



IDWN news

INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS' NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 2012



IDWN Chair, Myrtle Witbooi from the South African domestic workers' union SADSAWU, addressing the IUF Global Congress in Geneva, May 2012.

IDWN at the IUF 16th Congress and Women's Conference

ON 12-17 MAY 2012, THE IDWN STEERING COMMITTEE ATTENDED THE 16TH CONGRESS OF THE GLOBAL UNION FEDERATION FOR FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS, THE IUF, AS WELL AS THE IUF WOMEN'S CONFERENCE WHICH PRECEDED IT, BOTH HELD IN GENEVA.

The IUF has been key in supporting domestic workers' organising and campaigning globally ever since the first domestic workers' world conference in 2006. When the IDWN was launched in 2009, it provided an organisational base to enable our network to develop. But this was the first time that domestic workers' organisations had been officially represented at an IUF Congress.

At the Women's Conference, there was a panel discussion on the activities of the IDWN. Then Myrtle Witbooi, Chair of the IDWN, addressed the whole Congress, followed by strong expressions of support in speeches by many union delegates. Many IUF-affiliated unions have domestic workers in their membership, and are active in getting C189 ratified in their countries.

The Congress adopted a formal resolution reaffirming the IUF's commitment to supporting the IDWN, and to the ratification campaign. At our own Steering Committee meeting on 14 May, we also decided to maintain strong ties with the IUF (see page 12).

FROM THE IDWN CHAIR – MYRTLE WITBOOI

“ There is now so much activity by domestic workers' organisations around the world, it is difficult to capture it all. So, in this newsletter, we give you some of the highlights (with our apologies to those we have missed), and some lessons learnt – how to build alliances, how to work with 'decent' employers, and so on. Congratulations, everyone!



The IDWN is now turning itself from a loose network into a formal organisation. So we are asking all domestic workers' organisations to join us, as members. There is more about this on page 12.

Celebrating the first anniversary of the C189

To celebrate one year since the adoption of the international ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers – the C189 – the IDWN, together with the global unions IUF and ITUC, held a meeting at the International Labour Conference (ILC) on 8 June. Over 80 participants crowded the room at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, mostly leaders from national union centres, as well as ILO officers, the FES (Germany), and supporting NGOs. They watched film of the ILC in 2011 when the C189 was adopted, and heard testimonies from leaders of domestic workers' organisations and unions about what is happening in their own countries to 'ratify' C189 – to put what it says into national laws.

There for the IDWN were the International Coordinator Elizabeth Tang, along with Hester Stephens from SADSAWU in South Africa, Carmen Cruz of the Latin American regional confederation CONLACTRAHO, Shirley Pryce of the Jamaica Household Workers' Association, Evaline Mulo of KUDHEIHA in Kenya, Rebecca Pabon of the FNV Bondgenoten in the Netherlands, and Grace (Shiella) Estrada of FADWU in Hong Kong.

Also at the meeting were representatives of the Governments of Uruguay and the Philippines – the two countries that have already ratified the C189. The IDWN gave them awards for their concrete actions. "As a government, we just do what we should be doing", replied the Uruguayan Government representative, Mr. Loustauar. Indeed, the meeting was held to remind all governments of their domestic duty - to ratify the C189 to protect the rights of domestic workers. On pages 2-5, we give an update on the pressure IDWN members and supporters are putting on their governments.

Mr. Loustauar of the Government of Uruguay receives thanks and a certificate from the IDWN.



IN THIS NEWSLETTER

2-5 C189 – Coming into Force!

6-10 Our Organisations Grow in Strength

11 USA: Organising Domestic Workers and Employers

12 IDWN: From 'Network' to 'Organisation'

12 New Resources

C189 – Coming into force!

TWO GOVERNMENTS – THOSE OF URUGUAY AND THE PHILIPPINES, IN APRIL AND AUGUST 2012 RESPECTIVELY – HAVE NOW RATIFIED THE INTERNATIONAL ILO CONVENTION C189 THAT GIVES DOMESTIC WORKERS RIGHTS. THIS MEANS THAT C189 AND ITS ACCOMPANYING RECOMMENDATION 201 WILL OFFICIALLY COME INTO FORCE, ON 16 JUNE 2013.

WITH BOLIVIA, GERMANY, SOUTH AFRICA, BELGIUM AND OTHERS IN THE PIPELINE, THERE IS MORE REASON THAN EVER FOR US TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON ALL OUR GOVERNMENTS. CYNICS SAID WE COULD NEVER DO IT, BUT WE CAN! HERE IS JUST SOME OF WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD.

AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA: The SADSAWU union is expecting its country to be the next to ratify C189, now awaiting signature from the Cabinet. The union celebrated the first anniversary of C189 in June with an event at Community House in Cape Town where it is based.

TANZANIA: Assistant Labour Commissioner Josephat Lukakingira, from the Ministry of Labour, told domestic workers at a symposium on C189 on 16 June, “The Government of Tanzania will see to it that C189 is ratified and domesticated”.

