



**Declaration by Belgian Trade Unions, CSC, FGTB, CGSLB, partner organizations, and ITUC/TUCA at the 3<sup>rd</sup> ITUC Women's Conference, San José - Costa Rica, 10 October 2017**

On 10 October 2017, we, 70 delegates from ITUC affiliates from all around the world, gathered at the Crown Plaza Corobici Hotel in San José to assess the state of women workers in the world. The theme of the event — **“Decent work, gender equality and fight against precarious work”** — proved to be relevant for the ITUC 3<sup>rd</sup> Women's Conference which followed immediately after this meeting, and had a focus on “Building women workers power”.

Accordingly, we focused on the following key issues:

- Gender Based Violence and Harassment in the world of work
- The role of women in the Transition of Informal to Formal Economy
- Access for all, including women, to the Universal Right to Social Protection

Taking into account that the changes in the nature of the world of work further aggravate the precarious working conditions for women, we are aware of the challenges that confront us concerning inclusion, organizing, trade union affiliation and effective participation to overcome gender-based violence, the transition towards the formalization of work and the advancement towards universal access to social protection.

Faced with these challenges, we commit ourselves to working together as sister unions to respond to the challenges facing women, by implementing gender policies, resolutions and strategic programs to respond to challenges confronting the ITUC and her affiliations.

The participating organizations declare that we will fight relentlessly for and with regards to:

**Gender-based violence:**

To restore the dignity of women, and to spare no effort in the fight to prevent, manage and eliminate work-place harassment and violence against women. We commit to stepping up our efforts to eliminate gender-based violence through programs and campaigns in the workplace, in our unions, and in our communities.

1. Devote particular attention to supporting the proposed ILO Convention and Recommendation against violence and harassment in the world of work. Commit to a common and single position at the International level before the ILO Conference of 2018, coordinated by the ITUC.
2. Work for organizational change, for more gender sensitive trade unions, who mainstream in an effective manner the cause of gender equality in their agendas, plans and programs.
3. Create, develop and strengthen mechanisms / services of accompaniment in trade unions, to pay attention to women victims of violence. Equally, to develop actions to identify and diagnose different types of violence.
4. Promote gender equality through social dialogue and the defence of better legal frameworks, policies and programs, generating codes of conduct and policies on the prevention of violence as well in the trade unions as in work places.
5. Positioning of the trade union movement in peace processes so as to insure that a real gender focus is integrated in the peace accords and processes.

## **Access to Social Protection:**

How to make certain that we have a system for social security that provides quality services.

1. Organise the workers in the informal sector. In other words: formalise work. If you formalise work, you have social protection.
2. Denounce fraud and fiscal evasion: the financial means are available, the states must take up their responsibility.
3. Enforce respect of the ILO recommendations and respect of the national labour laws : universal social security for all.
4. The trade unions should fight together to ensure that vulnerable groups of workers also have access to social security.
5. At the ILO-level, look into the system of financing social security so that the “new” workers - these are workers that are not officially recognized as being workers - also have access to social protection.
6. Strengthen the trade unions to be better equipped to participate in the elaboration of national policies for social protection and to better defend the workers in all sectors.
7. Include burnout and other work-stress related illnesses in the social protection.
8. Trade unions should strongly oppose the demolition of the existing social security systems and actively fight for improving these existing systems, for instance by including the right to paternity leave.

## **Transition towards the formalization of work:**

1. Official recognition of workers organisations in the informal economy, and their right to participate directly in social dialogue representing their members' interests.
2. We need to organise, and we need to know the most vulnerable workers (the ones who are affiliated or not). We have to check our own structures and policies, we need to be open to organise the workers from the informal economy. For this we need adapted tools in our own unions concerning how to reach and organise the vulnerable workers.
3. Trade Unions have to work together, looking at synergy efforts, strong alliances & cooperation in order to be able to lobby and advocate to obtain labour and social rights and to be a strong counterpart in the dialogue with government.
4. Implementation of the ILO Recommendation 204 process should start with a review of existing legal and policy frameworks. We need integrated and inclusive public policies – first and foremost focusing on labour policies (including training, living wage) and those on poverty reduction. All levels of government need to be involve, especially local governments.
5. Extension of social protection, to workers in the informal economy need a formal legislation (through triparty dialogue where possible) into already existing social protection mechanisms, for example at how trade unions and health mutuals can work together.
6. Formal and Informal workers have to work together (understand each other's job situation). Mixed delegations of formal and informal workers' representatives from different sectors should seek joint consultation with government.
7. A Strong Gender dimension – women have particular needs, including specific needs on health and safety, gender-violence and harassment, how to be organised...

We pledge to support this declaration and carry its message through to the coming 4<sup>th</sup> World ITUC Congress in 2018