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Child Labour and Anti-union Actions Frequent in the DRC

Brussels, 24 November 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is releasing today a report on core labour standards in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), coinciding with the Trade Policy Review of the country at the WTO. The report finds prevalent violations of all core international labour standards especially with regard to child labour and forced labour.

The report finds that many so-called trade unions are actually organised by employers in an effort to discourage free trade unions from operating. Anti-union discrimination remains unpunished along with many other crimes against trade unions. Frequently the police and judiciary make arbitrary use of their powers against trade unionists, and cover up the actions of investors and corrupt officials who breach the law.

Women face discrimination in employment and need their husbands' agreement in order to perform salaried work. The report also finds that the ILO has criticised discrimination against pygmies who are marginalised and lack control over their lands and assets.

Child labour, especially in its worst forms, is a serious problem in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Child labour in mines and quarries is prevalent, and many children are forced into prostitution. The recruitment of child soldiers and the forced labour of many citizens operated by armed groups and certain units of the national forces are serious problems. The ITUC report shows that there has been no conviction for human trafficking, and stresses the need to end that impunity.

To read the full report: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,8052.html>

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

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