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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Protection of domestic workers: the ITUC supports proposed ILO Convention

Brussels, 13 February 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Already grouping over one hundred million workers worldwide, the largely female domestic labour force is continuing to grow in line with the rising demand for these services. Whilst contributing to improving the quality of life and living standards of others, domestic workers themselves remain confined within an invisible and very poorly protected segment of the labour market. Although a vital link in the economic chain, they are often deprived of their basic rights and confronted with exploitation and ill-treatment.

Calling on its affiliates to rally to the cause, the International Trade Union Organisation is urging the countries represented on the ILO Governing Body to support the proposal to draw up an International Convention specifically to protect domestic workers.

Excessive working hours, low wages, inadequate or no social security, sexual harassment, physical abuse, unscrupulous employment agencies, no trade union rights, forced labour... the inventory of abuses drawn up in the document to be submitted to the members of the ILO Governing Body, which will meet in Geneva from 6 to 20 March, highlights the cruel lack of decent work among this category of particularly vulnerable workers, often excluded from national labour legislations and, until now, ignored by international law.

"For the international trade union movement, ensuring better protection for domestic workers is one of the keys to promoting decent work, which is at the heart of our action," declared Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ITUC.

-The ITUC has published several testimonies regarding the organisation of domestic workers, which can be read at:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1483&lang=en> (South Africa)

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article472&lang=en> (Hong Kong)

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1585&lang=en> (Trinidad and Tobago)

- Also see the video on domestic workers released by ILO-ACTRAV (in French), at: <http://www.pourleemploi.com/video/domestiques/domestiques.html>

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org>
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