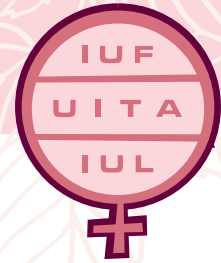




More women, more power! Breaking down barriers.



IUF ACTION PROGRAM FOR EQUALITY

Since 1980, IUF Congresses have unanimously adopted resolutions reaffirming the principles of equal opportunities for men and women:

- Equal right and access to decent employment, training and professional advancement;
- Equal pay for work of equal value;
- The right to combine work and family responsibilities;
- Fair representation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels of trade unions (local, national, regional, international) according to the rules of the IUF;
- The right to be Safe at work, Safe at home.

And calling for the active promotion of equality at the workplace, in the trade union movement and in society.

However, the gender gap has persisted and in some cases deepened over the last 20 years. Women are overrepresented in informal employment and have higher rates of unemployment or under-employment than men.

They continue to spend many more hours carrying out unpaid work due to the unequal division of family responsibilities. The lack of access to affordable child care considerably reduces the incomes of women. There is increasing gender segregation by sector and occupational group.

Equal pay for work of equal value is still far from being achieved. On the contrary, the gender pay gap – the difference between the full-time earnings of women and men – has increased from 20% to 30% on average. Women receive lower pensions than men and a high proportion of women workers lack social protection.



Health and safety conditions for women and men are deteriorating due to the general increase in the use of hazardous chemical substances, including agro-toxins, and high line speeds in the food industry. However, women, by the nature of the work they perform, are more exposed to harmful working conditions and therefore more at risk.

In all sectors of the IUF, including the hotel and restaurant sectors, long hours and stress and repetitive strain injuries seriously affect women.





Millions of women in the IUF sectors are forced to work outside their home country. Women migrant workers are in a more vulnerable situation than their male colleagues since they are discriminated against not only as migrants but also as women. There is evidence that forced labour, child labour and trafficking of women have dramatically increased.

Rural women workers, who contribute enormously to building union strength and developing the visibility of rural women, are still often denied the right to food security education, housing, health systems, credit and social security.

The persistent economic crisis has worsened the situation of women and increased their responsibilities, particularly in the areas of care for the elderly, victims of HIV/Aids, and childcare, resulting in even greater stress on their work/life balance.

These realities fall short of the expectations of women workers who have been struggling for recognition of the enormous contribution they make through their labour as workers, as trade unionists, within the family and in society.

There can be no further argument to continue with the same patient attitude that has marked IUF work towards equality over the past decades. These are urgent matters and must be tackled accordingly by the IUF and its affiliates.

Campaigns to recruit, organize and protect migrant women workers in all sectors should be intensified and agreements on equal treatment and conditions for all should be negotiated and signed with employers. The level of trade union organisation among women is generally lower than among men. This might be related to precarious forms of employment and/or the fact that women do not always see how unions can help to improve their living and working conditions. There is also a fear of reprisals by employers. Unions still have a lot to do to enable men and women to combine family life with trade union work. There are too few women both at the negotiating table and as leaders at all levels in many of the unions.

The precarious employment status of so many women workers has also increased the incidence of bullying, sexual harassment and violence against women, particularly in the agricultural, hotel, restaurant, and food processing sectors and for domestic and home-based workers. Women are forced to give sexual favours as a condition of continued employment. An action plan against bullying and sexual harassment should be negotiated and implemented in all workplaces and displayed on notice boards. There should also be scope for systems to allow domestic workers to lodge complaints concerning bullying and sexual harassment.

Maternity is one of the major reasons for discrimination at work in spite of ILO Conventions, national legislation and collective agreements. Furthermore, lack of access to affordable, quality public child care makes it difficult for women to reconcile work and family life.

The HIV/Aids pandemic has more than any disaster revealed the persisting inequalities between men and women at all levels in society. Women are more vulnerable to the infection than men for biological reasons but also because they lack power over their own bodies and lives.

Menstruation is used as a pretext for discrimination against women. In many countries, menstruating women are excluded in the work place or cannot attend school because of lack of facilities and general ignorance.

AN ACTION PLAN AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED AND IMPLEMENTED IN ALL WORKPLACES AND DISPLAYED ON NOTICE BOARDS.





