



# UNCSW59

9-20 March 2015 - New York

## Realizing rights for women and girls

# A union perspective



### Women Power Unions

More than 100 union women are at the UNCSW59. In alliance with likeminded women's organisations, networks and coalitions we are making our voices heard so that governments can do more to live up to their commitments to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, especially with regards to:

- ♀ Expanding women's access to paid employment, decent work and social protection, and;
- ♀ Building a care economy in which paid and unpaid care is valued and shared.

We represent 70 million women workers from unions all over the world. By standing united we strengthen women's power and their ability to secure rights and protection at work.

### Connect with Us

♀ Trade Union blog: <http://unioncsw.world-psi.org/>

♀ Facebook: UNCSW - Women Power Unions

♀ Tweets: [@unioncsw](http://twitter.com/unioncsw)

♀ Video's: [www.youtube.com/user/unioncsw](http://www.youtube.com/user/unioncsw)

♀ Photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/unioncsw>

♀ Women trade union events @ the UNCSW59 – find a shortlist at the back

# UNCSW59 Global Union Statement submitted by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International (EI) and Public Services International (PSI), civil society organisations with consultative status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC Status)

## It's been 20 years: are we there yet?

### *Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action from a Trade Union Perspective*

More than 70 million women workers are represented in trade unions today, and over the last 20 years, they have built a legacy of winning rights and protection in the workplace. Unionised women earn more than women outside trade unions, and have been instrumental in negotiating fairer wages, paid maternity and paternity leave and access to social protection through collective bargaining and social dialogue, as well as mobilizing workers who were not previously unionised.

Ten million domestic workers recently won the right to minimum or higher wages, and social protection, regulation of working time, one day off per week and other rights. This was the result of a global campaign led by trade unions and domestic workers, and supported by human-, women's- and migrants' rights groups. The campaign led to the ratification of ILO Convention 189 and labour law reforms in 35 countries.

Through collective bargaining, social dialogue, local and global campaigns, union women have advanced women's rights in a number of critical areas of concern outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

These include:

- ♀ women's economic rights (including access to employment, resources, markets and trade),
- ♀ elimination of occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination,
- ♀ access to quality public services, and harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

However, for the most part, the promises of the BPfA remain unfulfilled. Women have moved mountains over the last 20 years, but we cannot fully enjoy or celebrate all we have achieved. Not when we know that:

- ♀ 70% of the world's poor are women; The global gender pay gap remains at almost 23%;
- ♀ Women are over-represented in low status, poorly paid, informal, part-time, insecure and precarious work;
- ♀ Women's unpaid care work remains marginalized in social and economic policymaking, although it is estimated to contribute 15-50% of GDP (adding over US \$25 trillion to the global economy);
- ♀ Unequal distribution of care responsibilities between the state and families, and between women and men continues to hamper women's effective participation in the labour force and their access to decent work;
- ♀ Millions of girls do not access quality education because of poverty, child labour, institutional and traditional barriers, early marriage, lack of safety getting to and from school, lack of separate sanitary facilities, sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools, unwanted pregnancies, and domestic work overload.



## And Still We Rise – Labour Women’s Priority Areas Beyond 2015

A new architecture of the global and local economy is required in which decent work, universal access to social protection, an economic agenda for care and environmental sustainability are the cornerstones. Reconsidering investments can provide the budgets needed to cover social protection, a living minimum wage, and education for all, as well as renewable energy to halt climate change. Therefore, we call for tax justice, ending tax havens, tax avoidance and corruption, addressing race-to-the-bottom tax incentives and regional tax competition policies.

The austerity measures introduced in response to the recent global economic crises and public spending cuts in developed and developing nations alike have a disproportionate impact on women and girls. There is an unprecedented rise in the share of work that is informal and precarious, where women are over-represented. Cuts in public spending increasingly lead to privatisation of education, which reinforces social exclusion. Increased regulation of private actors does not sufficiently counter the systemic discrimination borne by girls when education becomes marketised. Education must be seen as a public good, rather than as a commodity; if women and girls are to fully enjoy the right to education a renewed emphasis on States’ obligation to fulfil the right to education is needed for women and girls to enjoy their right to education in practice, and

so that education is truly transformative as a human right.

