



# A GLOBAL CALL to Action for Women Workers' Rights



*2005 presents us with unique opportunities to demand accountability from our governments and to urge them to turn their promises into concrete gains in women's lives*

#### **Promises to keep**

- > In Cairo, Beijing and Copenhagen, governments of the world committed themselves to advance gender equality and women's rights. These commitments were reaffirmed at five-year review meetings and incorporated into the Millennium Declaration adopted by United Nations Members States in 2000. The Millennium Declaration identified gender equality and women's empowerment as a goal in its own right and as essential to achieving all of the other goals.
- > The rights of women are guaranteed in regional and international human rights treaties, including notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has been ratified by 171 countries. These rights include:
  - equality in employment and education,
  - full political, civil, economic, cultural and social rights,
  - non-discrimination in both the public and private spheres,
  - security and freedom from violence.

*"Gender inequality is a problem that has a solution."*

Millennium Report, 2005

*"2005 should be the year when trade unions mobilize massive public protests against the poverty and suffering of the world's poor."*

Guy Ryder, ICFTU General Secretary

**Trade unions are joining the women's movement and other parts of civil society in the Global Call to Action against Poverty.**

# Women Workers' Rights

**From a women's rights perspective, the Global Call for Action against Poverty means:**

**A call for decent jobs:**

- > Of a total of 550 million working poor, 330 million (60%) are women.
- > The majority of women workers are in precarious, low-paid, unprotected work and face higher unemployment rates.
- > They earn less than men for the same type of work.
- > By campaigning for more and better jobs, rights at work and trade union protection, women can have equal opportunities and a way out of poverty.

**A call for trade justice:**

- > Trade expansion has been built on the back of poor women's workers.
- > Trade justice means guaranteeing women's labour rights, protecting women's agricultural activities and food security.
- > Trade justice means access to quality public services for the most marginalized members of society, including poor women.

**A call for debt cancellation:**

- > The debt of developing countries is being paid for by poor women.
- > Women are providing unpaid health, education, child care, care for the elderly and other services, and support families, societies and economies. This gets little or no recognition.
- > In order to eradicate poverty and advance women's rights, debt must be cancelled and quality public services must be provided by the state.

**A Call for National development strategies which are Democratic, Transparent, and Participatory:**

- > National strategies to eliminate poverty must empower women through education, health care, reproductive rights, full political participation, equal citizenship, inheritance and property rights, access to quality public services, and policies and action to end violence against women.

**Join the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and ensure that women's rights at work and in society are at the centre of the global anti-poverty agenda.** This call is backed by an international coalition of trade unions, women's organizations and civil society organizations. Actions are being organized on key dates in 2005. The wearing of a white band will symbolically link these actions.

**Join the international campaign** by going to: [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)



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Global Unions is backing the Global Call to Action Against Poverty along with a broad alliance of civil society organisations. For more information, see [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org)