

The Brief Report on the ITUC/IUF Workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa 28 April to 30 2011

1.0 Introduction.

The Regional workshop for domestic workers for Africa was organized by ITUC in collaboration with IUF/IDWN. The workshop brought about participants from the Trade union centers, and Domestic workers. Twenty seven participants participated in the in the workshop.

2.0 Major issues discussed were as follows:

2.1 Best Practices Shared:

Participants were able to share some of the best practices observed in Africa with regard to domestic workers. This included experience from SADSAWU in terms of legislation and organizing, KUDHEIHA presented case study in organizing, recruitment drive and capacity building, SINED from Mozambique, and SEHM/BA from Benin explained about organizing and Senegal about Cooperatives and organizing.

2.2 Presentation of the brown Report/Blue Reports:

This was facilitated by Marieke from ITUC.

She briefed the participants about the brown report and the blue report. This included the response from the Governments, and Employers. Also highlighted the challenging issues for the second ILC in Geneva in June.

Some of the issues which participants were able to contribute and debate were as follows.

- (i) Evidence based arguments: Need to have data and best practice for the ILC in June.
- (ii) Social security: It is true that some of countries have social security scheme but differs from each country. There are schemes that only domestic workers contribute and are other scheme were employers contribute to social security to their employee. (Gabon remark).

Social Security Committee at ILC in Geneva needs to have representative from Domestic workers so as to include issues of domestic workers.
- (iii) Social Protection (OHS) .The participants commented that the issue should be one of the high priorities in the discussion as most of the domestic workers rights were being violated. These include maternity protection, lack of protective gears, occupation diseases and medical treatment.
- (iv) Privacy: “We definitely need our privacy to full fill our emotions like other people and are our human right. It is not a matter of respect but is our right” a comment from Eveline Mullo a domestic workers from Kenya – KUDHEIHA.

3.0 Major output of the Workshop:

- (i) The participants were able to come up with the Action plan.
- (ii) A statement which has been sent all participants and is used as a tool to lobby the Governments.

IDWN DAY: 30th April 2011.

1.0 Global report on IDWN.

The Chairperson sister Myrtle was able to brief major activities which have been done by IDWN at global level in campaigning for the ILO Convention for domestic workers. This includes preparation of the

demands for domestic workers, participation in different global meetings to create awareness and lobby for support, participation in the ILO workers consultative meetings in 2010 and 2011 as well as attending the at the ILC , in June 2010.

2.0 Report from Africa:

The coordinator Vicky Kanyoka was able to brief the activities which have been done in Africa. This includes sub regional workshops, consultative meetings, awareness creation meetings during Domestic workers day, lobbying letters to governments and soliciting support from Trade union councils and trade union centers.

3.0 Progress Reports:

The domestic workers were able to present the reports on what is being done in their respective organizations.

Kenya: KUDHEIHA: (Eveline Mullo, a domestic workers and organizer)

(i) **Members:** The union have 13,200 DW,(from 2008 Dec-2011 May). Committee of domestic workers have been established, conduct trainings through workshops. Create awareness campaign through media, demonstrations and seminars and develop materials like t-shirts, calendars.

Impact: Employers have started to provide leave for the domestic workers, make contract and produce appointment letters, and provide protective gears for the workers and maternity protection.

However still the Federation of the Employers is an obstacle in Kenya.

(ii) **Guinea (Conakry):** (Asmah an organizer)

Have started to organize domestic workers but still need to learn from others.

- (iii) **Benin- SEHM/BA** : (Raimi A domestic worker and General Secretary)

Benin has two trade unions of domestic workers, one in the North and in the South.

Have 150 members of domestic workers. They mostly do awareness creation and dispute handling to their members. Their vision is building a centre where they can discuss their issues.

- (iv) **Senegal:** (Elisabeth Sane -domestic worker and Organizer).

251 domestic workers have been organized and joined the union. On the 7th April they conducted a seminar on OHS seminar, and on the 10th Dec 2010 conducted a seminar about DWs rights.

