Joint Declaration on Celebrating May Day 2010 as “Asian Domestic Workers’ Day” 1 May 2010

“We are not begging for special treatment. We, domestic workers, are claiming our basic rights. We are demanding equal treatment and proper recognition as workers and members of society. We will continue to fight abuses and exploitation. We want freedom from slavery.” ~Sringatin, Chairperson, Federation of Asian Domestic Workers’ Union (FADWU, Hong Kong)

May Day 2010 will mark 124 years since 300,000 workers first walked out of their jobs demanding an 8-hour workday. The '8-hour standard work' is one of the hallmarks that differentiate workers from slaves. At its very first session in 1919, the ILO formalized this principle into international law by adopting ILO Convention #1. In 1999, ‘decent work hours’ was identified as a key component of ILO’s decent work principles.

Sadly, a century-and-a-quarter later, one of the most vulnerable sections of the working class – the domestic (household) workers – have been denied decent work hours and other basic labour standards (decent wage, regular rest days, retirement/social security, reproductive/family rights, etc.). ILO Convention #1 and many other key ILO Conventions exclude domestic workers from their coverage. It is long overdue to renew the revolutionary spirit of May Day 1886 in the modern-day context – by making these basic standards universally applicable to all workers, especially the vulnerable, like the domestic workers.

Therefore, trade unions and domestic workers’ organizations, together with migrant, women, and civil society and partner advocates, have come together to spearhead the international campaign for the rights and recognition of domestic workers. As part of this joint campaign, we have agreed to jointly celebrate May Day 2010 as the “Asian Domestic Workers’ Day’ to emphasize the core labour rights principles and highlight our call for the proper recognition of the rights, value, and status of domestic workers as workers.

May Day 2010 is at the threshold of the global labour landscape because the 2011 International Labour Conference is expected to adopt the ILO Convention on Domestic Work. This new international treaty, like Convention #1 more than a century ago, will put a legal face to the hundreds of millions of domestic workers around the world. An ILO
Convention will formally define domestic work as work, and will make all the fundamental labour rights and decent work principles equally applicable to domestic workers. The adoption of the Convention will help address the stark invisibility of domestic work as a form of employment.

Housework is one of the oldest and most fundamental duties performed by a majority of women because women are traditionally considered as nurturers of the family. For centuries, it has been work that is informal, unregulated, unpaid or undervalued, unprotected and unrecognized. Domestic workers enable employers and their families to participate in the productive processes of the larger society.

The intensification of free-market globalization in the last 50 years saw a need for domestic workers on a global scale, giving rise to multi-billion dollar migrant domestic work (MDW) industry. Millions of MDWs have taken over house care for families both in the global North and South, and have created new economic opportunities for other workingwomen in receiving countries. Domestic work has also generated economic benefits for sending countries, mainly through remittances than enable these countries to survive many economic crises. Migrant domestic work is now one of the main occupational preferences of women workers seeking to survive steadily disappearing livelihood opportunities at home.

Due to the nature of the job, the situation of domestic workers has remained precarious, vulnerable, and invisible. The unique challenges faced by domestic workers start from the day of recruitment. Live-in local and migrant domestic workers are particularly susceptible to various forms of maltreatment at the workplace and have little or no channels of redress. Migrant domestic workers are preyed on by opportunistic recruiters, employers, and corrupt officials. Vulnerabilities to forced labour, slavery-like conditions and trafficking increase as domestic workers end their employment and search for new work. Domestic workers, especially at the local level, also involve a substantial number of children, which is another major concern of the ILO.

