

2nd ITUC-AP Regional Conference

Resolution No. 3

GENDER EQUALITY

UPHOLDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN

Women workers in recent years constitute half of the workforce but they still continue to experience gender inequality, in terms of gender wage gap, discrimination in employment and treatment, lack of support mechanisms to ensure harmonisation of work and family life by including support for reproductive function of women through maternity protection and various child care schemes and sharing of family responsibilities, sexual harassment and other forms of workplace violence, discriminatory application of social safety nets; and, add to this, feminisation trend in informal economy, atypical work, and increasing migration with globalisation giving rise to flexible labour market policies internationally, regionally and locally.

In society at large, where trade unions operate, violence against women and girl-child is rampant to an unacceptable extent; discrimination in access to education, health services and to economic resources and opportunities are prevalent; women are under-represented and more often paid at lowest levels in public and private spheres, most notably in decision-making and policy making bodies, peace processes, media, environmental protection and sustainable development; and are still predominantly negatively portrayed and used as objects in media for commercial purposes.

Women in trade unions are also under-represented. Despite women membership comprising 40% - 50% of union members, women are still scarce in top leadership and in decision-making structures. The ITUC-AP survey in 2010 found, on gender parity in leadership positions, the average for region is only 16%, a far cry from minimum target of 30%. This is parallel to business communities where women hold less than 5% of the top jobs for obvious reasons.

On maternity protection, trade unions have made a headway in successfully putting provisions of the Maternity Protection Convention No. 183 into collective bargaining agreements. However, much remains to be done. Globally, only 20 countries have ratified Maternity Protection Convention No. 183.

Trade Unions primarily exist as vanguard and protectors of human and workers' rights for democracy, justice, equality and peace. As such, trade unions should continue to fight for social justice, and among other issues, eradication of gender-based discrimination against women. The achievement of gender equality and women empowerment must be highly placed in the trade union agenda. This is further emphasised in the ILO and ITUC campaign for Decent Work that placed Gender Equality at the heart of Decent Work.

The Conference endorses the ITUC-AP Platform of Action for Gender Equality 2011 - 2015 and commits the ITUC-AP, working with affiliates and the GUFs to actions focusing on the following four (4) areas:

1. Elimination of discrimination and violence against women in all aspects of their lives;
2. Empowerment of women economically especially those from informal economy, EPZs, migrants including women workers in domestic service;
3. Facilitation of women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making and power structures and processes; and
4. Mainstreaming of gender perspective in all policies and programmes of trade unions and governments.

Detailed trade union actions can be referred to in the Platform of Action for Gender Equality 2011 - 2015.