- (v) **South Africa –SADSAWU:** (Hesther a domestic worker and the chairperson for SADSAWU)

Have 50,000 domestic workers but active (paid) 25,000. Work in four provinces.

Activities done include workshops, seminars, recruitment drive, lobbying for ILO Convention and hold consultative meetings with Governments. Also work closely with SACCAWU and Social law project.

- (vi) **Tanzania-CHODAWU** (Deograsia, the women director)

Have 3000 domestic workers unionized into CHODAWU. Activities include seminars which sometimes involves employers of domestic workers. Conduct awareness campaign through radio

programmes, and IUF women programme. CHODAWU have conducted OHS for domestic workers through

WIEGO support. Participated in lobbying Government

in collaboration with IUF/IDWN and the trade Union

Federation of Tanzania -TUCTA

(vii) **Mozambique- SINED:** (Maria Joachim, a domestic worker and General Secretary).

Have 1056 domestic workers. They do awareness campaign on domestic workers rights, recruitment drive.

Challenges: Apart from these success stories she said that still more domestic workers were not aware of their rights, and lack of funds was the major problem to run the activities in the union.

4.0 What they say and what we say.

The facilitator sister Myrtle walked through the IDWN booklet on “**what they say and what we say**” to get their comments on the challenging issues: The participants had the following comments.

Issues discussed:

(a) Our name.

‘If someone who is **teaching** is called a **teacher**, why are we not called **domestic workers**? We are very proud of our work. We want to be called domestic workers.’ Reaction from Raimi a domestic worker and General Secretary from SEHM/BA Benin who was seconded by all domestic workers.

(b) Human rights abuses to domestic workers:

“Few employers treat domestic workers in the proper way. Out of 1000 employers of domestic workers only 100 employers treat well domestic workers.” This was an experience and a remark from Eunice a domestic workers and organizer from SADSAWU- South Africa based in Johannesburg who was supported by other Dws through testimonies.

(c) Need to the legal minimum wage for domestic workers:

“We don’t like excuse from our employers that they can’t pay us minimum wages. We know that some good employers pay more than minimum wage. The minimum wage should be there. For example in my country Kenya the Member of Parliament has a package of 15% of their salary for a domestic worker, but they don’t pay us.” They need us but are taking advantage of our ignorance. Without us they can’t go to work. The minimum wage should be there in order for us to have decent life.” Commented Eveline Mullo from KUDHEIHA –Kenya who was also supported by all domestic workers.

(d) Social security:

“Social security is a very important issue for us in our life when we retire from work. For example my employer in Senegal –Dakar contributes to my social security. Why not others? It is possible. We should include it in the ILO Convention.” Elisabeth Sane from Dakar testified.

(e) Poor countries can’t implement if Convention adopted except the rich ones.

“They are no Governments which are poor. Where do they get salaries for Government officials, Member of Parliaments and buy expensive cars?” Adowa Sakyi, Regional coordinator for women project commented. Eunice from SADSAWU said ‘We won’t allow it. We need a strong Convention’.

(f) ***Rest time:***

“We don’t agree call time when we are resting, and during our holidays. Employers should respect our privacy time; we want to do our own things. They should respect resting hours for domestic workers. We are also human being; we need time to rest, to do things for our families. “Hesther from SADSAWU said.

5.0 General comments.

5.1 Most of them admitted that organizing domestic workers was not a problem, the only challenges they are facing includes lack funds to facilitate the logistics like stationeries, travel costs, offices, equipments like phones, computers, internet facilities and travel costs.

5.2 Domestic workers still do not know their rights. Education and training are the key solution for domestic workers.

5.3 There is great need to conduct a study for domestic workers in order to understand the real situation of domestic workers in Africa and identify different interventions.

5.4 Called for support from funders to support domestic workers activities as most of the unions are financially weak and that hinders a number of their activities.

5.5 Call support from Governments to adopt the ILO Convention supplemented by the recommendation and if adopted asked for immediate ratification by their Governments.