The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) is a membership-based global organisation of domestic/household workers. It is the first such global union federation to be formed for informal workers for many years, and it is the first one to be led by women.

Its objective is to build a strong, democratic and united domestic/household workers’ global organisation to protect and advance domestic/household workers’ rights everywhere across the world.

We believe that domestic work is work, and that all domestic/household workers must enjoy the same rights as all other workers.

The IDWF grew out of the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN). It was established as a global federation at its Founding Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay, 26-28 October 2013.

As of 2018, we have 69 affiliated organisations from 55 countries, representing over 500,000 domestic workers. Most of the affiliates are trade unions, and others are associations and workers’ cooperatives of domestic workers.
GOVERNANCE

The Congress of IDWF members, the highest governing body, is held every 5 years (the founding congress was held in Uruguay in October 2013 and the second Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, November 2018). The Congress sets priorities, reviews and updates the constitution, and elects the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee provides on-going governance and plays a central role in ensuring that the IDWF acts according to its purpose and vision and is responsible for the IDWF’s policies and governance as well as staff support and oversight. The Executive Committee is composed of the Officer Bearers: President, Vice-president and General Secretary (ex officio) and Executive Committee members. With the exception of the General Secretary, all are representatives from each of the following regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. An alternate representative is also chosen from each region to assume the duties of the Executive Committee member when she is unavailable.

The Executive Committee meets a minimum of four times a year, including at least one face to face meeting, with the others held via teleconference (where additional face to face meetings are not possible). Regional Coordinators maintain close contact with their Executive Committee representatives, and on-going operations and management is coordinated by the General Secretary.
Myrtle Witbooi, President of the IDWF said at the Founding Congress:

"It took a lot of work to get to where we are today and thank you to everyone who played a part. But there are still millions who are exploited. The new Federation will have a big task ahead. But, with the right leadership, we will ‘take the world by storm’. We are slaves no more. We are workers, with the same rights as other workers. The impossible dream is becoming a reality. This is for you, about you. Make your voices heard today!"

VICE PRESIDENT:
Carmen Britez, UPACP, Argentina

GENERAL SECRETARY:
Elizabeth Tang, IDWF Secretariat, Hong Kong

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Novelita Valdez Palisoc, UNITED, Philippines
Shirley Pryce, JHWU, Jamaica
Grace Papa, CSC A&S, Belgium
Andrea del Carmen Morales Perez, FETRADOMOV, Nicaragua
Gilda Victoria Blanco Franzua, NDWA, USA

ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Asmaou Bah, SYNEM-GUINEE, Guinea
Gyanu Maya Khashtri, HUN, Nepal
Norma Nelson, ATLU, Antigua & Barbuda
Wendy Paula Galarza Quinonez, FILCAMS CGIL, Italy
Doug Moore, UDWA, USA
WHERE WE CAME FROM

“Who is a domestic/household worker?”

Any person engaged in domestic/household work within an employment relationship.

The International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) and the C189

It was only in 2006 that domestic workers’ organisations and our supporters from around the world came together for the first time in a global conference. There, we decided to form a new network, the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) to fight together for an international ILO Convention setting out their rights as workers, which they had historically been denied.

In our efforts, we received huge support from the IUF, WIEGO, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) as well as many other civil society organisations. In June 2011, we achieved a massive victory when ILO Convention C189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers and its accompanying Recommendation R201 were agreed by representatives of the world’s governments, employers, and workers at the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Major Challenges of Organizing

- Isolated and invisible nature of work in private homes
- Fear of employers for harassment and assault and losing jobs
- Dependency on employer for housing, food, immigration status, etc.
- Not protected by labour laws
- Long hours of work, no rest or free time, and no holiday
- Fear of authorities

Major Areas of Work

The IDWF is committed to helping domestic and household workers build strong, democratic and sustainable workers’ organizations, and to weave these organisations into an influential global federation that protects domestic and household workers’ rights everywhere.

The IDWF works to achieve this end by:

- Giving support to domestic workers everywhere to form strong organizations through membership recruitment and organizing and strengthening women leadership;
- Organising and/or supporting campaigns to ratify and implement ILO Convention 189 and other legal improvements for domestic and household workers,
- Providing education and training activities and facilitate the sharing of good practices among domestic and household workers and their organizations in order to strengthen the capacity of affiliates and their members,
- Representing domestic and household workers at local, regional, national, and international forums;
- Communicating regularly with affiliates to facilitate their active participation in the life of the IDWF;
- Building, promoting, and maintaining alliances with trade unions and other strategic partners, and leveraging the resources created through those alliances to the benefit of domestic and household workers and their organisations.
WHO CAN JOIN THE IDWF?

Local or national trade unions or other forms of membership-based organisations of domestic workers and led by domestic workers according to democratic rules and practices.

The IDWF is also a Special Group of the global union federation for food and allied workers, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Union (the IUF) and a member of the Women in Informal Employment – Globalizing and Organizing (the WIEGO).
FOR MORE INFORMATION 
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