MOZAMBIQUE: On 16 June, domestic workers marched in the capital city of Maputo to urge their Government to ratify C189. Two employers of domestic workers joined them in the rally, organised by the SINED union, and they got good press coverage.

GHANA: 100 domestic workers, along with supporters from religious organisations and others, took part in a forum in June to put pressure on their Government to ratify C189. They came up with a new ‘ratification’ song. The DSWU union produced new leaflets for ratification and sent off a letter to the Minister of Employment and Social Welfare. DSWU has recently recruited 200 new members.

TOGO: The SYNTEB union held a public parade on 1 March and followed up with a letter to the Prime Minister for ratification of C189.

KENYA: On 19 July, 100 domestic workers, led by KUDHEIHA, presented a petition to Parliament for C189 ratification and got broad press coverage. Their campaign materials include special C189 aprons.



CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: The National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) now sits on the Minimum Wages Board, and amendments to the ‘Household Assistant Order’ in line with C189 are before Cabinet. The Ministry of Labour is also launching a Register for Domestic Workers on 21 September. This database will help monitor and implement standards, as well as support union organising.



JAMAICA: To mark International Domestic Workers Day, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, issued a statement, saying “... we pay tribute to and value the services and contribution of the estimated 58,000 domestic workers in Jamaica”. She confirmed that her Government is currently reviewing labour legislation so as to allow ratification of C189.

EUROPE

IRELAND: Hundreds of migrant domestic workers joined the international campaign on 16 June, calling on the Irish Government – which voted for C189 in 2011 – now to ratify it. Mariaam Bhatti, a migrant domestic worker and activist with the Domestic Workers Action Group (DWAG) said, “Today is about being in solidarity with our fellow domestic workers across the world”: www.mrci.ie/news



Members of the National Union of Domestic Workers (NUDE) demonstrate outside Parliament, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

LATIN AMERICA

As well as Uruguay, there is great optimism that further Latin American countries will soon ratify C189, including Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Colombia and Chile, as the new leader of the regional confederation CONLACTRAHO Carmen Cruz reports (see page 9).

In the region, 30 March has been celebrated as Household Workers’ Day since 1988, and this year actions took place in countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Peru, often in conjunction with the ITUC ‘12 x 12’ campaign for C189. In Guatemala, two unions of domestic workers, SINTRACAP and ASOCASA held a joint press conference on C189. Their strategy includes regular radio spots to reach workers and employers at home.



PERU: In July, the two major domestic workers' trade unions, SINTTRAHOL and SINTRAHOGARP, with support from the national union centres CUT and CGTP, plus other allies, sent a joint letter to the President to demand ratification of C189. Since the IDWN and Global Network conference for domestic workers there on 15 April, the two domestic workers' unions have been working together on the C189 campaign. (For a full report of the conference, see: www.idwn.info/resource)

ASIA

INDIA: On 17-18 March, the first ever national meeting of domestic workers was held in India by the IUF/IDWN, supported by the FNV union centre of the Netherlands. It was attended by 35 representatives from 16 domestic workers' unions and other organisations, including the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the National Domestic Workers Movement.

The meeting agreed the immediate goal is to get better policies and laws at state and national levels, including a central Act for domestic workers. A working group was set up to ensure better coordination and implementation of the work plan. For a full report, see: www.idwn.info/resource

Many organisations across India then used International Domestic Workers' Day, 16 June, to voice their demands for laws and ratification of C189. In Kerala, SEWA formed a 'human chain' in front of government buildings. In Delhi, the Domestic Workers' Forum gathered 1,000 domestic workers to celebrate the Day with dancing and to voice their demands. The HMS union brought 200 domestic workers to the railway station in

the city of Kota, to ask passers-by to sign a petition. In Bangalore, the Domestic Workers' Rights Union did street theatre, held a press conference, and handed a letter to government officials. Elsewhere, affiliates of the National Centre for Labour also held public meetings. In the state of Andhra Pradesh, the President of the A.P. State Domestic Workers Union, Vijaya Laxmi, has been elected as a member of the State Social Security Board for Unorganised Workers.

SOUTH KOREA: Several domestic workers' groups and the trade union centres organised a street campaign on 16 June, demanding ratification of C189 and inclusion of domestic workers in the Labour Standard Act and Employment Insurance Act.

SINGAPORE: The migrants' support centre HOME gathered over 200 domestic workers members plus supporters on 17 June to put their fingerprints on a Statement which went to the Minister for Manpower. The domestic workers' leader Rista received a message from the Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore, Andri Hadi, saying, "We will continue to encourage relevant bodies for the ratification of C189, as we acknowledge the importance. Looking forward to working together for speedy ratification". HOME now has a newsletter 'My Voice' in English and 'Suaraku' in Indonesian.

TAIWAN: Migrant domestic workers continue to fight for their rights to a paid day off each week. A video of their activities on 16 June, showing many individual workers with banners in their own languages – Indonesian, Thai, English, etc. – and including the song "I Want My Day Off", is at: <http://youtu.be/kdl-s0IQQU>

THAILAND: 140 domestic workers and supporters from trade unions and civil society groups celebrated 16 June, encouraged by the fact that a draft ministerial regulation on protection for domestic workers is in process.



