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Trinidad and Tobago: Excessive Restrictions of the Right to Organise

Brussels, 7 March 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is releasing today a report on core labour standards in Trinidad and Tobago, coinciding with the Trade Policy Review of the country at the WTO. The report finds excessive restrictions to the right to organise, to collectively bargain and to strike; for instance, in order for a union to obtain bargaining rights, the union must satisfy an excessive requirement that it represent 51 per cent of the workers. Domestic workers and some other categories are not covered by the Industrial Relations Act and so cannot join trade unions or benefit from their protection.

Bargaining power is further lowered in practice. Employers often refuse to negotiate, and the state authorities have appointed just one office to negotiate the collective agreement of the whole sector resulting in lengthy delays.

The report finds that the legal protections against discrimination for women, persons who live with HIV/AIDS and people with disabilities are poor. Women face a 20 per cent pay gap and unemployment rates are significantly higher for women than for men.

The law does not protect children from certain forms of exploitative labour and trafficking. In practice illegal child labour occurs, mainly in the agricultural sector.

For the full report: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/internationally-recognised-core,10743.html>

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