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Hong Kong: Minimum Wage Welcome, but Much More Progress Needed

Brussels, 1 December 2010 (ITUC Online): The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) reported today to the World Trade Organisation that Hong Kong continues to violate core labour standards despite recently legislating a minimum wage.

"Hong Kong's new minimum wage is a significant step in the right direction, but should be increased and extended to protect foreign domestic workers against discrimination," said Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the ITUC.

The government has set the minimum wage at only HK\$28 (US\$3.60). The ITUC and its Hong Kong affiliates are calling for a minimum wage of at least HK\$33 (US\$4.25) to cover basic living costs.

Exclusion from the minimum wage is only one example of discrimination against foreign domestic workers. Hong Kong is not subject to the International Labour Organisation's core conventions on Equal Remuneration and Discrimination.

"China has already ratified these conventions itself. Why won't it extend them to Hong Kong?," asked Burrow.

Only about one percent of Hong Kong's workforce is covered by collective agreements. The ITUC report calls on the government of Hong Kong to bargain collectively with public employees and create a legal framework for collective bargaining in the private sector.

For full report, see: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,8080.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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