

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Report on Paraguay notes failings in the application of labour standards

Brussels, 27th April 2005 (ICFTU Online): As the World Trade Organisation launches a review of trade policy in Paraguay, the ICFTU today publishes a report underlining a series of shortcomings in the application and enforcement of core labour standards in the Latin American country. The report, submitted to the WTO for consideration alongside their trade review, highlights absence of respect for trade union rights, discrimination and child labour as particularly problematic in the country.

A significant number of restrictions on trade union rights still exist today in Paraguay. In particular, the minimum requirement of 300 workers to form a trade union, coupled with excessive demands on potential trade union officers and difficult registration procedures heavily impinge on trade union activity in Paraguay. In addition, authorities fail to apply effective sanctions to prevent trade union discrimination, and harassment and unfair dismissals continue.

Discrimination in employment and wages is another failing of the country's system. The few available statistical indicators show a large wage gap between men and women, and that less than 10% of women are employed in public sector posts, professional and technical positions. Segregation in the workplace continues and unemployment among women is higher than among men.

Child labour is prevalent in Paraguay, and some 14% of all children between the ages of 5 and 17 years are employed, mainly working in the agricultural sector on family farms, as vendors or as domestic workers. Child prostitution is also a serious problem. More than a third (34.9%) of all working children between 5 and 17 years do not attend school.

To read the full report:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221542&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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