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## INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS' NETWORK

### Issue Highlights:



#### Ratify C189 – Actions by Domestic Workers Worldwide

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IDWN: Recipient of Award from AFL-CIO

### Ratify C189 – Actions by Domestic Workers Worldwide

#### 1. South Africa

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Leaders of SADSAWU met with the Minister of Labour, Ms Mildred Oliphant, on the 5th of April to discuss the slow progress on ratification of C189. The Minister assured SADSAWU leaders that South Africa would be the next country to ratify the Convention. They also discussed issues such as

maternity benefits and provident fund for domestic workers. It was agreed that SADSAWU and the Department of Labour, will together devise a work plan to educate domestic workers on the content and implementation of labour laws covering domestic workers.

The domestic workers thanked the Minister and felt that the meeting was a success. As a next step, SADSAWU will ask for a meeting with the South African President to keep the pressure on for ratification of C189.

Prior to the meeting with the Minister, SADSAWU mobilized their members to demand ratification. They gathered outside the gates of Parliament at 11pm on March 7th for an all-night vigil to voice their demand.



## 2. Peru



Marcha de trabajadoras del hogar

03.04.2013 - 01:23 PM  
LIMA.- Decenas de trabajadoras del hogar se movilizaron hacia el Congreso para ratificar sus derechos laborales. Allí fueron atendidas y buscarán firmas entre parlamentarios para respaldar sus pedidos ante el Ministerio de la Mujer. Jorge Malmberg con el informe.

The major domestic workers organizations in Peru, SINTRAHOL, SINTRAHOGARP and IPROFOTH, have jointly launched a chain of actions to press the President of the Republic to ratify C189 this year. A group of domestic workers kicked off the action on March 24th when they held a noisy march on the streets of Lima, followed by a rally outside the Congress building on April 3. This resulted in a group of five representatives being invited to speak at a Congress session. The leaders of the organizations met on

April 6 to plan further actions to take the struggle forward. [To View the TV Report of the rally >>](#)

## 3. Jamaica

IDWN leaders Myrtle Witbooi and Ida Blanc visited Jamaica on the occasion of the launch of the Jamaica Household Workers Association as a trade union, on March 14th and 15th. Together with the President of the Association, Shirley Pryce, they met the Prime Minister of the country and Minister of Labour to discuss ratification of C189. The Prime Minister was keen on the ratification.



The Minister of Labour said that Government is presently reviewing labour legislation against the articles of the Convention and aims to ratify it before June. When the Minister attends the International Labour Conference in Geneva in June he can then personally deposit the document.

[To Learn More >>](#)

#### 4. Tanzania

On March 26th and 27th, the IDWN Regional Coordinator, Vicky Kanyoka, convinced a meeting of domestic workers' experts to draft a submission to the Cabinet on ratification of C189. The 8-person meeting consisted of a domestic worker plus experts from the Government, the CHODAWU (trade union representing domestic workers), IDWN and ILO. The submission provided an analysis of the existing laws and the C189. It proposed an implementation programme for after ratification has taken place, with cost estimates.

#### 5. Netherlands

Representatives of FNV-Bondgenoten, an affiliate of IDWN, joined an expert group meeting in April to prepare advice for the responsible government Ministry on the ratification of C189. Other participants in the expert group meeting were representatives from the FNV, FNV ABVA (care workers union), OSB (cleaners' employers association) and jurists on immigration and labour law.

#### 6. Benin

On March 4th, Brother Raimi, General Secretary of SYNEHM, met with the General Director of Labour (GDL). This followed an earlier meeting with the President of the Parliament held in February. SYNEHM was accompanied by the Secretary for Legal Issues, Labour Standards and Employment Promotion, Sanni Bonaventure, from the national centre, CSA-Benin, to which SYNEHM is affiliated. The GDL reported that copies of C189 had already been circulated amongst members of Parliament and that a working programme towards ratification of C189 could start in 2013 in the Parliament. He then invited SYNEHM to take part in a government study of the C189. In addition, CSA-Benin has committed to ensuring that the National Labour Council will take a decision on ratification.

### IDWN: Recipient of Award from AFL-CIO

## 2013 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award

"We thank you for showing us that we are important. Together we can and we will", said Myrtle Witbooi, Chair of the International Domestic Workers Network. In February, the AFL-CIO gave the IDWN the 2013 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award. [To Read the AFL-CIO statement >>](#)

On March 29th, Barbara Shailor, Special Representative for International Labor Affairs from the US State Department– reiterated the Government's commitment to extend domestic workers' rights as much as possible, and underscored the role ITUC and the IDWN played in the adoption of C189 at the ILO. "I want to take this opportunity to recognize the women who perform some of the most

marginalized and at the same time, most personal, work in our global economy - domestic workers. Their contribution has long gone undervalued and unrecognized; yet, domestic workers - approximately 80 percent of whom are women, and many of whom are migrants - form a significant component of the modern service economy." [To Read more >>](#)

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