HONG KONG: On 16 June, local domestic workers joined migrants in the Federation of Asian Domestic Workers' Unions (FADWU) at a press conference and an information booth in a central park, calling on the Government to protect migrant domestic workers from excessive agency fees and provide social protection as stated in C189.

The Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB) also organised a rally to Central Government offices to demand ratification of C189.



Strong alliance grows in Indonesia

... parliamentarians found it hard to believe they were domestic workers because they gave such good presentations!

THE KAPPRT, THE DOMESTIC WORKERS' ACTION COMMITTEE, IN INDONESIA WAS FORMED IN 2010 BY THE DOMESTIC WORKERS' ADVOCACY NETWORK JALA PRT AND THREE MAJOR TRADE UNION NATIONAL CENTRES, THE KSBSI, KSPI AND KSPSI, AS THEY PREPARED TO HOST THE FIRST ASIAN REGIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS' CONFERENCE.

Since then, the KAPPRT has grown to become the main engine driving the campaign for a national Domestic Workers Bill and ratification of the C189 by the Indonesian Government. *"The campaign is political process and there are many conflicts of interests. The KAPPRT builds a common platform, and does actions together"*, says Lita Anggraini, Coordinator of Jala PRT.

The KAPPRT brings all three national union centres together, and also places Jala PRT firmly within the union movement. *"It is important that domestic workers are now recognised as workers, and we build common issues with unions and struggle together"*, says Lita. Jala PRT works with other civil society organisations of women, children and human rights too, making the platform even stronger.

On 16 June, Jala PRT coordinated celebrations in several cities. In **JAKARTA**, they held a mass action and a press conference. In Yogyakarta, Tunas Mulia and the Congress of Domestic Workers (KOY) performed a play about the situation of domestic workers and the response of the Government. In **SEMARANG**, the newly-formed Semarang Independent Domestic Workers' Union (see page 10) lit hundreds of candles and prayed together, followed by a birthday cake to celebrate the birth of C189.

In **SURABAYA**, a city where there are many child domestic workers, another play was performed – by Operata Tunas Bangsa (a domestic workers' organization), the women's group SA KPPD Surabaya and the KELOLA artistic group – in front of 100 people, including employers of domestic workers.

However, the draft Domestic Workers Bill makes only slow progress. In July, five domestic workers' leaders went to the latest reading in parliament. Seemingly, parliamentarians found it hard to believe they were domestic workers because they gave such good presentations!

Also in mid-July, KAPPRT and the ITUC global union organised a National Consultation on the Domestic Workers' Bill and the Ratification Campaign, attended by 80 representatives from the various organisations. In Indonesia today, domestic workers are definitely not alone in their struggle for rights and protection.



On 16 June - International Domestic Workers Day - this year, domestic workers and supporters performed a play in the city of Yogyakarta, calling on the Indonesian Government to take more action to protect their rights.

Survey in Hong Kong reveals appalling abuses

The Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers (IMWU) in Hong Kong, supported by the ITUC global union and the HKCTU, recently carried out a survey on the treatment of Indonesian migrant domestic workers. They asked 930 such workers about their experiences during the pre-departure period, their placement in Hong Kong, and their return home. Among their findings were:

- 85% of workers are paying excessive agency fees; some have over 80% of their wage deducted for 7 months. As taking excessive fees from workers is illegal, most agencies take the workers to a finance company to sign papers.
- 70% of workers have their documents confiscated by employers or agencies.

UN body adds its voice

Overseas, Indonesian migrant domestic workers continue to put pressure on their Government. On 24 June in Hong Kong, the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (IMWU) and the HKCTU union confederation held a forum on human trafficking and forced labour attended by over 160 people, including an ILO expert on combating forced labour, and a representative from the Indonesian Consulate.

There, they revealed the appalling results of a recent survey (see box). *"So many of the abuses originate with recruitment agents, yet the Indonesian Consulate continues to require migrant domestic workers to go through an agency"*, Sringatin, Vice-Chair of IMWU, complained.

In July, Sringatin joined an Amnesty International delegation to New York, to give testimony to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of the United Nations. Afterwards CEDAW expressed its *"deep concern about the persistence of violence, abuse and exploitation"* that the workers face. It recommended the Government of Indonesia should inspect recruitment agencies and training centres in Indonesia, with penalties for abusive ones.

Time for action!
The Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (IMWU) has been continuously protesting in front of the Indonesian Consulate in Hong Kong.



