

**Conclusions and commitments from the ITUC Women's  
Organising Assembly, meeting in San José, Costa Rica,  
from 11-13 October 2017**



The ITUC Women's Organising Assembly, meeting in San José Costa Rica, takes place at a crucial time for women workers, our families, our friends and our communities.

There is no region in the world that is not faced with a serious crisis in democracy and many of our countries are in violent conflict.

At this Assembly, ITUC women from more than 60 countries have been charting a path to **peace, freedom and democracy and the future of work we want.**

It starts with solidarity. It starts with equality. It starts with breaking the cycle of patriarchy and misogyny. And it starts with women rising to organise for peace, freedom and democracy.

The Assembly took inspiration from the words and actions of a 17-year-old student activist from Brazil and committed to **work in solidarity with our members, feminists organisations, student and youth groups, refugee and migrant communities, indigenous communities and all communities defending human rights**, to reclaim our democracy from the hands of greedy corporations and despot governments.

**We commit to action to strengthen our social movements.**

We have looked at the **future of work** we want.

Whatever challenges lie ahead, union organising must be at the heart of our response.

**We commit to organising for decent work, equal pay for work of equal value and an end to violence and harassment in the world of work.**

**We commit to recognising intersectionalities and organising for equality, equity and an end to discrimination on the basis of gender, race, LGBTI, age, disability and any other form of discrimination.**

**We commit to organising for leadership as well as for transformation. We will reinforce our efforts to achieve equal and equitable representation of women in the leadership of our unions and further develop our mentorship programmes for young women.**

**We commit to an inclusive and feminist trade union movement, which organises the unorganised, whether migrant workers, workers in the informal economy, the gig economy, precarious, temporary or agency work or any other forms of work where women workers are deprived of their rights and protections.**

This Assembly highlighted how union organising is already being transformed:

- Women in the informal economy are defining the terms of their work by demanding recognition through organising. They are reshaping how society views them and the work they perform. They are claiming their rights as workers and contributors to our economies and communities, by organising around the issues they care about and need to address.
- In India, waste workers have defined themselves as care-workers, because they view their work as environmental stewardship.
- Workers in South African Health care clinics have found that in order for them to address their workplace issues, they have to organise holistically across the community. They must address issues of violence against women in the community if they are to deal with it in their workplaces. They must create allies in the community around issues of their work, if they are to win, and the only way they can do that is through organising efforts.
- Workers in the digital economy in Canada have reminded us to keep flexing our organising muscles: even when we think we have established union power, we must be vigilant and continue to organise around our issues. Digital media workers and freelance workers may have not previously viewed themselves as people entitled to hold their clients accountable but, through a union, they are shifting power and changing standards in their industry. Through the use of union “Community Chapters” new possibilities are being opened up for union membership and activism to many additional segments of the working class, including workers in workplaces where organising campaigns have not yet succeeded in forming a bargaining unit; workers in precarious jobs such as contract, temporary, agency, and freelance workers; unemployed workers; students working to put themselves through college or university; and any other group of workers hoping to improve their economic and social condition.
- Migrant and local domestic workers in the Dominican Republic have transformed their Association from a small grassroots organisation into a thriving and effective force for change. Supported by their affiliation to the Confederación Nacional de Unidad Sindical (*National Confederation of Labor Union Unity, CNUS*), they have trained organisers on

communication, labour rights and the responsibilities of shop stewards, with a special focus on participatory and creative teaching methods appropriate for multi-lingual and multi-cultural settings. The work of domestic workers in the Dominican Republic is now finally recognised as work.

The Assembly heard that everywhere in the world women still earn less than men, women own less than men, women have a weaker position in the labour market and women are still under-represented in public life. But we also heard how lasting progress can be achieved through strong unions and through social dialogue.

*"Without reproductive work there is no productive work"*. We assert that care is a human right. **We therefore commit to ensuring that governments place care at the centre of human and economic development, by investing in decent jobs in the care economy and quality public care services. We will campaign for the recognition, reduction and redistribution of care work through gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and investment in social infrastructure and jobs.**

**We commit to bargaining to ensure that work in the care economy is paid according to its true value.**

**We will campaign for universal social protection and national minimum living wages.**

**We commit to bargaining to ensure the right balance between our working lives and our family lives, for both women and men. We will lead by example and make union offices and working arrangements family-friendly.**

**We will continue to campaign for the ratification and effective implementation of key ILO Conventions, including Conventions 100 (equal pay for work of equal value), 111 (non-discrimination), 156 (workers with family responsibilities), 177 (home-based workers), 183 (maternity protection) and 189 (decent work for domestic workers).**

We commit to our vision of **a future of work without violence at work** and to **achieving an international law to finally signal that violence and harassment are NOT part of the job.**

**We will intensify our efforts to lobby governments to sign up to an ILO Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation in June 2018.** Nothing less will do!

The ILO instruments must have a **strong focus on gender-based violence and address the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination** in the context of violence and harassment. We will work with civil society to raise up this issue. We will expose the impacts of gender-based violence through the media.

The ITUC Women's Organising Assembly and 3<sup>rd</sup> World Women's Conference "Building Women Workers Power" declares that the achievement of an ILO Convention and Recommendation which includes all forms of gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work, including the impact of domestic violence, is central to achieving all ITUC aims for equality, dignity, respect and safety for working women.

ITUC women therefore demand that all ITUC affiliates coordinate global action on this issue including, but not only, on this 25 November.