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Victory at Last! Domestic Workers win Global Recognition with the Adoption of the ILO Convention for Domestic Workers.

“Now Comes the Domestic Work for Governments: Ratify and Implement!”

Geneva, June 16, 2011 - Today Governments, Employers and Workers of the world at the 100th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva, Switzerland adopted the First Convention and accompanying Recommendation on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

Myrtle Witbooi, Chair of the International Domestic Workers Network “Today we celebrate a great victory for domestic workers. Until now we have been treated as ‘invisible’, not respected for the huge contribution we make in society and the economy and denied our rights as workers. It is an injustice that has lasted too long.”

This is truly a historic event and a step forward for an estimated 50 to 100 million men, women and children worldwide – working in the homes of their employers.

Some governments attending the ILO have already indicated their willingness to ratify the Convention. Domestic workers from around the world will continue their organizing with efforts at the national level to ensure that governments put the contents of the Convention into the law of each country.

About the Convention: The Convention starts by recognising the “*significant contribution of domestic workers to the global economy*” and that this work is “*undervalued and invisible, and is mainly carried out by women and girls, many of whom are migrants or members of disadvantaged communities*”.

It affirms that domestic workers’ have the same fundamental rights that all workers have:

- the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining,
- the elimination of all forms of forced labour,
- the effective abolition of child labour, and
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

With this Convention, Governments have the duty to take measures to make sure that domestic workers enjoy these fundamental rights. They will be asked to take measures ensuring that domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence.

About IDWN: The International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) is made up of domestic workers’ unions and associations around the world, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America, and Europe. Support organisations include International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) and Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

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