Our organisations grow in strength



ACROSS THE WORLD, DOMESTIC WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS ARE ENGAGED IN MEMBERSHIP DRIVES, SEMINARS AND TRAINING FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND GAINING PRESS COVERAGE. HERE IS SOME OF THEIR NEWS:

AFRICA

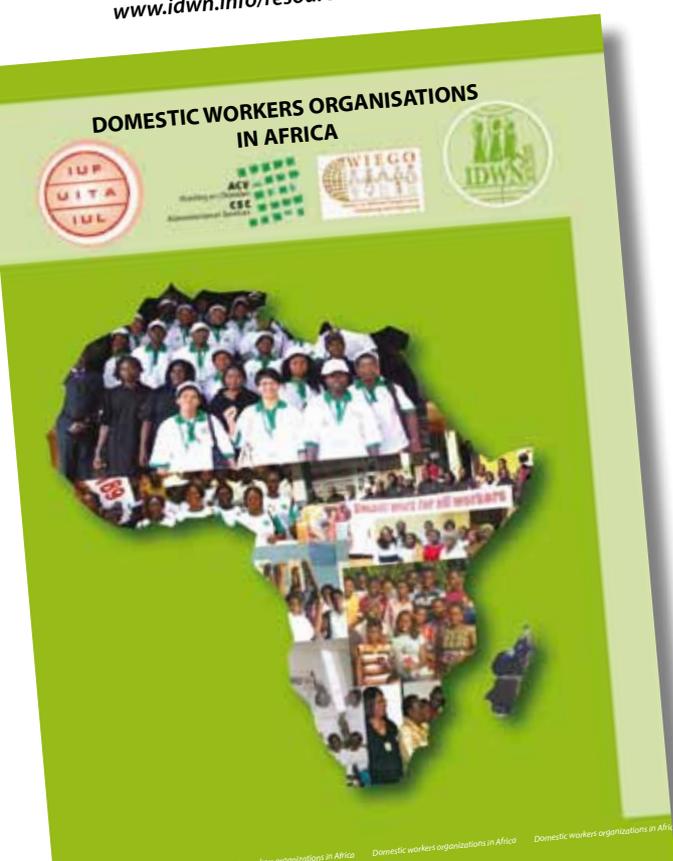
Along with those mentioned on pages 7 and 8, domestic workers' organising activities are being undertaken by SYNEHM in Benin, SYNEMG/B in Burkina Faso, SYNTRAD in Guinea, SATRH in Senegal, UHFTAWU in Uganda, and UHDWUZ in Zambia.

Some, like SYNTRAD in Guinea, SINED in Mozambique, CHODAWU in Tanzania, and SYNEMG/B in Burkina Faso, have been successful in getting onto TV programmes, raising awareness through such things as cooking as well as discussions.

GHANA: The Domestic and Service Workers' Union (DSWU) has been on a recruitment drive and recently gained 200 new members.

ZIMBABWE: The Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers' Union (ZDAWU) is being supported by an exchange programme with SADSAWU in South Africa.

*New IDWN Africa leaflet, available in English and French:
www.idwn.info/resource-centre*



Eveline Mulo from KUDHEIHA in Kenya visits neighbouring Tanzania, where she hands a union membership card to a new CHODAWU member.

TANZANIA: The CHODAWU union has recently formed domestic workers' committees in various cities, and added 500 domestic workers to its membership. A national training workshop was held in mid-August to which representatives from KUDHEIHA in Kenya were invited.

IDWN Africa Regional Coordinator, Vicky Kanyoka:
vicky.kanyoka@idwn.info



Asmoua Bah of the SYNTRAD union demonstrates cookery skills on a very popular television programme in Guinea, taking the opportunity also to inform viewers about C189 and the rights of domestic workers.

EUROPE

This year's survey for International Women's Day, 8 March, by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) contains a report on the situation of domestic workers, their legal rights and level of union recognition/organisation in the different European countries. In 8 countries of East/Central Europe, trade unions still do not recognise domestic workers in their structures. In Romania, unions are still by law not allowed to organise domestic workers, though there is now some union activity to change this: www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/8_March12_analysis_FINAL_EN-5.pdf

The trade unions in Europe have been involved in workshops - in Germany (23-25 April), in Spain (18-20 June), and in Ireland (24-26 June) - to mobilise more action for ratification of C189 and foster better organisation of domestic workers. Organised by the ETUC, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT, which is the regional body of the global union IUF), and the workers' support body of the ILO, ACTRAV Turin, a total of some 86 participants from 18 countries attended. The workshops are leading up to a conference in Turin, Italy, on 27-28 November.

IDWN European Regional Coordinator, Karin Pape:
Karin.pape@wiego.org

SOUTH AFRICA: TAKING THE UNION TO WHERE THE WORKERS ARE

By day, domestic workers are too busy working for the union to easily get their attention. So the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers' Union (SADSAWU) has decided to get more active in the townships where many domestic workers live and return at night. Cape Town-based Workers World Media Project gave support by letting them share an office in one of the local townships.

SADSAWU General Secretary Myrtle Witbooi says, "By visiting the domestic workers where they are staying, we have managed to organise more successfully than ever before".

Meanwhile, for those many domestic workers who stay at their employers' homes, SADSAWU is continuing with its 'room meetings'. Union members invite other domestic workers in their area to small get-togethers in their own rooms. Once they have about 50 interested, the union holds a bigger meeting, aiming to get them to join as members.



