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Unions Call for ILO Standard on Gender-based Violence at Work

Brussels, 25 November 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC is calling for a new international Convention on gender-based violence at the workplace, as the world observes the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women today.

The Governing Body of the International Labour Organization - made of representatives of governments, workers' and employers' organisations - has not yet given the green light to tripartite negotiations for an international legal instrument focusing on gender-based violence at the workplace. Although several members of the ILO - including the workers' group - have indicated their support for such a Convention, there are still voices against it, among them the employer representatives at the ILO.

"There are very few countries which have labour-law provisions to prevent, address and redress gender-based violence at the workplace. An ILO Convention is absolutely necessary to close this gap and boost protection for women and girls generally against violence," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

Women face particular situations at the workplace including gender-based physical and psychological violence and sexual harassment. These problems are too often silenced by fear of getting sacked or just because "it is not done" to speak up on these issues. An ILO Convention would be an important step to improve women's working conditions worldwide and to save the millions of dollars spent every year on health care, lower productivity and sick leave because of violence against women.

Unions in many countries are campaigning to stop violence against women, including in sectors where most workers are male - one of many examples being in the construction industry in Australia <http://www.cfmeu.asn.au/news/real-men-dont-abuse-women-cfmeu-launches-anti-violence-campaign>

See the ITUC flyer in support of an ILO Convention on gender based violence:
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/flyer-stop-gender-based-violence>

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 325 national affiliates.

Follow us on the web: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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