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ITUC OnLine

Cambodia: Child Labour in a Climate of Violence and Intimidation Towards Union Members

Brussels, 31 October 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is releasing today a report on core labour standards in Cambodia, coinciding with the Trade Policy Review of the country at the WTO. The report finds poor compliance with international labour standards, especially with regard to trade union rights, child labour and forced labour.

The report finds significant restrictions in the Labour Law with regard to the right to organise, to collective bargaining and to strike. Broad categories of workers are excluded from the scope of the law. The report presents various examples of a climate of violence and intimidation towards union members as well as anti-union practices employed by authorities and employers which have significantly weakened workers' rights in Cambodia.

The most recent available statistics show that there are 1.4 million working children, many doing hazardous work in sectors including agriculture and plantations, construction, salt production, shrimping and other sea-food industries, fishing, brick kilns and domestic servitude.

The law does not provide adequate protection against discrimination for all citizens. Women, ethnic minorities and disabled persons face discrimination in various aspects of employment. Moreover, indigenous people are losing access to the lands where they undertook their traditional employment due to the expansion of sugar and rubber plantations under the EU's "Everything But Arms" initiative.

Forced labour and trafficking are also problems. Indeed, recruitment agencies, sometimes with political cover, exploit and mistreat thousands of migrant workers and coerce them into debt bondage or forced labour. The law is poorly enforced due to corruption and lack of resources.

To see the full report: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/report-for-the-wto-general-council,10021.html>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 308 affiliated national organisations from 153 countries and territories.

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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