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Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali: Persistence of child labour and human trafficking

Brussels, 4 October 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is releasing today a report on core labour standards in the countries of Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, coinciding with the Trade Policy Review of the three countries at the WTO. The report finds poor compliance with international labour standards, especially with regard to child labour and gender equality.

Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali have ratified all eight core ILO labour Conventions; however, their national law is not adequately in line with the Conventions and is not efficiently enforced. All three countries define “essential services” far too broadly, in order to restrict basic trade union actions, and in practice the right to strike is restricted.

In all three countries female literacy is about half that of men. Women are discriminated against in terms of access to employment and equal remuneration, while disabled persons and persons who live with HIV/AIDS are inadequately protected by law and their access to employment and social services is limited.

The laws of Burkina Faso and Mali are not in line with the two ILO Conventions on child labour. Their labour inspectorates are under-resourced and unable to prevent child labour. Consequently child labour, particularly in its worst forms, is a serious problem.

Although all three countries prohibit forced labour in practice it occurs, affecting mostly children. Reports show that traditional forms of slavery survive in Mali, where certain families from indigenous groups are traded as slaves in a system that ascribes that status at birth. Furthermore, the struggle against trafficking in human beings is being implemented too slowly, particularly in Benin and Mali.

To read the full report: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,7737.html>

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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