The ILO has recognized the urgent need to establish minimum standards of “human dignity and self-respect” for domestic workers as early as 1965, in a resolution that cited the lack of social and legal protection for them. However, until today, this has not progressed into binding standards or legal commitments. Part of this inaction is the prevailing notion that domestic work does not constitute formal employment – i.e. it is an extension of women’s unpaid reproductive (nurturing) role; domestic workers also predominantly come from lower classes or castes especially in Asian societies. An ILO Convention will help break these gender and class stereotypes, and lay down the basis for an employer-employee relationship in domestic work.
We, the undersigned, call for the adoption by 2011 of an International Convention on Domestic Work, together with clear guidelines on monitoring and implementation, reporting and compliance mechanisms. We believe an ILO Convention will significantly contribute to the reduction of slavery-like conditions, abuse, violence, exploitation, inequality, and discrimination against women and domestic workers. It will help reduce the worst forms of child labour, the stigmatization and criminalization of migrant domestic workers, and racial and ethnic discrimination.

On May Day 2010, we call on everyone to support and celebrate the “Asian Domestic Workers’ Day.” We, the domestic workers’ groups, trade unions, migrant organizations, women’s groups, civil society and advocates in Asia and globally will march together in solidarity as we demand for the recognition and respect of rights, value, contributions, and status of domestic workers as workers and equal members of society.

Domestic Work is Work!
Domestic Workers are Workers!
Domestic Work is NOT Slavery!
Adopt an ILO Convention on Domestic Work in 2011!

SIGNATORIES:

Asia-Pacific

Regional unions & organizations
Asian Migrant Domestic Workers’ Alliance (ADWA) *
Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN) *
Asian Migrant Centre (AMC) *
Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY)
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
CARAM-Asia
Committee for Asian Women (CAW) *
Focus on the Global South - India, Philippines, Thailand
Global Network Asia *
IUF-Asia Pacific
International Young Christian Workers - Asia Pacific (IYCW ASPAC)
Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) *
Southeast Asia Women Watch (SEAWWatch)
Australia
Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

Bangladesh
Association for Community Development-ACD
Karmojibi Nari (KN)
WARBE Development Foundation

Burma
ALTSEAN Burma!
Federation of Trade Unions-Burma (FTUB)

Cambodia
Cambodia Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW)

China
Migrant Women's Club, Beijing

Hong Kong
Alliance of Progressive Labour-Hong Kong (APL-HK)
Association for the Advancement of Feminism
Black List for recruiters agency, agency & employer who violate migrant rights alliance
Coalition for Migrants’ Rights (CMR) *
Federation of Asian Domestic Workers’ Unions in Hong Kong (FADWU) *
Filipino Domestic Workers' Union (FDWU)
Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) *
Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union
Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities
Hong Kong Women Workers' Association
Indonesian migrant worker Union (IMWU)
Unlad Kabayan

India
Alliance of Peoples Movement
Center for Education and Communication
Domestic workers rights union, Karnataka
Hind Mahila Sabha
Karnataka Domestic Workers' Union
National Campaign for Domestic Workers-India
National Domestic Workers Movement
Nirmala Niketan
Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam, (Women Workers' Union, Chennai)
Rural Women's Liberation Movement
Rural workers Movement
Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
Tamil Nadu Women's Forum
Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement
Women Workers Trade Union

Indonesia
ACILS
ASPEK Indonesia
Association of Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (ATKI)
Federation of Indonesian Women Legal Aid
FKUI SBSI
The Foundation for Legal Aid (YPBHI) - Lampung
FSPMI
FSPSI Reformasi
FSPTSK
Imparsial-Indonesia
Indonesian Women in Politics Caucus Makassar
Jakarta Legal Aid Institute
Jala PRT (National Network for Advocacy for domestic workers)
Kelompok Perempuan untuk Keadilan *Buruh (KPKB)*
KSBSI
LBT APIK Jakarta
Migrant Care Indonesia
Migrant Care Jakarta
National Commission on Violence Against Women
Sahabat Sekerja (SAHAJA)
SBMI
Social Analysis and Research Institute (SARI)
Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity for Human Rights)
SBSI
Tunas Mulia Domestic Workers Union, Yogjakarta
The United Development Party/PPP
UNIMIG Indonesia
YASANTI
Yuniasri (Gugus Kerja Pekerja Migran-Komaas Perempuan)

