

Resolution No. 3

ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The 4th ITUC-AP Regional General Council meeting in Hong Kong, 23 -25 November 2010:

REAFFIRMING

the commitment to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment as a top trade union agenda in its pursuit of democracy, social justice, peace and development;

AFFIRMING

the grave concern in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) that violence against women is a serious obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace;

RECOGNISING

that violence against women is both a root cause and a consequence of gender inequality; and a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights preventing women from the exercise and enjoyment of their rights and freedoms restricting fulfillment of their potentials and aspirations;

UNDERSCORING

the UN definition of violence against women in 1993 as amended in 2003, that states violence against women is *“any act of gender- based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public and private life, and including domestic violence, crimes committed in the name of honour, crimes committed in the name of passion, trafficking in women and girls, traditional practices harmful to women, including female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, female infanticide, dowry-related violence and deaths, acid attacks and violence related to commercial sexual exploitation as well as economic exploitation”*;

EMPHASISING

that violence against women is not merely physical as commonly understood but includes other forms such as economic violence – when women are not given equal access to

opportunities and resources, paid lesser than men for equal work and work of the same value, take the lowliest, menial and poor working conditions, denied educational and training opportunities including promotion opportunities and viewed as inferior or of lesser status than men; and what could be more degrading and damaging than purely physical – the psychological violence which includes sexual harassment, bullying or harassment in general;

STRESSING

that preventing and eliminating violence against women is the key and crucial step in the empowerment of women;

UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNISING

that the silence of the victims - most notably due to lack of protection and support systems and services including societal pressures adding insult to injury re-victimising women by attacking the victim's dignity, honor and reputation, turning the victim to be the accused resulting to absence if not scant complaints - does not mean that acts of violence against women are not committed or are not serious;

RECALLING

article 4 of UN Declaration on eliminating violence against women that States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid obligations with respect to its elimination;

PURSUING

the decisions adopted by the 2nd ITUC World Congress (Vancouver, June 2010) and the 1st ITUC World Women's Conference (Brussels, October 2009) to prevent and eliminate violence against women at the workplace, within the family or in society;

CONCURRING

with the Conclusions and Recommendations of the ITUC-AP Conference primarily on the fact that violence against women dehumanises humanity as it diminishes both the dignity of the oppressed and the humanity of the oppressor;

REAFFIRMING

the trade unions role as vanguards and protectors of workers human and trade union rights in pursuit among others of equality, justice, and peace – which can never be achieved

without reversing injustices; THEREFORE, mindful of the recommendations in the AP Conference on Eliminating Violence against Women;

CALLS ON

ITUC-AP and affiliates:

- to advocate for adoption of an ILO Convention and Recommendation on Sexual Harassment;
- to advocate for adoption of an ILO Convention and Recommendation on Elimination and Prevention of Gender-based Violence against Women;
- to advocate for explicit inclusion in the existing international instruments on VAW the economic forms of violence against women;
- to lobby for creation of laws specifically addressing violence against women at local and national levels;
- to campaign for “zero tolerance” of violence against women, by taking the issue in bargaining and social dialogues;
- to mobilise trade union actions every 25th November which is international day for elimination of violence against women;
- to involve male trade unionists to actively campaign in eliminating violence against women by acting as white ribbon ambassadors;¹
- to mainstream elimination of violence against women in trade union policies and actions for gender equality;
- to actively participate in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laws eliminating violence against women.

¹ White Ribbon campaign started in Canada in 1991, to advocate for men to speak out and organise against violence, specifically violence against women.