



## A New Social Contract rooted in a gender-transformative agenda:

### KEY TRADE UNION DEMANDS FOR BEIJING+30

#### INTRODUCTION

This 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action comes amid multiple crises. From the devastating impacts of neoliberal policies and austerity to the existential threats posed by climate change and technological disruption, the challenges working women face are both varied and interconnected. Their impact on gender equality is dramatic, leading to a global backlash against human and labour rights, as well as an increase in racism, xenophobia, violence, discrimination and exploitation.

This is a crucial moment, one that requires urgent and decisive action. The global trade union movement urges United Nations Member States to seize the opportunity presented by the 69th session of the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women (CSW69/Beijing+30) to drastically change course. **The Beijing+30 Declaration must support the workers' call for a New Social Contract rooted in a gender-transformative agenda, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and based on an intersectional approach.** This is the only way to dismantle persistent structural barriers faced by women at the intersections of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and migrant, indigenous and disability status, and to address the needs of those who have already been left behind.

Providing **financing for comprehensive gender-transformative policies, infrastructure, and public services** is a must and it is achievable. Reforming the international financial architecture is necessary to align investments with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, support United Nations-led frameworks on taxation and debt, promote progressive taxation, and reform International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to prioritise human rights over private profit.

**Economic justice for women** cannot be achieved without decent work, and decent work is impossible without fundamental principles and rights at work – starting from freedom of association and the right to organise and bargain collectively – being upheld. Joining unions and exercising collective bargaining rights are the most effective means to advance gender equality in the world of work. Moreover, these rights are key for promoting a feminist approach to leadership at the workplace and in the wider society.

The 69th session of the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women must recognise the **unique role of the ILO**, given its historic leadership and expertise in advancing gender equality in the world of work, as well as its unique tripartite structure, which enables the adoption of labour standards that can tangibly improve the lives of women workers.

## **KEY DEMANDS**

The global trade union movement calls for the Beijing+30 Declaration to deliver on:

### **1) GENDER EQUALITY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY AND PEACE**

Equality and inclusion are at the heart of a world with sustainable peace, democracy and social justice. However, democracy is under attack worldwide, as authoritarian and totalitarian regimes rise. The Beijing+30 Declaration must include concrete commitments to build a **world free of all forms of discrimination including intersecting forms of discrimination, extremism, violence and intolerance**. Moreover, United Nations Member States must commit to **protecting democracy everywhere**, ensuring that the conditions for the full exercise of all human rights – universal, indivisible and inalienable – are enjoyed by all, including women in all their diversity.

Key areas to ensure **democracy for women at work and in society** include: guaranteeing their fundamental right to **freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to strike**; upholding the right to freedom of expression; realising equal pay for work of equal value; ending discrimination and gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace; enhancing women's access to work and career progression by redistributing and harmonising care responsibilities; increasing women's access to education, skills development, training and life-long learning; promoting women's equitable participation and representation in leadership roles and in decision-making processes, including in social dialogue and collective bargaining; asserting women's fundamental rights to self-determination, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The interconnections between gender equality and **sustainable peace** must also be reflected in the Beijing+30 Declaration. In contexts of armed conflict, women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to promote peace and security, including in peace negotiations and frontline essential public services, must be supported through adequate financing. At the same time, women's protection from violence in conflict zones must be ensured, while providing access to justice and reparations as specified in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). Economic opportunities for women in post-conflict reconstruction are equally essential, as is promoting decent work as a pathway to sustainable peace and stability. This includes supporting women displaced due to conflict to voluntarily return to their territories of origin.

### **2) WOMEN'S LABOUR RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS**

Trade unions call on the Beijing+30 Declaration to include a bold commitment to upholding the ILO's **fundamental principles and rights at work** for all women, as well as the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards. This commitment should encompass freedom of association and collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced labour, the effective abolition of child labour, the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining are essential to achieving the Decent Work Agenda for women, as recognised by the ILO. These enabling rights must be respected, promoted and realised at all levels of supply chains and for all workers, including those in formal or informal employment, with migrant status, in rural and urban areas, and in both the public and private sectors.