Japan
Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC)

Jordan
Women Access To Entrepreneurship Development and Training (WAEDAT)*

Korea
Korean House Managers Cooperative
Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU)

Malaysia
Friends of Women
Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)
The National Human Rights Society of Malaysia (HAKAM)
UNI Global Union - Malaysian Liaison Council (UNI-MLC) Migrant Workers Help Desk
Writer Alliance for Media Independence

Mongolia
Centre for Human Rights and Development

Nepal
Alliance for Social Dialogue
Children Women in Social Service and Human Rights(CWISH)
Gefont
Nepali Independent Domestic Workers Union
Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS)
POURAKHI
Rural Women's Network Nepal (RUWON Nepal)
Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC Nepal)

Pakistan
Labour Education Foundation
Potonar Organization for Development Advocacy
Philippines
Alliance for Progressive Labor (APL) *
Center for Migrant Advocacy Philippines
Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN)
Mary Star of the Sea Seafarers Family Association (MaSSSFA)
Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute (WAGI)
Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Mangagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas (SUMAPI)
Solidaritas Migran Scalabrini Philippines INC.
Southeast Asia Women Watch (SEAWWatch)

Singapore
HOME Singapore
Singaporeans For Democracy
Transient Workers Count

Sri Lanka
Institute of Social Development
National Workers Congress
Red Flag Women's Movement

Taiwan
Hsinchu Catholic Diocese Migrants and Immigrants Service Center (HMISC)
Raging Citizens Act Now (RCAN)

Africa

Carboverdiana
Confederação Caboverdiana dos Sindicatos Livres - CCSL

Ghana
Ghana Trade Union Congress
Public Services Workers Union OF TUC, Ghana

Nigeria
BAOBAB for Women Human Rights
Food, Beverage & Tobacco Senior Staff Association (FOBTOB)
IUF Nigeria Council

South Africa
Democratic Alliance
South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU)

Togo
Syndicat des Travailleurs des Enterprises de Boissons

**Americas**

**Regional organizations - Latin America**
Avina Foundation
CONLACTRAHO
Latin American Association of Waste Pickers

**Mexico**
CACEH

**USA**
Chinese Progressive Association (San Francisco) (CPA)
CIVISOL / RRA
**Global Workers Justice Alliance**
National Domestic Worker Alliance

**USA & Canada**
UNITEHERE

**Europe**

**Regional organizations**
Babaylan - Europe
RESPECT Network in Europe

**Belgium**
ACV – CSC Food and Services

**Denmark**
United Federation of Danish Workers (Fagligt Fælles Forbund/ 3F)

**England**
Justice for Domestic Workers (J4DW)
Trades Union Congress

Finland
Finnish Philippine Society
Service Union United PAM
Workers' Education Association of Finland

France
CFDT
Syndicat CFDT des Salariés Particulier Employeur d'Ile de France

Georgia
IDP Women Association

Greece
KASAPI

Ireland
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

Republic of Moldova
Promo-LEX

The Netherlands
Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers
FNV Bondgenoten
I-MEI Committee-Nederland
India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN)
Philippine Solidarity Group Netherlands
RESPECT-NL
United Migrant Domestic Workers in the Netherlands (UMDWs-NL)

Turkey
Human Rights Research Association

International unions & organizations
AIC (Association Internationale des Charités - International Association of Charities)
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Global Labour Institute
Human Rights Watch
International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) *
International Republican Institute
The International Labor Rights Forum
The Missionary Society of St. Columban (MSSC)
ITUC-AP (International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific )
IUF
International Working Group for Domestic Workers (IWG-DW) *
Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
Migrants Rights International (MRI)
United Religious Initiative (URI)
OXFAM
WIEGO, Women in Informal Economy: Globalizing and Organizing
Worldwide Foundation

Individual
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