South African Domestic Service
And Allied Workers Union

Newsletter 4
March - June 2012

A year has gone by, after the adoption of International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 189 for Domestic Workers. We have worked so hard for nearly four years, to ensure that our work is recognised as decent work! On 16th June 2011 we made history when Convention 189 was adopted.



In this year gone by, only one government has signed the ratification of Convention 189. We set ourselves a goal: We want at least 12 governments to sign, one each month as part of the international **12 to 12 Campaign** with the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) and International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN).

South Africa should be the second government to sign and ratify 189, meaning it becomes labour law, as South Africa was the most supportive and vocal government leading the campaign for Convention 189 at the International Labour Conference.

We urge our government to sign, and ratify, Convention 189! South Africa, take the lead and Africa will follow!

- Hester Stephens, President

Read More Inside.....

- **June 16th declared International Domestic Workers Day!** SADSAWU celebrates
- **Open Letter to Minister of Labour, Nelsiwe Oliphant** Ratify Convention 189 in South Africa
- **SADSAWU's first home, Community House, declared Heritage Site 3 May 2012**
- **Ratify C189!** The 12 to 12 Campaign...
- **Building Solidarity!**
- **SADSAWU Activities**
- **Membership Milestones**
- **Desk of General Secretary**
- **Recruitment Roundup**
- **Contact SADSAWU**

UNITY IS STRENGTH! EENHEID IS KRAG! UMANYANO NGAMANDLA!

page 1

SADSAWU has also recruited the workers in three more retirement centres, and quickly won them a wage increase. The company that runs these homes for the elderly only wanted to pay an extra 6%, but SADSAWU achieved 8%, above the 7% that most other sectors got this year. After meeting with the workers, SADSAWU wrote to the employers to convince them about the rising costs of living and transport that their workers face. Myrtle says it usually takes about three months to negotiate a wage increase, but in this case only a week. "You need to be strong in your argument, pulling out all stops. Also you can only do this if you have more than 70% of the workers as members".

Plus about 40 gardeners who work at private homes and 100 community care workers – a new target for the union – have joined. As a result, this year SADSAWU has recruited over 800 new members, very close to their target of 1,000. "Yes, we are reaching many workers. But it is costly, as we must pay the workers that assist us and employ an extra organiser. It can take 2-3 months to get workers to join. So, we have to do more fundraising. But our strategy is working, and in the long run it will make us financially stable", says Myrtle.

On 7 August, SADSAWU joined with the Department of Labour to launch a new door-to-door campaign. Department officials are now visiting private homes to talk to both the worker and the employer. Employers who fail to comply with labour laws, get 7 days to rectify or a legal case will be taken against them.

SADSAWU has recently set up a Gender Desk to deal with issues such as violence against women and children, rape counseling, and HIV-Aids, and a Young Domestic Workers Desk to help young domestic workers improve their skills. Also, to develop their own skills, the 15 members of the SADSAWU Committee have been trained in computer skills at the University of the Western Cape.

... this year SADSAWU has recruited over 800 new members, very close to their target of 1,000.

Kenya: KUDHEIHA campaigns in three cities

DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE KUDHEIHA UNION IN KENYA HAVE ROLLED OUT CAMPAIGNS IN THREE MAJOR CITIES.

Kisumu in the west hosts a large number of domestic workers, and an extremely active domestic workers' committee. Their biggest challenge is the lack of recognition of domestic workers by the community. So, their new campaign aims to show that they are organised, to reach out to more domestic workers, strengthen their capacity to fight for their rights under Kenyan labour law, and raise more awareness about C189 and why it should be ratified by their Government.

The campaign in Kisumu started with an Environment Day on 26 June, inviting others to join in like officials from the Ministry of Labour and the local government, church groups, human rights supporters, and so on. In the morning, along with members of a local women's group, they did a clean-up of a local market. Wearing aprons 'Ratify Convention 189 Now', carrying brooms and banners 'Am Not Your Servant: Am a Domestic Worker', and singing songs, they attracted many onlookers to whom they gave pamphlets on domestic workers' rights and C189. Then they moved on to planting 100 trees, in collaboration with a local theological college. KUDHEIHA has identified the church as a very influential institution to help them. The College declared its support for C189, and said they would tell the community that domestic workers have rights like all other workers.

On 1 July, in the capital city Nairobi, KUDHEIHA held a workshop to give more domestic workers training on labour laws and decent working conditions. It took place on an estate where employers have an association which had developed a strategy to pay their domestic workers below the legal minimum. So the union trained the workers on the Minimum Wage Bill which is supposed to cover them, as well as how to bargain with employers, and about occupational health and safety. The workers agreed to distribute copies of the Bill to every household and, through the union, to approach the local employers' association. They said how much more secure they feel in the union, to refuse the proposed low wage. Six more joined KUDHEIHA.

The city of Kwale on Kenya's east coast has world-renowned beach hotels and wealthy settlements, but most domestic workers are paid below the minimum wage. The union branch now has 285 registered members, with over 100 active. 30 have written contracts with their employers. On 1 July, they launched a Domestic Workers Awareness Campaign, with a street procession accompanied by drummers, attracting a large crowd to whom they gave handouts about the minimum wage and labour laws. Within a week, 27 more domestic workers registered as union members. However, the Chairwoman of the local domestic workers' committee was sacked by her employer and KUDHEIHA had to immediately take up her case.





