



## **IDWF e-Newsletter #7 - APRIL 2015**

# **MAY DAY 2015**

*"I hope 2015 brings happiness for us and that as leaders we build power to fight for domestic workers' rights."*

- Sonu Danuwar, Home Workers Union, Nepal

May 1st is a day to honor the long struggle for worker rights and lift up the demands of workers today. International Workers day commemorates the fight for the 8-hour work day from 1886 in the USA, which included strikes across the country. Some of those actions turned violent, with confrontations between police and protestors, resulting in deaths. The actions and subsequent legal battles changed labor history forever.



Myrtle Witbooi, IDWF President from the South Africa - SADSAWU explains,

*"In many places domestic workers have been denied inclusion in May Day activities. Over the years, as we've fought for people to understand that domestic workers are workers, we see that now more and more domestic workers are taking part in May Day actions and marches. May Day should be a day to lift up our voices and to organize domestic workers so we can become a much stronger voice for domestic workers in the world."*

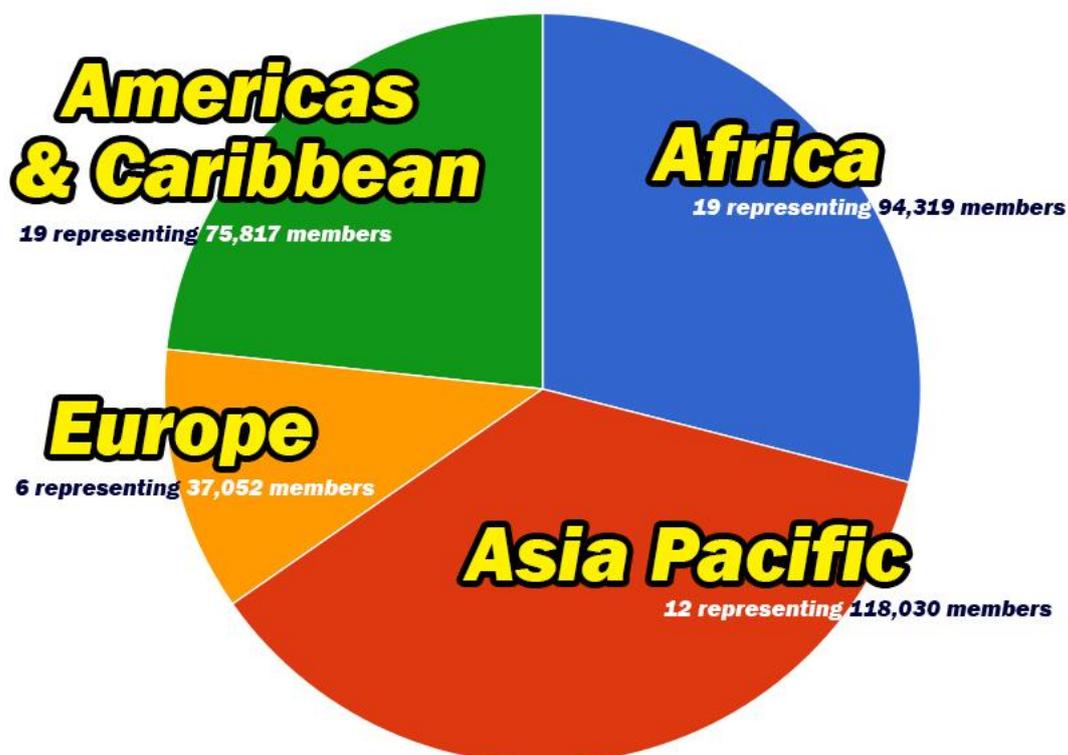
This newsletter shares some of our accomplishments through 2014 and where we are headed in 2015, starting with demanding dignity for domestic workers and all workers on May Day! Thank you all for your organizing, leadership, solidarity, and care for one another.

