

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Nigeria: 15 million child labourers and violent union-busting

Brussels, 28 June 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The International Trade Union Confederation has denounced the alarming level of child labour in Nigeria and anti-trade union violence in a report to the World Trade Organisation. Some 15 million children are at work, many in dangerous jobs.

"Nigeria's restrictions on workers' rights to organize unions are allowing severe exploitation of workers, including in the country's export processing zones where start-up companies are guaranteed a strike-free workforce up ten years or more. Massive legal loopholes and poor enforcement mean millions of kids are at work instead of at school, damaging the Nigeria's social fabric and economic prospects," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The report <<http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,9354.html>> submitted to the WTO Trade Policy Review of Nigeria, also reveals:

- Restrictions on union organising and collective bargaining rights are compounded by intimidation and violence by employers;
- Women earn just 68% of men's salaries for equivalent work;
- and,
- Police rarely allow unions to hold public demonstrations, and routinely use force to disperse protesters.

"WTO members have pledged to uphold the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation, but Nigeria has failed to live up to this. Many Nigerian workers live in fear of employer and police violence. This failure not only hurts Nigerians- it also undermines efforts by other governments to uphold decent employment standards in the globalized economy" said Sharan Burrow.

See the Nigeria entry in the ITUC Annual Survey: <http://survey.ituc-csi.org/Nigeria.html>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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