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INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU)

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Serious violations of core labour standards in Brazil

Brussels, 30 November 2004 (ICFTU online): A new report by the ICFTU on core labour standards in Brazil, produced to coincide with the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) review of the Latin American country's trade policy, shows important shortcomings in the application and enforcement of core labour standards, particularly with regard to the lack of trade union rights of workers, forced labour and child labour.

Among the most serious violations of core labour standards identified in the report are violations of trade union rights in rural areas, where employers are particularly hostile towards labour organisations and where the blacklisting of trade unionists is common. In fact, many trade unionists have been killed in rural areas since the 1980s.

Furthermore, the report notes that discrimination in access to employment and remuneration is frequent, and that Afro-Brazilians are particularly exposed to this form of prejudice. Afro-Brazilian women are discriminated against on the basis of race and sex.

Although the number of working children is decreasing, a large number of children are still economically active, including in the worst forms of child labour. Child prostitution is a problem and there are many street children in Brazil.

Finally, there is a serious problem with forced labour in Brazil, particularly in rural areas, in forest clearing, logging, charcoal production and agriculture, and a number of children are caught up in this. The International Labour Organisation has estimated that the number of people working in conditions of slavery to lie at around 40,000 (2003). Inspection has increased but the number of convictions remains too low.

To read the full report:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991220867&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 148 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 150 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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