**Together, we are changing the world!  
Que viva la Federacion! Long live IDWF!**

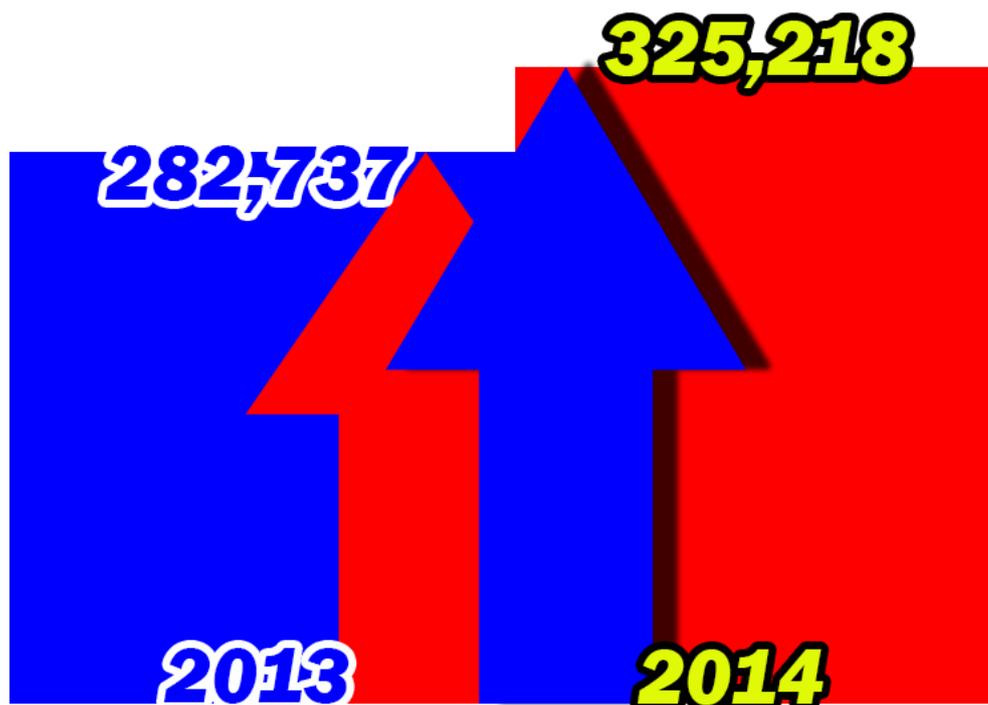
## ***We're Building Our Federation!***

### **IDWF grew!**

We increased the number of IDWF affiliated domestic workers trade unions and groups from 47 to 56, from 45 countries!



Compared to 2013, the total membership increased from 282,737 to 325,218, an increase of 15%!  
Great organizing!



IDWF affiliated with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the Women in the Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).



In 2015, IDWF will develop tools to improve our capacity to regularly and systematically collect data from our affiliates. In doing so, we will have information to support organizational building of our affiliates and campaigns and advocacy on domestic workers' rights.

Moving forward, IDWF will work closely with affiliates to organize more domestic workers to increase our strength. In 2015, new domestic workers unions will be inaugurated in the Philippines, Ghana and Mexico this year. And increased organizing of migrant domestic workers is a long-term priority.

# We're Winning Domestic Workers Rights!

*"Leaders of Africa: Implement what you voted for at ILC in June 2011. We are workers and voters too in the region."*

- Evelyn Kunanka, Zimbabwe Domestic and Allied Workers Union



C189 - So far 17 [countries have ratified the C189](#). Argentina, Columbia, Ireland and Switzerland ratified in 2014 and Finland in 2015.

## Domestic workers laws were adopted in Namibia, Chile and the state of Massachusetts in the USA.

**CHILE:** On September 26, 2014 an IDWF delegation led by Vice President, Ernestina Ochoa, joined Chile IDWF affiliate SINTRACAP to witness the adoption of the domestic workers law. The Minister highlighted the role of organizations and unions of domestic workers (SINTRACAP, SINDUTCAP, ANECAP and the Foundation of Older Workers Margarita Pozo) in the creation and writing of the Bill. The law provides legal protection to domestic workers in many areas including 48-hours weekly rest for live-in domestic workers.

