

**Akiko Gono**

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**To Elizabeth Tang,  
General Secretary,  
IDWF**

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**Letter to be shared with the family of Myrtle  
Witbooi and members of the IDWF**

**DGS/OT**

**20 January 2023**

**Myrtle Witbooi**

Dear family of Myrtle Witbooi, dear Elizabeth and members of the IDWF,

We are deeply saddened at the passing of Myrtle Witbooi, our dear sister, friend and comrade. On behalf of the ITUC and its 200 million members around the world, I pass on my deep and sincere condolences, sympathy and solidarity.

Myrtle's decades of courageous, compassionate leadership moved mountains. Her work changed and will keep on changing the lives of millions of women workers and domestic workers. From her home in Capetown, in a country where apartheid forced many into slavery, and later, across the world, her call to domestic workers to unite and organise led to the strong worldwide movement of domestic workers, the IDWF. Myrtle's leadership of the IDWF paved the way for it to fight collectively for social justice, respect, rights and dignity for all domestic workers.

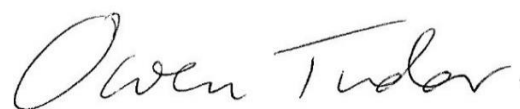
Myrtle deeply inspired us all with her determination to fight "until all domestic workers are free." She led the way to the historic adoption of ILO Convention 189. For the first time in history, domestic work was officially recognised globally as work. That was when Myrtle spoke the iconic words: "today we've got our dignity and respect. Slaves no more, but workers just like all of us." She continued to keep the ILO constituency alert by calling for the ratification of C189 to ensure that it does not remain just 'a piece of paper'.

Since then, the ITUC continued to walk with Myrtle and the IDWF, supporting domestic workers around the world in making C189 a reality through ratification, law reforms and more, collaborating together on the C190 ratification campaign, advocacy around the care economy and more.

Myrtle's legacy, leadership and vision will continue to deeply inspire us all, always and in all that we do. Myrtle leaves a lasting imprint on our trade union movement. We will miss her dearly.

Wishing the family and the IDWF movement strength to carry Myrtle's loss,

Yours sincerely,



Owen Tudor  
Deputy General Secretary