Establishing universal and gender-transformative **social protection systems**, with adequate and sustainable funding, is essential for women's full enjoyment of human rights. Specific policies to close the gender gap in social protection must include the promotion of decent work for all women; recognition of adequate credited care periods in contributory social protection systems to maintain contribution levels; paid maternity, paternity and parental leave, as well as other care-related leave that promotes the equal sharing of family and care responsibilities. Additionally, policies should support the development of national social protection floors for all, including women in precarious and informal work, such as

domestic and rural workers. There must also be policies to facilitate the worker-led transition to the formal economy, close the gender pay gap, and promote freedom of association and participation in collective bargaining for women workers.

Quality and affordable **public services**, including universal access to quality public health, care, education and lifelong learning, water, transport, energy and communication infrastructures, function as equalisers in society and are instrumental to the enjoyment of women's human rights. Therefore, these services must be gender-transformative, accessible to women in all their diversity and protected from privatisation. Sustainable financing of public services should be based on progressive national tax systems, tax reforms measures (including a global minimum corporate tax rate, financial transaction taxes, wealth taxes and measures to combat illicit financial flows and tax avoidance by corporations and the wealthy), and debt relief. Trade unions lead the global fight against privatisation of public services, which has consistently resulted in reduced access to essential services, precarious work, heightened inequality, low wages and poor working conditions.

### 3) DECENT WORK FOR WOMEN

Achieving gender equality in the economy heavily depends on equal access to decent work opportunities for women. Governments must develop national **employment policies** and plans and invest in the creation of 575 million new decent jobs by 2030, including in the care sector, with a gender-transformative Just Transition towards environmentally sustainable economies for all, as well as the worker-led **formalisation** of one billion workers in the informal economy, the majority of whom are women.

**National comprehensive care systems** are crucial to advancing women's participation in the labour market and building a fairer, more inclusive society. Trade unions call for the implementation of comprehensive and adequately financed care systems, based on the ILO's "5R" framework: the recognising, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work; rewarding paid care work, by promoting more and decent work for all care workers regardless of their intersectionality or migration status; and, ensuring representation of care workers through collective bargaining and social dialogue. Trade unions also advocate for the recognition of care as a human right and a public good, affirming the State's primary responsibility to directly provide and fund universal public care services. Given its unique tripartite nature, expertise in the world of work and normative power, the ILO must take a leadership role in promoting decent work in the care economy, as recognised by the 2024 ILO International Labour Conference.

The **digital transition** should also be regulated through social dialogue to promote gender equality and mitigate the disproportionate negative impacts of automation and work reorganisation on women. Artificial intelligence (AI) poses multiple challenges for working women, including online gender-based violence and harassment such as cyberbullying and hate speech, as it reproduces and perpetuates gender stereotypes and intersectional discrimination. These issues further entrench the occupational segregation of women through the algorithms used by platforms. Trade unions support the adoption of a new set of ILO standards, in the form of a Convention and Recommendation, on platform work, as well as the establishment of policies and regulations on artificial intelligence in line with the 2030 Agenda and ILO standards

### 4) EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The lack of **equal pay for work of equal value** is one of the main factors hampering equitable and inclusive labour markets and contributing to the feminisation of poverty, as highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal 8 (employment and decent work). Trade unions call for systemic and structural approaches to close the gender pay gap. These include establishing minimum living wages through statutory processes or collective bargaining, implementing pay equity and anti-discrimination legislation, introducing pay transparency laws, and adopting quotas or targeted initiatives to train, recruit and retain women in underrepresented sectors, such as STEM, as well as revaluing feminized occupations and

sectors. Promoting collective bargaining, social dialogue and the active participation of women leaders in union structures is crucial, along with the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions 100 and 111. Specific policies and campaigns must address gender-based discrimination and stereotypes at work and in society that contribute to gender bias and occupational segregation.

#### **5) A WORLD OF WORK FREE FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT (ILO Convention 190)**

Eliminating violence and discrimination against women, including gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace, is essential to advancing gender equality. Trade unions call for the ratification and effective implementation of **ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206**, through gender-transformative and intersectional reforms in national law, policies and collective agreements, and workplace policies that address the root causes of gender-based violence and harassment.

**Workplace policies** that protect women from violence and harassment, including domestic violence and femicide, must be designed and implemented with trade unions. These policies should provide support for survivors by ensuring job and earnings security, offering work arrangements that prevent exposure and holding perpetrators accountable.

Trade unions call for increased investment in prevention and greater funding for anti-violence public services. This should include gender transformative **education systems, training and awareness raising programmes, accessible grievance mechanisms** through social dialogue, programmes for survivors' economic recovery and legal support, and adequate labour inspection.