

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

ICFTU OnLine...

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Better protection for migrants: an agenda priority for the international trade union movement

ICFTU OnLine (Brussels 16 December 2005): On the eve of International Migrants' Day on December 18, the ICFTU is drawing attention to the vulnerability of the world's 115 million migrant workers and their families and the exploitation to which they are often subjected.

Following up on the Special Action Plan on migrant workers adopted last year at its 18th Congress, the ICFTU is calling on the international community to take on the challenge of establishing an international policy framework capable of ensuring respect for migrant workers' fundamental rights and offering them decent work opportunities.

"The hostile social and political environment confronting many migrant workers, and the need for appropriate regulation of migration make it imperative for trade unions to play a more active and visible role in promoting solidarity, and in protecting the rights of migrant workers regardless of their legal status in the host country. Particular attention needs to be given to the vulnerable situation of women migrants," said ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder.

This same message was at the centre of an international workshop on "Defending and Promoting the Rights of Migrant Workers in the Gulf States" held in Manama (Bahrain) from 26 to 29 November 2005. The Workshop, the first of its kind in this region where over 60% of the workers are migrants, was jointly organised by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the host organisation, the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU).

The aim of the workshop was to provide trade unions and the relevant NGOs with practical assistance in their work to defend the interests of migrant workers. The recommendations formulated by the delegates included: campaigning for the ratification and implementation of international labour standards, ILO Core Conventions, particularly those relevant to migrant workers, and the revision of national labour laws to guarantee conformity with these standards. The Bahrain workshop underlined the benefit of partnerships between host and origin countries and also called on trade unions within the countries of origin to engage in dialogue with governments on the reintegration of returning migrant workers.

The ICFTU represents 159 million workers through its 234 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. The ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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