In light of the above, the IUF 27th Congress calls on affiliates and on the IUF to:

- Closely monitor and **enforce the IUF rules requiring at least 40% representation of women in all decision-making bodies** of the IUF, including the regional committees and other structures;
- Actively **implement special organizing strategies for women, particularly young women, in precarious employment** and in the informal economy, including domestic, homebased and migrant workers.
- **Ensure that women have at least 40% representation in all collective bargaining teams and that :**
 - Adequate training in negotiating tools to curb gender inequalities with regard to wages and other working conditions is provided;
 - Equal access to jobs becomes part of the negotiating agenda and that national law serves to effectively reduce the gender pay gap;
 - Gender-inclusive job evaluation and grading tools are used;
 - Women have safe and decent workplaces;
 - Women's reproductive health and safety at work with special emphasis on the harmful effects of pesticides, RSI, stress, HIV/AIDS;
 - Access to women-only toilets and sanitary facilities are addressed;
 - ILO conventions 100 on Equal Pay, 111 on Non-discrimination, 156 on Workers with family responsibilities, 183 on Maternity Protection and 189 on Decent work for Domestic workers are reflected in collective agreements, plus relevant clauses from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – particularly article 7a (i).



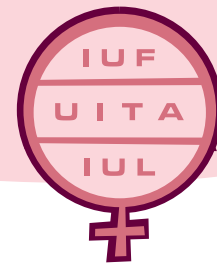
- **Establish an action plan to combat gender-based violence, including:**
 - Promoting and fighting for the proposed Convention on gender-based violence to establish an international legal framework;
 - Undertaking and sharing case studies on gender-based violence at work and at home, including violence against LGBTI workers;
 - Negotiating and implementing agreements to combat gender-based violence with TNCs in the IUF sectors and ensure that a policy on bullying and sexual harassment is agreed upon at every work place and/or part of the collective agreement.
- **Ensure women's right to food security and nutrition through, for example legislation and by increasing wages.**

CAMPAIGNS TO RECRUIT, ORGANIZE AND PROTECT MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS IN ALL SECTORS SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED.





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In order to translate Congress resolutions into practical and measurable objectives, the following steps should be taken:

The IUF and its affiliates should continue to:

- Actively promote the participation of women at all levels of union organisation and structures;
- Train women as leaders, organizers, negotiators and educators;
- Use the IUF gender equality manual in leadership courses for both men and women trade unionists;
- Collect statistics on female / male union membership by occupation / sector;
- Conduct research into the working conditions of women workers in order to respond more effectively to their needs;
- Reinforce the work on and co-ordination of equality platforms with TNCs;
- Campaign for social security, including health care, for all;
- Campaign for public policies for rural women to ensure they have access to education, housing, health systems, credit, etc.;
- Raise awareness about menstruation-based discrimination and ensure that there is access to toilets and sanitary facilities in all workplaces;
- Recognise 20th October as Home-based Workers Day to raise awareness and promote recognition of the contribution of home-based workers and their rights;

- Strengthen existing regional women's TNC and sectoral networks and establish such networks where they do not currently exist;
- Actively participate in relevant international institutions to combat human trafficking;
- Raise awareness of the destructive impact of climate change and support efforts to reverse global warming by highlighting its serious impact on women worker.

Employers / companies should be requested to provide statistics on:

- The number of women / men workers per job category;
- Job classifications of women / men;
- Type of employment contract (permanent, full time, part time, seasonal, temporary, casual) women / men;
- Earnings (hourly wages / yearly earnings including benefits) by gender;
- Training and further training opportunities by gender;
- Resources to facilitate family-work balance.

These statistics should be drawn up annually to measure developments and to take action on any negative results, e.g. through a gender equality plan.

Gender equality plans shall be developed to address inequalities at the workplace. They must state clear goals and activities regarding recruitment, salaries, skills development, parental leave, health and safety aspects including bullying and sexual harassment policies. A regular review procedure should also be included in the equality plans.

The IUF Women's Committee shall monitor the implementation and progress of the action plan, leading up to next Congress.



EQUAL ACCESS TO JOBS SHOULD BE PART OF THE NEGOTIATING AGENDA.