LATIN AMERICA

COSTA RICA: The Domestic Workers' Association ASTRADOMES is fighting the discrimination faced by migrant domestic workers from neighbouring Nicaragua. Many are undocumented and so do not pay social insurance contributions, meaning they are not entitled to paid holidays, unemployment benefits and other forms of social security. ASTRADOMES has contacted them in local parks in the capital city San Jose. It has also set up an office in Nicaragua to train and advise workers before they migrate to Costa Rica.

IDWN Latin America Regional Coordinator
Marcelina Bautista:
marce_baumx@yahoo.com.mx

CARIBBEAN

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: Supported by UN Women, the NUDE union for domestic employees has been making great strides. Two more domestic workers on its staff have quickly learnt how to recruit, represent workers at tribunals, do media work, use computers, and so on. Membership is increasing, though NUDE still has to combat the sad situation where some domestic workers are ashamed of the work they do.

NUDE has recently applied to affiliate to the IUF global union (see page 12).

NUDE is also active at the regional level, along with the Jamaica Household Workers' Association.

IDWN Steering Committee Member, Ida Le Blanc:
Ida.leblanc@idwn.info

IDWN Coordinator Elizabeth Tang with Maria del Carmen Cruz, the new General Secretary of CONLACTRAHO in Latin America

Latin America: CONLACTRAHO's new leader

MARIA DEL CARMEN CRUZ is the new General Secretary of the Latin American Regional Confederation of Household Workers' Associations CONLACTRAHO, elected at their Congress in Mexico City, 1-5 May 2012. Carmen comes from the ASTRADOMES Household Workers' Association in Costa Rica. The IDWN asked her about CONLACTRAHO's Plan of Action, and her hopes for her four years of office.

"In Latin America, the possibilities for ratification of C189 are very positive. It has already been ratified in Uruguay, and in Costa Rica it will hopefully be by December. We have made good progress in other countries too, such as Nicaragua, Colombia, and Chile.

The main challenges we face for ratification are: 1) lack of good communication between domestic workers' organisations and governments, and 2) the different legislation in each country - so far, we have found no database that gives us this information in a user-friendly format.

The ratification of C189 is only one of CONLACTRAHO's objectives. My goals as General Secretary are:

- *To affiliate those countries in Latin America that are not yet in our network - for example, Honduras, El Salvador, Panama and Colombia - and to continue promoting our membership.*
- *The empowerment of women members. For example, we are planning intensive capacity-building for leaders in the use of communication tools. Activities are difficult to carry out simultaneously in 13 countries. So we have committed ourselves over the next four years to learn and use communications tools better to increase our organisation and strength.*
- *To hold regular strategic planning meetings, and do more training for leaders."*

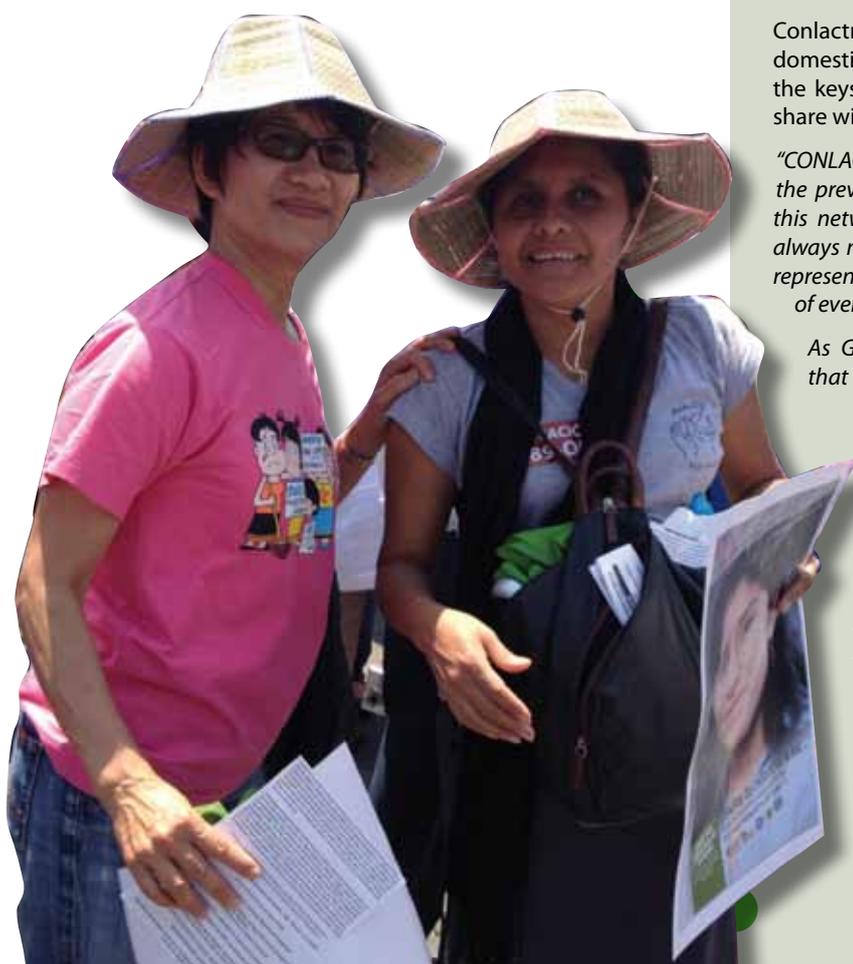
Conlactraho is currently the strongest regional network of domestic workers in the world. So, we asked Carmen what are the keys to achieving this success, and what lessons she can share with other domestic workers' leaders.

