

To

All the Zonal / Divisional/Regional/State Units,

Dear Comrades,

ONWARD TO THE 24TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

The 24th General Conference of AIIEA is scheduled to meet at Kochi, Kerala from 21st to 25th January 2017. This Conference has the task of outlining the policy and program of the organisation for the next three years. The international and national developments that influence the insurance industry and the life of the insurance employees have to be properly scrutinised to develop tactics to meet the enormous challenges of the times we live in. The successes achieved in the last three years have to be consolidated and the organisation equipped with correct political and ideological understanding to carry out the set tasks.

The global capitalist crisis is continuing and further deepening and shattering the gains made by the working class through their struggles. The developments in the industrialised nations and the result of the referendum in Britain on the issue of continuance or exit from the European Union indicate the collapse of the capitalist model based on privatisation, trickle-down theory etc. The working class has made it clear that neo-liberalism has failed and they want the power of the State to protect them from the anarchy of the market. Unfortunately the people disempowered by neo-liberalism see the Left in the advanced capitalist countries as part of the neo-liberal project and hence incapable of providing an alternative. This has resulted in massive gains for the Right and ultra-nationalist parties across Europe and a similar trend helped Donald Trump gain the presidency of United States. The Right and ultra-nationalists blame the immigrant workers as responsible for the misery of the natives rather than the exploitation of the capital of both the immigrants and the natives. This has given a fillip to the politics of hatred and division of the working class to the advantage of global finance capital.

The never ending wars of imperialism have destroyed nations and imposed massive sufferings on people across the world. Millions of lives have been lost in these wars and millions more are displaced creating an unprecedented refugee crisis. Imperialism has to be held accountable for the crimes it has committed on humanity. Peace is a pre-requisite for development. There cannot be any development without peace. War can be an opportunity of earning massive profits for the producers and dealers of arms but shatters the lives of the common people. Therefore, no trade union committed to human values can ignore the dangers of war and need to give an important place for the struggle for peace and against imperialist war drive in its program.

Neo-liberalism does not respect the nature. In its greed for profits it is ravaging the nature and its exhaustible resources. The increasing natural calamities attributable to the climate change are a powerful message that the future of planet earth is not safe. The refusal of the rich nations to limit their carbon emissions shows their scant respect to the nature and

safety of our planet. This has become a very important issue for the survival of human race and the trade union movement cannot remain unconcerned.

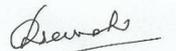
India has not remained immune to the global developments. The Indian economy is going through a difficult period. The growth of the GDP is not the reflection of the living standards of the people. The benefits of growth are appropriated by the rich resulting in massive inequalities. It is estimated that just 1 percent of the top population control nearly 58 percent of the national wealth. India today has the dubious distinction of being one of the most unequal societies. There is a crisis of unemployment. The economy is demand constraint. The demonetisation with the objective of unearthing black money has imposed tremendous hardship on the honest citizens. The informal economy is shattered. There is a reverse migration of workers. It is estimated that millions of jobs will be lost due to this measure and economy will take a big hit. It is becoming clear that demonetisation is an ill-thought and ill-prepared measure incapable of achieving the stated objectives but succeeding in causing massive distress and derailing many sectors of the economy. The country is also witnessing increasing social conflicts with the government refusing to rein in the organisations fanning communal and caste hatred. Nationalism is given a new definition. Dissent is not tolerated. Democracy itself has become a casualty. The unity of the nation is under tremendous strain.

The insurance industry has performed admirably well to serve the nation. LIC is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee backed by a stupendous performance through its contribution to the nation building exercise and giving total security to the policyholders. The PSGI companies have also performed well. The public sector insurance industry cannot remain safe from the general political and economic policies of the government. The government has decided to divest the shares of PSGI companies and there are indications that such attempts will also be made in LIC too. Therefore, the major task before the insurance employees is to defend their industry in the interests of national development, protection of policyholders' interests and the gains achieved in improving their living standards through struggles. Struggles have to be developed to secure the long pending demand of a pension option and other benefits agreed but yet to be given.

The AIIEA has succeeded in improving the living standards of the insurance employees fighting against worst odds. These successes were achieved due to the correct reading of the political and economic situations and developing the struggles accordingly. But the situation globally and within our country is really grim. Meeting the present day challenges require cementing the unity of employees with correct political and ideological understanding. In its history of over six and half decades AIIEA has weathered many storms successfully. It has achieved successes that seemingly looked impossible. The 24th General Conference too will rise up to the occasion and draw the policy and program that will steer the movement of insurance employees to successfully achieve the set tasks. Onward to the 24th General Conference of AIIEA.

With greetings,

Comradely yours,



General Secretary.