



New Trade Union Initiative

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Rights of Domestic Workers recognised by ILO

Delhi, 20 June 2011: The New Trade Union Initiative welcomes the historic Convention on Domestic Workers adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 16 June 2011. The Convention adopted at the 100th Annual Conference of the ILO recognises the rights of domestic workers as worker rights and specifies standards for regulation of their employment and working conditions.

The Convention requires governments to bring domestic workers within the ambit of labour legislations on minimum wage, working hours, day of rest in a week, overtime wages, terms of employment, social security, and maternity protection. It also contains detailed requirements for governments to regulate private employment agencies, investigate complaints and lays down special measures for migrant workers. As per ILO estimates, 83% of domestic workers are women or young girls, and therefore the Convention obliges governments to protect them from violence and abuse, and to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement.

Most importantly, the Convention recognises the right to association of domestic workers, giving respect for fundamental principles and rights at work including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

The Convention will become binding on member countries once they ratify and make it part of their national legislation. The Convention which comes with an accompanying Recommendation gives guidance to governments on designing laws and policies. The two standards will be the 189th Convention and the supplementing 201st Recommendation of the ILO.

NTUI welcomes the move by Government of India of reversing their earlier opposition to the Convention and finally voting in its favour. However, the Convention will become meaningful to Indian domestic workers only if the GOI ratifies it. We urge the Government of India to ratify this Convention immediately.

The Government of India has already formulated a National Policy for Domestic Workers, along with the National Advisory Council (NAC) making recommendations. We urge the Government to take this forward and immediately legislate for Domestic workers that will ameliorate the condition of millions of poor working women, giving them their due recognition, dignity and self respect, along with ensuring decent living wage, social security and protection against workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. Urgent ratification and timely implementation of the Convention will bring a change in the lives of a large section of working women.

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