

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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New ICFTU report submitted to the WTO:

Child labour and discrimination in Bolivia requires urgent attention

BRUSSELS, 2 November 2005, (ICFTU Online): A new report by the ICFTU on core labour standards in Bolivia, which coincides with Bolivia's trade policy review at the WTO this week, shows serious shortcomings in the application and enforcement of all eight core labour standards, particularly with regard to restrictions on trade union rights, discrimination and child labour.

Child labour is a serious problem in Bolivia, with an estimated 800,000 children engaged in some type of work. Most children work in rural areas, in agriculture, livestock and construction. Children in urban areas are engaged in commerce, manufacturing and family businesses. Around 10,000 children are engaged in sugarcane harvest, working up to 12 hours a day under dangerous conditions and an estimated 120,000 children work in life-threatening conditions in small-scale mining. Indigenous children are indentured to perform household work (criaditos), and child prostitution is widespread.

Trade union rights are restricted in Bolivia, both in law and in practice. Peasant farmers are denied freedom of association and only public servants in the health, education and oil sector have the right to organise. Furthermore strict restrictions are attached to the right to strike with a prohibition of the right to strike in public services (except for banks and public markets) and the requirement for a legal strike to be supported by three quarters of the workers within a company. Participants in illegal strikes risk prison terms of up to five years, with forced labour as additional punishment.

To read the full report:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991222993&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 231 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories: www.icftu.org

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

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