Policy-makers must address the inequitable distribution of unpaid care work and free millions of women to participate more fully and equitably in the interrelated spheres of employment, education and public decision-making. Investment in the care economy recognises the real value of care work, currently often provided through unpaid or grossly underpaid labour that is invisible in the statistics. Investment in the care economy can break down gender stereotypes and occupational segregation, and impact positively on the gender pay gap by challenging traditionally assigned gender roles.

Universal access to quality public services is fundamental to building just and equitable societies. Market mechanisms have their place, but they have proven incapable of ensuring universal access.

The BPfA recognised that violence against women and girls (VAWG) ‘violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment...of human rights and fundamental freedoms’. Domestic violence is the most widespread form of VAWG, and the main cause of female homicides worldwide. VAWG in the workplace is a widespread phenomenon that affects millions of women. An estimated 246 million girls and boys feel the impact of school-related gender-based violence every year (SRGBV), which forms a serious barrier to learning; and although both girls and boys can be targets of SRGBV, girls are most vulnerable.

**We demand a bold shift from political leaders: from inaction to targeted investments and labour reforms to build an inclusive labour market, which secures women’s equal access to paid and decent work, including women’s representation in decision-making and access to quality public services and quality education.**

The realisation of women's universal human rights, their empowerment and promotion to leadership positions are crucial elements of an agenda to eliminate VAWG. The respect and promotion of women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are essential conditions to ensure women's autonomy and capacity to exit violent situations. Access to health care and social services, childcare, education, housing, food and basic income security are inextricably linked to women's greater or lesser vulnerability to different manifestations of violence against women.

### The Way Forward

Women in trade unions urge governments to take bold steps to deliver on the implementation of the BPfA, especially as they negotiate a new sustainable development framework, which will be adopted in 2015.

We call on governments to:

- ♀ Live up to past commitments to respect fundamental rights at work;
  - ♀ Implement a jobs and growth plan to increase women's access to paid employment and decent work supported by childcare and care for the aged, with family friendly workplaces and investments in quality public services;
  - ♀ Establishment of robust living minimum wage mechanisms;
  - ♀ Social protection floors in accordance with ILO Recommendation N°202 and Convention 102 on Social Security;
  - ♀ Introduce labour law reforms to comply with the core ILO standards and gender equality Conventions: C87, C98, C29 and its protocol, C182, C111 and C100, C156, C183 and C189;
  - ♀ Eliminate gender based violence at work, including through the adoption of an international labour standard;
  - ♀ Strengthen labour market institutions, including collective bargaining, social dialogue and labour inspectorates,
- which have proven effective in reducing the feminisation of poverty;
  - ♀ Remove public services from Free Trade Agreements;
  - ♀ Introduce progressive properly resourced and enforced tax systems, and provide means for economic self-sufficiency at all levels;
  - ♀ Link poverty relief to income growth and wages to address inequality within the post 2015 framework and adopt stand-alone goals on:
    - full, productive employment and decent work for all,
    - national social protection floors,
    - education, and
    - gender equality.
  - ♀ Set targets and indicators to assess: living minimum wage levels; job creation for women and men; achievement of components of social protection floors; and adequate financing (% of GDP) to support implementation of the new sustainable development framework.

### International labour policies to better protect women's rights @ work!

International labour policies for women are key: to ensure they have the right to join trade unions and bargain collectively for rights and protections at work - including a living minimum wage and social protection.

