



Global Unions position concerning the draft resolution submitted by Israel on Eliminating Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The Global Unions welcome the focus that the draft resolution brings to the persistence of sexual harassment in the workplace and the need for urgent action.

In the European Union¹, approximately one out of every two to three women has experienced some form of sexual harassment or sexually unwanted behaviour. In Bangladesh² alone, over 60% of female garment workers have been intimidated or threatened with violence at work. In the U.S.³, 90% of female waiters have experienced sexual harassment on the job. Worldwide, women working as domestic workers⁴ in private households are often at risk of psychological, physical and sexual abuse and harassment.

However, sexual harassment is just one form of the violence and harassment that women experience in the world of work today, which prevents women from fully enjoying and exercising their economic, social, political and cultural rights. Gender-based violence in the world of work is a manifestation of unequal power relations between women and men. At work, as in society, gender-based violence can take on multiple forms: physical abuse including assault, battery, attempted murder and murder; sexual violence including rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment; verbal and sexist abuse; bullying; coercion; psychological abuse, intimidation and threats of violence; economic and financial abuse; and stalking.

Further, domestic or 'intimate partner' violence has a clear impact on the workplace⁵, through prolonged or frequent absenteeism, poor concentration, loss of productivity and job security for the victims⁶, and misuse of company resources by perpetrators, for example.

Goal 5 of the SDGs calls for the elimination of **all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres**. This clearly includes the world of work.

Gender based violence is a significant obstacle to women's economic empowerment, autonomy and independence – and to the realisation of gender equality. Yet, whilst gender based violence is widely recognised as one of the most pernicious yet tolerated of human rights abuses⁷, there is currently no international baseline legal standard outlawing violence and harassment in the world of work, in its multiple manifestations.

We draw attention to the on-going process at the International Labour Organization (ILO) to remedy this gap and to adopt an integrated approach to preventing, addressing and redressing violence and harassment in the world of work. We urge all member States to support the process towards a binding instrument, supported by clear guidance on implementation. This would go a long way towards the realisation of Goal 5 of the SDGs.

The Global Unions represent 72 million women workers around the world and are present at the UNCSW61 with 150 women trade union delegates.

Global Unions (represented at the UNCSW61 by the ITUC, EI, IDWF, ITF and PSI)

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¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/shworkpl.pdf>

² https://www.fairwear.org/ul/cms/fck-uploaded/documents/fwfpublications_reports/StandingFirmReportFWF2013.pdf

³ http://rocnited.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/REPORT_TheGlassFloor_Sexual-Harassment-in-the-Restaurant-Industry.pdf

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/11/24/protect-domestic-workers-violence>

⁵ http://dvatworknet.org/sites/dvatworknet.org/files/PreVAiL_Work_IPV_Research_Brief_March2014.pdf

⁶ In addition, evidence shows that women with domestic violence experiences have more disrupted work histories, are on lower personal incomes, have had to change jobs more often and are employed at higher levels in casual and part time work than women without these experiences.

⁷ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/11/ed-message-intl-day-for-elimination-of-violence-against-women>; and http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/61/143&Lang=En