**USA:** On July 2, 2014 the [Massachusetts Domestic Workers Bill of Rights](#) was signed and has gone into full effect in 2015. This is the fourth state in the USA (following New York, California, and Hawaii) where the [National Domestic Workers Alliance](#), with leadership from its local affiliates, has won a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. It is the most forward-looking bill of rights in the USA to date, covering provisions such as: a written contract, just cause for termination and maternity leave for workers.

**AFRICA:** Minimum wages were increased significantly in some African countries:

- South Africa - USD 220 for 5 day work week
- Tanzania - USD 50 for live-outs workers and 25 for live-in per month
- Guinea - USD 62 per month

In 2015, there are active campaigns to improve domestic worker rights in Indonesia, Cambodia, India, Connecticut and Illinois (USA), Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Peru, and many more! We will be in touch to ask for your support!

# Domestic Workers speak up and demand to be heard!

## Governments are Listening!

An Increasing number of governments engage IDWF affiliates to improve domestic workers rights.

### Tanzania

The IDWF and its affiliate, CHODAWU, are working closely with government and other social partners towards the ratification of C189, including the drafting and launching of the *Tripartite Plus Plan of Action* and organizing the final stakeholders meeting in April this year. At the meeting, the Minister of Labour and Employment laid down concrete steps towards the ratification.



### India

On International Migrants Day, December 18, the [Self Employed Women Association](#) in India organized 3 Public Hearings on migrant domestic workers issues in Bihar, Orissa and Kerala. All were attended by government officials from labour ministries, immigration and the police. Migrant domestic workers gave testimonies about the abusive situation they face when working in GCC countries.



### Mexico

In December a pact for the rights of domestic workers' organizations – CACEH and those in Chiapas and Colima was signed. It was backed by National Council to Prevent Discrimination, the Secretary of Labor and Employment Promotion and Simone de Beauvoir Institute, to continue in 2015 to achieve:

- Organizing domestic workers,
- Continue to promote the ratification of C189, and
- The training of domestic workers in matters of human and labor rights

## International Labour Conference (ILC)

In 2014, IDWF participated in 2 important ILO discussion:

1) Committee to update the Forced Labour Convention C29 - This Convention had not been updated since its creation in 1930. [A protocol was adopted to address the current situation of migrant workers, including migrant domestic workers.](#)

2) Committee on Transitioning from the Informal to Formal Economy – IDWF participated together with a delegation of impacted informal workers from around the world. This discussion, which will result in a Recommendation, will continue and complete in 2015.

## The First ever web-based network of domestic workers!

With more than 4,000 registered users, the IDWF Online Communication Network ([www.IDWFed.org](http://www.IDWFed.org)) facilitates domestic workers around the globe to connect with one another online. Domestic workers around the world participated in the creation of the Communications Network through ILO/FLOW/OPC-sponsored regional workshops in Chile, Burkina Faso, and Hong Kong.



IDWF will continue to assist domestic workers to acquire various social media skills and be able to access the IDWF Communication Network to connect, share, access information and take actions.

**[Register Now!](#)**

Follow these [easy steps and join us](#) TODAY!

# ***We Stand Together***

**Through IDWF, we stand in solidarity with one another.**

## **Migrant Domestic Workers Rights in Qatar**

The IDWF Executive Committee held a protest in front of the United Nations building in Geneva in June 2014 to demand legal protection for all domestic workers in Qatar. Subsequently, together with the IUF, IDWF demanded the President of France call on the Emir to take immediate steps towards reaching our demands. We will continue to press for our demands to be answered. The upcoming one will be to join the ITUC and Human Rights Watch in a briefing session at the European Union office in May 26 this year.



## **Over 90,000 people signed petitions to call for "No Diplomatic Immunity for Domestic Worker Abuse"**

In early January 2014, IDWF, the IUF, National Domestic Workers Alliance, and domestic workers unions and organizations in India launched a series of actions to demand that Indian diplomat in the USA, Devyani Khobragade, not be granted diplomatic immunity for her abuse of the Indian domestic worker who worked for her. The US Attorney's office indicted Khobragade and she was forced to leave the United States. In India, Khobragade was penalized and was not sent to another diplomatic posting.

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