



NO to modern day slavery: domestic workers have rights!

Montreal, March 7th, 2018

Dear allies,

The Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO), the Comité québécois femmes et développement de l'AQOCI (CQFD) and their partners invite you to support our campaign to ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers adopted in 2011 by the majority of the ILO members, including Canada. Despite Canada's support, Canada has not yet ratified the convention domestically. It is time for the Canadian Government to recognize the legal status of domestic workers and to enforce their rights. To accomplish this goal, it is essential to build a vast network of popular support in favour of ratification.

Since the 1950s, domestic workers in Canada - the majority of whom are racialized women and immigrants - have made significant contributions to the development and growth of the Canadian economy. Yet, their contributions remain unrecognized, their labour is invisible and continues to be undervalued in Canadian society. Federal and provincial policies on domestic workers have consistently focused on exploiting the value of their work instead of protecting their human rights. Today there are approximately 25,000 domestic workers in Quebec and 150, 000 in Canada. These women are exposed to exploitation, racial discrimination, sexual and psychological harassment, violence, rape –in short, to modern slavery.

Worldwide the ILO estimates that there are between 67 and 100 million domestic workers. Out of that total 15.5 million are children, and the majority are girls and women. These workers face racism, discrimination, caste systems, slavery, physical and sexual violence, and egregious limitations on their mobility rights.

Currently only 25 states have ratified the Convention. By joining these states, Canada can take a leadership role in advancing the rights of domestic workers and migrant workers worldwide. Furthermore, ratification will spur other nations to ratify Convention 189 and to adopt binding workplace standards protecting the rights and security of domestic workers.

In 2011, Human Rights Watch wrote, “the growing global domestic workers movement—comprising domestic worker organizations, trade unions, and civil society groups including migrants’ rights and children’s rights groups, human rights advocates, and others—was a driving force behind the tripartite negotiation and the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention.”

We are building upon this movement with a campaign between March 5th and June 16th, 2018. On March 5th, a public event will launch the Quebec campaign. Various education, training and knowledge building activities are planned for the months of the campaign to raise awareness regarding the violations of domestic workers’ rights. In addition, direct lobbying and advocacy of Canadian MPs across the country is needed so that members of parliament recognize the importance of this issue to their constituents. Throughout this campaign, we will need voices across the country to amplify our demands, and we believe that your organization is an important part of this campaign.

We would like to mobilize the members of multiple groups from Quebec and from Canada to:

- Demand that the Canadian Government finally ratify Convention No. 189 on decent work for domestic workers.
- Invite provincial and territorial governments to harmonize their local legislation to reflect ILO Recommendation No. 201, which accompanies Convention No. 189.
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Petition E-1568 is now online in French and English on the website of the Canadian Parliament. We encourage you to share it within your networks :

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-1568>

Together, we can say NO to modern day slavery and YES to domestic workers’ rights!

Thank you for your support of this cause; to confirm your will to be a part of this campaign, or for any inquiries you can write to : ciso@ciso.qc.ca

For more information :

<https://www.ciso.qc.ca/non-a-lesclavage-moderne-les-travailleuses-domestiques-ont-des-droits/>

Feel free to inform groups who could also be interested in supporting this campaign within your network.

Groups who already support this campaign

Association pour la défense des droits du personnel domestique (ADDPD)

Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)

Au Bas de l’Échelle

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)

Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants/Immigrant Workers Center (CTI/IWC)

Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO)

Comité d'action contre la traite humaine interne et internationale (CATHII)

Comité québécois femmes et développement (CQFD-AQOCI)

ConcertAction femmes Estrie

Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)

Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)

Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé (FIQ)

Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ)

Femmes de diverses origines/ Women of Diverse Origins (WDO/FDO)

Front de défense des non-syndiqué.e.s (FDNS)

Illusion-Emploi Sherbrooke

Mouvement des chômeurs et chômeuses de l'Estrie (MCCE)

PINAY

Promotion handicap Estrie