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Core labour standards in the Eastern Caribbean states

Brussels, 5 November 2007 (ITUC Online): A new ITUC report identifies a number of legal shortcomings and the existence of discrimination in the six countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). The report on respect for core labour standards in the OECS countries is being released today to coincide with the OECS trade policy review at the WTO on 5 and 7 November.

The report notes some restrictions on trade union rights, including with regard to the right to strike. Several countries have defined essential services too broadly, as is the case in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Such services include banana, citrus and coconut industries, port services, water, electricity and hospital services. Some restrictions on the right to organise exist in St. Lucia. And St. Kitts does not provide legal protection of the right to collective bargaining and no explicit recognition of the right to strike.

There is a general lack of statistics on gender that are disaggregated by sector and occupation. Discrimination is prohibited in all countries but does occur in practice. On average women earn less than men and there are differences in opportunity in the labour market. Women are mainly employed in domestic work, tourism, agricultural work and in the public sector. In Grenada there is evidence of direct discrimination in wages for agricultural workers. And finally some parts of the legislation on discrimination and equal remuneration need amendment to be in line with the Convention.

Child labour is not a problem in the OECS countries but it does occur, mainly in agriculture during harvesting periods and in domestic work. Legislation on hazardous work shows shortcomings in most countries. Legislation is not in line with the Convention in St. Kitts and Nevis and in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A list, indicating the types of employment that are hazardous and for which an age limit of 18 years has to be set, needs to be put together in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Grenada.

To see the full report click here:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/OECS_report_final_carr_EN.pdf

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
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