and Health**, 1981, ratified by Brazil in 1992, intends to guarantee the occupational safety and health of workers and a working environment without health risks, or of accidents. An important aspect of this convention is the concern for improvement in the quantity and quality of information about occupational safety and health and the working environment. Article 20 of the convention concerns the need to adopt cooperative measures between company administration and workers and their representatives, which contribute to reinforce the ILO conventions about the forms of organization at the workplace.
- **Convention 161 – Occupational Health Services**, of 1985, ratified by Brazil in 1990, points to the need for essentially preventive services, that seek to establish and maintain a safe and healthy work environment that is supportive of the physical and mental health of workers.
- **Convention 170 – Chemicals Convention**, of 1990, ratified by Brazil in 1996, seeks to prevent or reduce illnesses and accidents caused by chemical products at work.
- **Convention 174 – Prevention of major industrial accidents**, of 1993, concerns measures to prevent major industrial accidents or limit their consequences.

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