

**Resolution No. 4**  
**OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO WOMEN IN TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP**

The 7<sup>th</sup> ITUC-AP General Council Meeting in Singapore, 21-22 November 2011:

**COGNIZANT** of the aims of the ITUC-AP Constitution “to make the trade union movement inclusive and responsive to the views and needs of all sectors of the workplace in the region “ and specifically “shall advance women’s rights and gender equality, guarantee the full integration of women in trade unions and promote actively full gender parity in their leadership bodies and in their activities at all levels”;

**AWARE** that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITUC-AP Regional Conference held in Singapore on 11-13 May 2011, Resolution No. 3 on “Gender Equality and Upholding Women’s Rights and Decent Work for Women” endorses the Platform of Action for Gender Equality (PAGE) and commits, among others, the “facilitation of women’s equal access to and full participation in decision-making and power structures and processes”;

**HAVING** noted:

- That the result of the ITUC-AP Survey on Women in Trade Union Leadership, although falling short of the majority of the affiliates, indicated a general trend that in the trade union’s decision-making bodies in Asia-Pacific, there is a marked increase in the participation of women from 12% in 2000 to 23% in 2010, although in the top leadership position, that of President and General Secretary, was tied at 18% for the 10-year period;
- That this is a reflection of efforts made by affiliates in promoting and achieving gender equality, including encouraging women participation and representation in trade union leadership;
- That the same survey identified four (4) persistent barriers and challenges that should be removed through positive actions by trade unions among others the continuation of capacity building for women trade unionists that would be consistent with the mandate of the ITUC-AP Constitution;

**BELIEVES** that the full strength of the trade unions can be achieved only if all its members are treated as equals and that equality includes giving access to women trade unions to decision and policy-making bodies in trade union organizational and social structures;

**THEREFORE,**

**COMMENDS** the ITUC-AP Women’s Committee on the paper presented on the topic and the survey results attached therein;

## **GIVE**

serious attention to the issues raised and ensure the provision of an enabling trade union environment necessary to overcome barriers and challenges identified in the survey; and,

## **EXHORTS**

the ITUC-AP and its affiliates to lead the promotion of women into trade union leadership positions and decision-making bodies and thus contribute to making a change for women trade unionists in particular and workers in general in this region specifically through the following:

### 1. Trade Union Culture

- mandatory implementation of ITUC-AP constitution on women representation in decision-making bodies – with gender parity as the goal, and progressive target starting at 30 per cent;

### 2. Family Responsibility and Work-Life Balance

- develop, advocate, and monitor labour and social protection related laws or legislations addressing women's issues and concerns among others ratification of ILO Convention 189 and Recommendation 201 on Domestic workers, and maternity / paternity leave, family leave, etc.;

### 3. Capacity Building and Women into Leadership Positions and Decision-Making Bodies

- conduct targeted education and leadership training for potential and incumbent women trade union leaders at national and regional level on trade union operations on one hand, and on the other hand building / enhancement of gender sensitivity and gender awareness of trade unionists at all levels;
- expose young women to trade unionism to develop their commitment to the cause of women and workers;
- women to stand up for their rights and break women's negative mind-set in taking leadership position;

### 4. Gender Mainstreaming

- collect and keep a database on women participation and representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies;
- actively engage male trade unionists on Women's Rights agenda to facilitate change in mind-sets and gather support and partners in addressing leadership gap.