

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Migrants: trade unions sign two new bilateral agreements to promote decent work

Brussels, 18 September 2006 (ICFTU OnLine): The ICFTU welcomes the two new bilateral agreements concluded by trade union centres to promote the defence of migrant workers' rights. The two partnership agreements recently signed by trade unions from Jordan (GFJTU) and Pakistan (PWF and NWC), Mauritania (CGTM) and Senegal (CNTS), reflect the international trade union movement's resolve to fight for the protection and promotion of migrant workers' rights across the globe.

"We welcome these two new bilateral agreements that perfectly reflect the spirit of the Special Action Programme launched by the ICFTU to promote decent work for migrants. National trade union centres in Asia and Latin America are also working on similar initiatives and this should result in better representation of migrant workers as well as the protection and defence of their rights," said Ms Kamalam, head of the ICFTU Equality department, who is in charge of the migrants dossier.

Shortly after the seminar on migrant workers held this summer by the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), with the cooperation of the ILO Social Dialogue Programme, the Jordanian and Pakistani trade union centres GFJTU and NWC signed a bilateral partnership agreement aimed at offering better protection for Pakistani migrant workers in Jordan, providing them with support both before and after their arrival in the country.

The agreement between the trade union partners underlined the role of the GFJTU in the defence and protection of the workers' rights established in Jordan's labour laws, and the joint commitment to promote the organisation of these migrant workers within the GFJTU. The partners also plan to hold exchange visits to ensure that the agreement responds as best possible to the needs and practical realities on the ground.

As regards the Senegalese (CNTS) and Mauritanian (CGTM) confederations, both of which are confronted, for example, with the phenomenon of migratory transit in their respective countries or the problem of clandestine immigration, the recently signed agreement aims to strengthen their capacity to provide migrant workers with appropriate assistance and services, paying particular attention to the specific problems faced by female migrant workers. The two confederations also committed to campaigning for migrant workers' rights in cases where they are limited, to actively promote the ratification and implementation of the relevant ILO instruments, as well as to take part in awareness raising campaigns to fight racism and xenophobia and to underline the positive contribution made by migrant workers in the host countries of the North.

In a joint statement

(<http://www.icftu.org/www/PDF/HLD14-15Sep06-TradeUnionStatementFINAL2.pdf>) published on 12 September, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Confederation of Labour and the Global Union Federations called on Heads of State and Ministers participating in the General Assembly High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to adopt a strong rights-based approach to global migration policy. "Migration should not be used as an alternative to decent employment opportunities in sending developing countries," commented Sharan Burrow, President of the ICFTU, who made the case for coherence on migration policy at a round table of the High Level Dialogue on Thursday 14 September. Trade unions further called on Member States to adopt a gender-friendly, normative framework for migration policy, based on core UN human rights instruments, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on Migrant Workers, as well as the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 241 affiliated organizations in 156 countries and territories: <http://www.icftu.org> ICFTU is also a member of Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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