"CONLACTRAHO's achievements are due to the efforts of all the previous General Secretaries who have built and sustained this network. The main lessons are always to be humble, and always make collective decisions. Domestic workers' leaders and representatives must take into account the views and suggestions of everyone.

As General Secretary, the thing I want to achieve most is that everything goes according to plan, that we achieve the level of communication that we need with all the affiliates, making CONLACTRAHO a much stronger organization of and for domestic workers.

I want us to empower our members, as well as get their labour rights recognised. Over the next four years, we will continue our struggle to increase the voice and visibility of Latin American domestic workers with legislators, employers, and society as a whole. I am also looking forward to knowing more about the IDWN's plans and how we can find the best ways to mutually support each other."

With many thanks to Sofia Trevino of WIEGO for the interview and translation.





ASIA

SRI LANKA: The Domestic Workers Union was registered on 5 March 2012, the first domestic workers' union ever to receive official recognition in the country. It is led by domestic workers, in a collective leadership structure with joint Presidents and joint Secretaries. The union is proud of this structure, as it is not led by a non-worker, nor by a single leader.

INDONESIA: The IUF Asia Pacific region is supporting the Tunas Mulia Domestic Workers' Union to consolidate their organising and membership building through a two-year project. Based in the city of Yogyakarta, it was the first domestic workers' union in the country and, having survived many ups and downs, it is now inspiring other domestic workers to organise into unions. The second one has just been formed in the city of Semarang, the Serikat PRT Merdeka Semarang (Semarang Independent Domestic Workers' Union), and more are planned, along with a federation to unite them.

HONG KONG: Migrant workers have for the first time been elected onto the Executive Committee of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU). They are Shiella Estrada of FADWU and Sringatina of IMWU. Along with two local domestic workers, this means that there are now four domestic workers out of 26 members on the Committee.



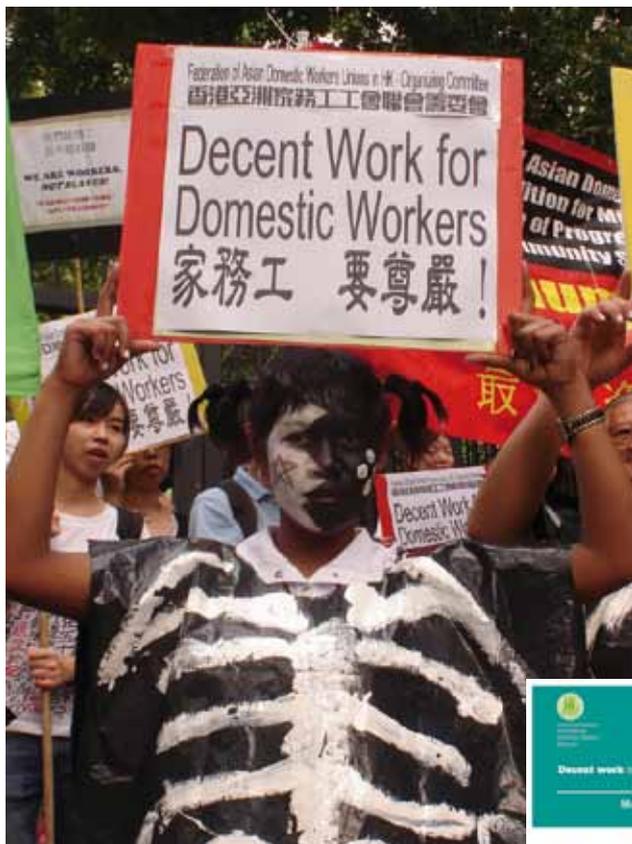
NORTH AMERICA

USA: In late August, the State of California became the second place in the country, after New York, to pass a Bill of Rights for Domestic Workers, setting out basic employment rights for the quarter of a million domestic workers who work there.

For an article on US domestic workers' joint mobilisation with progressive employers, see opposite.

National Domestic Workers' Alliance (NDWA):
www.domesticworkers.org

NDWA Field Director, Jill Shenker: jill@domesticworkers.org



The Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions (FADWU) has been holding training workshops on public speaking and training for trainers for its member organisations – including the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (IMWU), the Thai Migrant Workers' Union (TMWU), the Filipino Domestic Workers Union (FDWU), and the Union of Nepali Domestic Workers (UNDW) – using modules from a new ILO Asia training manual (see page 12).

