

DuPont Global Network makes its presence felt at the Shareholders Meeting



DuPont Global Network, outside the Shareholders Meeting 4/23/14

Last October, USW formed an alliance, the DuPont Global Network, with other DuPont Unions. DuPont is known for changing our work life with little advance notice. For example, DuPont announced the spinoff of the Performance Chemical business segment—which affected three of the four USW facilities. Our Brazilian Brothers and Sisters were informed mid-April that the company planned to shut down and demolish the plant in Camaçari, Bahia at the end of May. Little did we know the future importance of these global connections.

We polled our International allies and discovered we weren't the only ones left in the dark about DuPont's restructuring plan. The four USW facilities hosted our partner unions in Wilmington, DE for two days. Members were able to share information on working conditions at different plants, develop strategies for future actions, and learn more about the global chemical industry. The highlight of the day was an International Panel illustrating that when DuPont is mandated by laws to supply information to the union, it improves company/worker relations.

The next day at the Shareholders Meeting, the DuPont Global Network had an opportunity to ask direct questions of DuPont's CEO Ellen Kullman. Our delegation consisted of Unite the Union (United Kingdom), Sindiquimica/CUT (Brazil), Industri-ALL (a Swiss-based global trade union federation), and the Chairman of DuPont's European Works Council (EWC), who represents union workers at every DuPont facility in Europe.

The Network confronted the company about the long-term effects and the lack of transparency regarding the spinoff. Our Brazilian Brothers presented a letter from the state government with alternatives for the Camaçari plant, and handed CEO Kullman a petition signed by 500 community members to save the plant.

Everyone is ready for some straight answers about their future. If we are going to break through DuPont's stone-walling, we have to stand together not only at our individual sites, but also throughout the world. The best way to push back against a multi-national corporation like DuPont is to take a global approach ourselves. And we are on that path!