Hold your government accountable to ratify and implement the following legal instruments:

- ♀ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- ♀ The International Labour Organization (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at work;
- ♀ Core ILO labor standards and gender equality Conventions:

ILO Convention 87 – Freedom of association and right to organise
ILO Convention 98 – Right to organise and collective bargaining
ILO Convention 100 – Equal Remuneration
ILO Convention 111 – Discrimination (employment and occupation)
ILO Convention 105 – Abolition of Forced Labour
ILO Convention 29 - Forced labour and its protocol
ILO Convention 138 – Minimum Age
ILO Convention 182 – Worst forms of child labour

ILO Convention 156 – Workers with family responsibilities
ILO Convention 183 - Maternity Protection
ILO Convention 189 - Domestic Workers
ILO Convention 102 on Social Security and Recommendation N°202 on the Social Protection Floor



Contact women at the Global Unions:



**International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**

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 Web: [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)

# Trade union-related events @ CSW59

> Organised/co-sponsored by Global Unions > Women trade unionists speaking

Parallel event	<b>The labour rights of migrant women: from Beijing to Post-2015</b> <i>GAATW and co-sponsored by Global Unions + speaker</i>	<b>Monday, 9 March, 12.30 - 14.00</b> V Hall, Armenian Convention Centre
Parallel event	<b>Women and Sustainable Economy from a Human Rights Perspective</b> <i>Various groups, speaker from Global Unions</i>	<b>Monday, 9 March, 14.30</b> CCUN, Boss room
UNCSW program	<b>Ministerial round table: Investing in gender equality and the empowerment of women</b> <i>Moderator from Global Unions</i>	<b>Tuesday, 10 March, 11.30 - 13.00</b> Conference room 4, UN building
Side event	<b>Realising Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment within and beyond the Post-2015 Development Agenda</b> <i>Sponsored by Argentina Mission, EI, Post 2015 Women's Coalition; Panelist from Global Unions</i>	<b>Tuesday, 10 March, 11.30 - 12.45</b> Conference Room 11-GA, UN Building
Parallel event	<b>Shadow reports as gender advocacy tools: Beijing+20, CEDAW, UPR+</b> <i>Sponsored by Pangea Foundation - Speaker from Global Unions</i>	<b>Tuesday, 10 March, 18.15 - 19:45</b> CCUN, Hardin room
Parallel event	<b>Raising Wages and Ending Sexual Harassment in Corporate Supply Chains</b> <i>Sponsored by AFL-CIO, Global Unions, AWID</i>	<b>Wednesday, 11 March, 16.30</b> CCUN, Chapel room
Side event	<b>Organising migrant women and Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers</b> <i>Sponsored by German mission, UN Women - Speaker from Global Unions</i>	<b>Wednesday, 11 March, 13.15 - 14.45</b> 871 United Nations Plaza, German House
Parallel event	<b>Women's Labour Migration, Flawed Development Strategies, and the way Forward</b> <i>Sponsored by United Methodist Women, Global Unions and others</i>	<b>Thursday, 12 March, 10.30 - 12.00</b> CCUN, Second floor
UNCSW program	<b>CSW 59 Intergenerational Dialogue: Session 1: Gender Equality 2030 / gender goal in the post 2015</b> <i>UN Women/ CSW, Speaker from Global Unions</i>	<b>Friday, 13 March, 10.00 - 11.30</b> ECOSOC Chamber
Parallel event	<b>Realising young women's rights to sexual and reproductive health and decent work in cities - challenges for the Post-2015 Agenda</b> <i>Sponsored by ActionAid, Global Unions</i>	<b>Friday, 13 March, 12.30</b> UN Church Centre, Hardin Room
	<b>Meeting the Challenge of Globalization to realise Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</b> <i>Organized by Columbia University, Panelists from Global Unions</i>	<b>Friday, 13 March, whole day</b> Columbia University
Parallel event	<b>SDGs for Workers: Why Public-Private-Partnerships don't work: The many advantages of the public alternative</b> <i>Sponsored by Global Unions</i>	<b>Wednesday, 18 March, 10.30</b> CCUN, Room: Chapel

Share your views, stories and questions on the UNCSW trade union blog, with the latest news from union women at the UNCSW: <http://unioncsw.world-psi.org/>