IDWN Asia-Pacific Regional Coordinator, Ip Pui Yu Fish:
fish.ip@idwn.info



USA: Organising Domestic Workers and Employers

By Jill Shenker, Field Director, National Domestic Worker's Alliance (NDWA)

For the NDWA, organising supportive domestic employers has been core to our ability to win historic victories, like the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in New York and the new one in California (see opposite). We are now evolving this approach with our campaign 'Caring Across Generations' - to transform home care so that workers and those who need care can all live with dignity.

The intimacy of domestic work, and the generous and caring spirit that our members bring to their jobs, have led us to explore how we can lead a movement for change from that place—how can we lead with love? Of course, we challenge abusive employers and we have won back millions of dollars in unpaid wages. But we have also found partners among good employers who value and respect domestic workers, and who can be a role model for others.

They have formed 'Hand in Hand', a national network of employers of domestic workers who are convinced that dignified and respectful working conditions benefit worker and employer alike. Some of the employer organising strategies include:

- Meet people where they are and ask for their stories and experiences as employers
- Explore how employers can really live their values in this employment relationship and how justice would be beneficial for both workers and employers
- Ask every employer to take one step up to improve their employer practices
- Organise in faith communities, in specific geographic areas, or around specific types of employment
- Engage good employers to be role models to raise the bar for other employers
- Raise employers' voices in campaigns for domestic worker rights.

During the first week of July, when the US celebrates independence each year, we did a social media campaign highlighting the role of domestic workers in creating freedom for employers.

NDWA: www.domesticworkers.org

Hand in Hand: Domestic Employers Association (US): domesticemployers.org

Caring Across Generations campaign: www.caringacrossgenerations.org



CARING ACROSS GENERATIONS



Freedom
 is having the help I need to be a good parent.
 My domestic worker makes this possible.
 Support AB889 the California Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

Hand in Hand leader, Mimi Ho, is a perfect example of the power that progressive domestic employers' voices can have in our movement.

See her blog/facebook post advocating for the Bill of Rights in California 'This week I celebrate IN(ter)DEPENDENCE! 10 reasons you should join me in support of the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights' at: <http://cadomesticworkers.tumblr.com/page/2>



IDWN: from 'network' to 'organisation'



Since we were formed in 2009, the IDWN has been an open network of domestic workers' organisations, of all types, with a Steering Committee of representatives from every continent. We have been housed by the IUF, the global union federation for food and allied workers, to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude.

We have now taken the decision to turn the IDWN into a formal membership-based organisation, to help build the IDWN as a long-term, solid global organisation of domestic workers. So we are now inviting all organisations of domestic workers to join us, as members. We are also preparing for a founding Congress in 2013, which will approve a democratic structure for the IDWN.

Domestic workers have long organised themselves whenever and however they can, when no one took much notice of them - resulting in a big variety of organisations today. It is a key aim of the IDWN to assist our members to develop strategies and programmes of action to build women workers' leadership, with democratic and sustainable structures.

The IDWN Steering Committee meets in Geneva on 14 May 2012, just before the IUF global union Congress. In their hands are copies of the new IDWN publicity leaflet.

The IDWN Steering Committee has also decided to move towards becoming an integral part of the IUF structure. So, we are also encouraging IDWN members to become IUF affiliates too. It is hoped that, through this double affiliation, the growth of the IDWN will strengthen the IUF and vice-versa, leading to an even stronger global labour movement.

To join the IDWN, please find the application form in English, Spanish and French at: www.idwn.info/resource-centre and send it to the IDWN International Coordinator or the Coordinator for your region.

IDWN International Coordinator, Elizabeth Tang:
elizabeth.tang@idwn.info



New Resources

'Decent Work for Domestic Workers in Asia and Pacific: Manual for Trainers', ILO Asia-Pacific and IDWN, 2012, in English, Chinese and Indonesian: www.idwn.info/resource/decent-work-domestic-workers-asia-and-pacific-manual-trainers

'Achieving Decent Work for Domestic Workers: An Organisers' manual to promote ILO Convention 189 and build domestic workers' power', ILO Actrav, May 2012, in English, French and Spanish: www.idwn.info/topic/c189-ratification

'Effective Protection for Domestic Workers: A guide to designing labour laws', ILO, July 2012: www.idwn.info/resource/ilo-effective-protection-domestic-workers-guide-designing-labour-laws

'Conventional Wisdom', a film about how domestic workers won C189, produced by Sisi Sojourner Productions, in collaboration with Jennifer Fish at Old Dominion University (US), WIEGO, and the IUF: www.idwn.info/resource/international-domestic-workers-network-launches-film-convention-189

ABOUT THE IDWN

The International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) is made up of domestic workers' organisations, including trade unions, around the world. Our Steering Committee comprises representatives from domestic workers' organisations, and we are provided with an organisational base by the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF). We are also supported by Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO).

www.idwn.info

