

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU)

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Guinea must live up to its commitments on child and forced labour, trade union rights and discrimination

Brussels, October 12, 2005 - The ICFTU today called on the government of Guinea to put into practice the many commitments it had accepted over the 1996-2001 period as part of the WTO Ministerial Declarations in order to rid the country of the scourges of child and forced labour and improve the lives of its workers through effective collective bargaining.

In its submission to the WTO General Council Review of the Trade Policies of Guinea, taking place in Geneva on October 12 and 14, the ICFTU highlights the fact that whilst Guinea has ratified all eight core ILO Labour Conventions, in practice much work needs to be done.

According to ILO figures, some 309,000 children are economically active in Guinea, over 31.1% of the age group, in industries such as agriculture, petty commerce, domestic work and small scale mining. Prohibitions on forced labour, whilst written in law, are not enforced.

Harassment of trade unionists and interference with union activities is widespread. In 2003, when workers at the Kindia Bauxite Company went on strike to demand a pay rise, the police went looking for the strikers at their homes but instead took away their wives and children, beating up the women and inflicting facial injuries on 10 of them.

Major gender imbalances, starting with only 7% of girls being enrolled in secondary school (compared to 20% for boys) extend to a major pay gap between men and women, with employers preferring to hire men and no positive measures being taken by the government to bridge this gap thus far.

The full submission can be read at:
<http://www.icftu.org/www/pdf/clsguinea2005.pdf>

The ICFTU represents 148 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 150 countries and territories: www.icftu.org

ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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