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150/270906

Child labour is still a reality in Republic of Congo - New ICFTU report

Brussels, 27 September 2006 (ICFTU Online): A new ICFTU report on core labour standards in the Republic of Congo is being issued today to coincide with the country's trade policy review at the WTO this week.

The ICFTU report draws attention to infringements of all the core labour standards in Congo. Even though there are laws aiming at protecting children against exploitation at work, child labour is still a problem. The national law is not enforced effectively and child exploitation is widespread throughout the country, mainly in farm labour. Similarly, although the law bans forced labour, reports show that these practices persist.

Despite the fact that the law in Congo allows unions to strike, there are still occupations where workers are prevented from doing so. A ban on anti-union discrimination in the law does not stop it taking place.

The study points out that although Congo has ratified the main international labour instruments on discrimination, and national legislation bans discrimination on grounds of gender, these instruments are not enforced in practice. Women are underrepresented in formal employment and thus tend to lack access to employment benefits. The ICFTU report also draws attention to the situation of minorities in the country, such as Pygmies who are discriminated against regarding employment, education and health care.

In conclusion, the ICFTU urges the government of the Republic of Congo to adopt a number of recommendations in order to address the situations of non compliance with core labour rights reflected in the report.

The full report is available on the ICFTU web-site at:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991225059&Language=EN>

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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