



INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

EIGHTEENTH WORLD CONGRESS

Miyazaki, 5 – 10 December 2004

DRAFT RESOLUTION

FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION AND ACHIEVING EQUALITY

1. Congress deplores that all over the world, millions of people are denied jobs, confined to certain occupations, denied advancement at work, offered lower pay, or subject to harassment and intimidation, simply because of their sex, religion, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, social origin, age or disability. Discrimination is a violation of fundamental human rights, depriving people of their voice, and eroding their self-esteem. It prevents them from fulfilling their potential and contributing to and enjoying economic, social, cultural and political development. It weakens democracy, social justice and social cohesion. Systemic discrimination is closely linked with poverty and social exclusion. Its elimination in the world of work and in society in general is indispensable to trade union strategies for poverty reduction, sustainable development and peace building. Congress therefore commits the ICFTU to combat discrimination in all its forms as a key part of its work for equity, rights and justice.

2. Diversity in the workplace provides an opportunity for trade unions and is a significant challenge. Congress affirms that all workers have equal rights to dignity and justice in the workplace. Trade unions must be deeply committed to defend and promote the rights of all, whilst recognising that diverse groups of workers may have special needs and concerns, and giving them room to jointly pursue their goals. Congress recognises the multiple discrimination against women and underlines the crucial importance of integrating a gender perspective in all policies, programmes and activities. Congress condemns sexism, racism, xenophobia, intolerance, bigotry and prejudice, which have no place in our societies or our trade union movement. Many who suffer

from discrimination are engaged in informal or unprotected work, making implementation and follow-up of the recommendations of the 2002 ILO Conference General Discussion on the informal economy extremely important for such workers.

3. Congress is deeply concerned at the rise in racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and religious and ethnic conflict, all of which have a profound impact on the lives of workers and their families. World events have made the fight against racism even more difficult. The growing presence of extreme right-wing parties in many countries, and the behaviour of some governments in introducing policies and legislation contrary to the outcome of the UN World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001), are cause for serious concern. Anti-terrorist legislation and increasingly tough asylum and migration policies run the risk of encouraging discrimination, and make it more important than ever for trade unions to intensify their activities in fighting racial discrimination everywhere. The ICFTU and its affiliates must continue to raise public awareness of the vital contribution that migrants, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities bring to society and how they enrich our cultures and strengthen our economy.

4. Congress underlines that the unfair and often exploitative conditions of work and life faced by many of the world's 115 million migrants and their families present the international trade union movement with a major responsibility and challenge. The hostile social and political environment confronting many migrant workers, and the need for appropriate regulation of migration make it imperative for trade unions to play a more active and visible role in promoting solidarity, and in protecting the rights of migrant workers regardless of their legal status in the host country. Particular attention is needed to the vulnerable situation of women migrants.

5. The founding principle of trade union policy in this area must remain that of equal treatment for migrant workers, both in migrants' own interest and to ensure that employers cannot abuse migrants' often vulnerable situation so as to undercut the situation of national workers. Equal treatment must apply, not only in respect of terms and conditions of employment, but also to all areas of human rights, social security, housing and education. Migrant workers have a right to family life and so to be joined by relatives.

6. Congress urges the ICFTU and affiliates to campaign vigorously for the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions 97 (Migration for Employment) and 143 (Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers), and for the implementation of the recommendations of the 2004 ILO Conference General Discussion "Towards a fair deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy". It welcomes the entry into force in July 2003 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the role unions played in campaigning for its ratification, and urges the ICFTU and affiliates to make all possible use of the Convention to achieve improvements in migrant workers' rights.

7. Congress applauds trade unions all over the world which are engaged in activities against discrimination, from political action and anti-racist campaigns to organising migrants, ethnic minorities and indigenous workers, providing them special training, integrating their issues in collective agreements, putting in place recruitment and promotion strategies, and extending specific assistance and services to them and their families. At the same time, Congress draws attention to racism, xenophobia and intolerance within trade unions and the need to deal with them openly and without delay whenever they occur, and calls on trade unions to reach out more widely to all groups in the workplace. Congress welcomes the publication of the Trade Union Primer on "Fighting against Racism and Xenophobia" and urges unions at all levels to make full use of it in their information and education activities.

8. Congress notes with satisfaction that in many parts of the world, unions are paying increased attention to the issue of their older and retired members and the role of older people in society in general. The number of persons aged 60 years or older is projected to grow to almost 2 billion by 2050, at which point the population of older persons will be larger than the population of children for the first time in human history. Congress is particularly concerned about the situation of women, who account for the bulk of over 60 year-olds in almost every country and have less economic security in old age due to their disadvantaged position in the labour market when they were employed. It welcomes the Trade Union Platform for Action "For a Society for All Ages".

9. Gay and lesbian workers suffer from discrimination, and often harassment, in most countries. This discrimination is sometimes mandated by legislation, and results in extreme penalties. Unions must campaign for legal change. Congress welcomes the

work of those national centres and Global Union Federations fighting for equal rights for gays and lesbians at work and raising awareness of their issues within the trade union movement. It reaffirms the 17th World Congress mandate for the ICFTU to commit effort and resources to overcome discrimination at work on the grounds of sexual orientation. Congress calls on trade unions to fight prejudice, bigotry and intolerance in the workplace, in society and in the trade unions.

10. Congress is deeply concerned that everywhere in the world people with disabilities, estimated to number 500-600 million, are still struggling to be accepted as useful members of society. Most live in developing countries, primarily in rural areas, where it is particularly difficult to address disability - related issues. Many are excluded entirely from labour markets and when they do have jobs, these are usually unrewarding, badly paid or insecure.

11. Congress affirms the crucial importance of integrating people with disabilities properly into the world of work, and so calls on the ICFTU and all affiliates to give priority to: better school education and vocational training for persons with disabilities; emphasising the importance of challenging discriminatory and prejudicial social attitudes towards disabled people by the rest of society; fighting against all types of discrimination, focusing on equal pay and equal opportunities, especially as regards the possibilities offered by the development of the information society; adaptation of the workplace and of the living environment; and co-operation with governmental agencies and employers working for the integration of people with disabilities into society and the workplace.

ICFTU Action Programme

12. Congress instructs the ICFTU and regional organisations, working together with Global Unions partners and affiliates, to:

- a) address the issues and concerns of people and groups that are victims of discrimination and integrate them fully into trade unions, based on the primary role that they themselves must play in developing, implementing and monitoring policies, programmes and activities;
- b) lead actions to implement the Plan of Action "Trade Unions say NO to Racism and Xenophobia" adopted following the UN World Conference

against Racism, Xenophobia, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance in 2001;

- c) promote actions by unions to engage in recruitment campaigns and otherwise to assist migrant workers including through information on their rights, linguistic education, legal assistance, and special assistance to address problems of women migrant workers;
- d) give effective follow-up to the conclusions and recommendations of the 2004 ILO Conference General Discussion "Towards a fair deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy", working closely with the ILO and social partners, as well as with human rights and migrants' organisations;
- e) implement the Trade Union Platform for Action "For a Society for All Ages" to defend the welfare and well-being of older and retired workers;
- f) support union initiatives to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity ; and
- g) achieve the full integration of people with disabilities into society and the workplace including through education, vocational training and rehabilitation, fighting all types of discrimination, adaptation of the workplace and of the living environment, and co-operation with governmental agencies and employers.

10 November 2004