

**2<sup>nd</sup> WORLD CONGRESS**Vancouver, 21 - 25 June 2010

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**RESOLUTION****ON****GENDER EQUALITY**

1. Congress reiterates that gender equality is a key human rights goal and component of social justice. It commits the ITUC to the achievement of gender equality in all its endeavours, deplores the continuing reality of deep and pervasive discrimination against women in all areas of economic and social activity and recognises the equal contribution of women and men to society, to economic life and to the trade union movement.
2. Congress notes with concern that gender differences in participation and unemployment rates are a persistent feature of global labour markets in spite of advances in educational levels of women. Women suffer multiple disadvantages in access to labour markets, and in most cases do not have the same opportunities as men in the choice of work and in having access to the working conditions to which they aspire. Such exclusion is particularly serious as regards young women migrants. In addition, traditional social roles burden women with an undue share of caring responsibilities and domestic or family work.
3. Gender discrimination is evident throughout the world in access to resources, educational and economic opportunities, political power and leadership positions. Only 40% of those employed in the world are women, with the majority being in the agricultural sector and in informal economic activities where incomes and working conditions are generally lower. Women are over-represented in low-paying jobs, under-represented in executive, management and technical positions and often suffer poor working conditions. Women's skills and jobs have been historically undervalued with the global gender pay gap at around 22%. Policies and programmes to achieve gender equality are essential, but have not proven adequate to dismantle stereotypes and overcome injustice.
4. Cultural, economic, social and religious barriers must be identified, condemned and overcome in order for women's human rights to be respected and fully implemented everywhere. As gender discrimination frequently interacts with other forms of discrimination such as age and gender identity, policies and programmes should be put in place to address the multiple forms of discrimination against women and a cross-cutting approach on gender should be adopted.
5. Sexual harassment and other forms of abuse are serious forms of discrimination that undermine the dignity of women and men and negate gender equality. Congress deplores the reality that one third of women suffer from violence at some stage in their lives.

6. Because traditional occupational segregation has forced women into economic activities often characterised by low pay, whether low-skilled or skilled, it is critical to recognise appropriately the importance and value of the jobs, sectors and activities where women are overrepresented. Provision should be made for women to acquire the skills that are related to jobs, activities and sectors that are growing and offering decent work opportunities, and women's skills must be valued equally with those of men. Women should also be encouraged to join non-traditional sectors such as those linked to green jobs. Vocational training, education and skills development policies should promote equality of opportunity for girls and women, and initiatives should be taken for the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women to reconcile equitably work and personal life especially in relation to child and dependent care.

7. Discrimination and disadvantage in the world of work is often related to, or exacerbated by women's reproductive role and their lack of access to affordable related services and support and the inadequacies of maternity protection. Donor governments must provide developing country governments with the resources to provide satisfactory and universally accessible reproductive health and medical care and access to sufficient professional staff for all, to reduce maternal and new-born mortality around the world in line with the fifth Millennium Development Goal.

8. Congress recognises that globalisation affects women and men differently and that its differential impact and resultant needs should be subject to gender analysis in both policy development and impact assessment. The withdrawal of the state from regulatory and economic activity, and the reduction of public spending adversely affect employment in sectors in which women are highly represented and reduce those services on which women are disproportionately dependent because of the unequal division of family responsibilities.

9. Congress underlines that the global crisis has deepened inequality and undermined women's rights and that as a result an impoverishment of women, especially elderly women, is taking place. The crisis should be seized as a critical opportunity to adopt a new policy paradigm that reflects a rights-based approach and promotes equity and gender equality. National economic recovery strategies must therefore incorporate a comprehensive gender analysis from the outset.

10. Congress declares that gender equality should be addressed as a central element of all aspects of employment policy, including macroeconomic frameworks, active labour market policies, skills development, enterprise promotion and employment-intensive infrastructure programmes. Gender issues must be central to the process of designing and assessing the impact of recovery packages.

11. Congress demands the full respect of core labour rights in all export processing zones (EPZs) where women make up nearly 80% of the workforce, in order to eliminate exploitative, dangerous and sometimes brutal practices of which women are the most frequent victims.

12. Congress notes that women constitute nearly half the world's migrants and that many work in the least protected and most exploited sectors and are increasingly trafficked into illegal employment and prostitution. It condemns the growth of such slavery-like practices and commits the ITUC to fight against them and to achieve more effective national and international enforcement of measures to eliminate them.

13. Women also make up the majority of workers with precarious jobs and of workers in the informal economy who are not protected by legislation, are denied

fundamental rights and are subject to sub-standard conditions of work. Congress calls on affiliates to intensify the organisation of all women and men workers, both in the formal and informal economy while making all efforts to bring those workers who are currently denied their fundamental rights at work within the scope of legislative protection.

14. Congress encourages and supports the actions of unions working to lend moral and material assistance to women and children who have refugee status owing to conflicts or violent situations.

15. Congress is concerned that in spite of the growth in women's membership of affiliates of the ITUC to 40% and the efforts made to better represent women in their structures and policies, the full integration of gender perspectives in trade union decision-making, policies and activities remain inadequate. Trade unions have the basic responsibility, and must be at the forefront of the struggle, to achieve gender equality in the workplace, in their policies, in their own structures and in society. The ITUC calls on affiliates to prioritise and ensure the organisation of women into unions and the promotion of women into leadership positions and throughout their structures.

### **ITUC Action Programme**

16. Congress instructs the ITUC and regional organisations and structure, working together with Global Unions partners and affiliates to:

- (a) intensify the Decent Work for Decent Life for Women Campaign aimed at achieving social justice and gender equality at the workplace and in trade unions and to continue the drive to organise women workers, particularly in EPZs and the informal economy, as well as domestic, migrant, rural, young, and other vulnerable workers;
- (b) assist in the extension of gender awareness training programmes to both men and women trade union leaders and activists with a view to the systematic incorporation of gender perspectives in policies, programmes, publications and negotiations;
- (c) promote the appropriate participation of women as trade union negotiators and implement a Plan of Action for collective negotiation, social dialogue and gender equality, including: health and safety of women in the workplace and health policy, including HIV/AIDS; policies and procedures to eliminate sexual harassment, discrimination and violence in the workplace and in the community in general; and training for all negotiators and union representatives regarding the incorporation of gender policies in all trade union activities;
- (d) increase union activity for pay equity at national, regional and international level, including collective bargaining, research and information dissemination on the gender pay gap, support for equal pay for work of equal value, revision of the widely-held notion of certain jobs or professions being the preserve of a single gender, capacity building, and campaigning on the work-life balance and for the right to a decent living wage sufficient to cover basic needs, and for women working involuntarily on part-time contracts to have the possibility of moving to full-time contracts or at least to increased hours;
- (e) promote access of women trade unionists to education on all areas of trade union work at the national and international levels, including the global economic crisis, trade and labour standards, climate change and international institutions;

- (f) monitor and assist unions to bring about coherence in trade union gender policies at the international, regional and national levels and encourage unions to carry out gender audits to strengthen their policies and structures on gender equality including through use of the ILO Gender Audit tool;
- (g) take affirmative action and other corrective measures as necessary to further strengthen women's involvement in trade union decision-making, policies and activities and promote actively the ITUC's commitment to achieve gender parity in its programmes and in access to positions of responsibility in the leadership and structures of the ITUC, its affiliates and trade unions generally, with particular attention to the active participation of young women in decision-making bodies, including by collecting disaggregated data on gender parity in affiliates and taking measures in the case of non-compliance;
- (h) promote gender parity within the ILO and a higher representation of women at the International Labour Conference, and the involvement of trade union women at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- (i) fully engage in efforts to enable the adoption of an ILO Convention supplemented by a Recommendation for domestic workers, and its subsequent ratification and full implementation;
- (j) intensify campaigning at national, regional and international levels for the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions 100 (Equal Remuneration), 111 (Discrimination), 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities), 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples), 175 (Part-Time Work), 177 (Home Work) and 183 (Maternity Protection), and implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 ILO Conference on "Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work";
- (k) carry out gender analysis of the policies and actions of the IFIs, WTO and other institutions dealing with the global economy and development, and address these issues in the framework of achieving the UN's third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) on gender equality;
- (l) ensure gender equality is mainstreamed in all decision making, including measures to deal with the global crisis as endorsed in the ILO Global Jobs Pact and investment in green jobs for women and for men;
- (m) Identify and condemn cultural, economic, social and religious barriers to the respect of women's rights that have to be overcome in order for women's human rights to be respected and fully implemented everywhere;
- (n) Strengthen the commitment of companies to positive actions and programmes that seek to achieve gender equality;
- (o) actively promote the access of women to quality public services including health, education, transport and water, and public services such as day care centres and preschools that enable women to have access to the labour market and to remain in it, as part of the struggle for achieving gender equality;
- (p) undertake specific actions for girls' education and the elimination of child labour and the elimination of human trafficking, particularly in the sex trade;
- (q) undertake specific actions to protect women's health and safety at work, with particular regard to their reproductive health and maternity rights;
- (r) defend women's right to free decisions on their bodies and their sexuality;
- (s) condemn violations of women's trade union rights and violence against women trade unionists, participate actively in the International Day for Elimination of

Violence against Women, 25 November and strive for the elimination of all the various forms of violence against women;

- (t) make every possible effort to secure the application of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- (u) promote the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, in particular Section F on women and the economy, at national, regional and international levels and ensure effective trade union input and participation at follow up meetings, as well as support the organising of a Fifth World Conference on Women;
- (v) support the building of solidarity between trade union women at all levels, including international solidarity actions with the Global Union Federations;
- (w) actively take part in 8 March, International Women's Day, making it a day of global action, and build alliances with civil society on behalf of women trade unionists and with women's organisations in order to achieve common goals, including the World March of Women.

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June 2010