

Educate, Agitate, Organise

An Agenda for ITGLWF Action

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PREFACE

The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), which brings together some 250 affiliated unions in 130 countries across the world with a combined membership of more than 10 million workers, exists to advance the economic, social, political and cultural status of textile, garment and leather workers worldwide.

In 1992, the ITGLWF 6th World Congress adopted an Action Programme mapping out the major priority areas for the last eight years of the 20th century. This was revised by the 7th World Congress in 1996, and again by the 8th World Congress in 2000.

“Educate, Agitate, Organise” is an update of that Action Programme focusing on the major challenges ahead to ensure that the ITGLWF fulfils its objectives as set down in its Rules.

In 1992, the priorities for unions in the sector were three-fold: organising the unorganised, ensuring the effective representation of those organised, and encouraging the involvement of all members in the democratic life of their unions.

Despite the very rapid changes that have taken place around the world in recent years, those priorities remain as important today as ever before. Indeed, the globalisation of the world economy has reinforced their relevance.

The 9th World Congress takes place on the eve of the dismantling of trade regulation in textiles and clothing at the end of 2004, which threatens to cause huge disruption in the industry, leading to increased competition and massive job losses particularly in many producing countries in the developing world.

Now, as never before, we will need real and effective trade union co-operation and solidarity, nationally, regionally and globally to protect workers everywhere from the worst ravages of exploitation, injustice and poverty.

Unions everywhere, whether in the industrialised world or the developing world, must expand their membership base and enhance their capacity to protect all workers. Organising is a never-ending process and must be a core strategy for the future. However, the changing world labour market means that organising will have to be undertaken in new ways, in particular by identifying the pressure points in the industry, which increasingly are located at the retail end. Organising efforts will need to be better coordinated and will have to be conducted across national borders. Greater attention will need to be given to organising the informal sector, as well as attracting women and young people.

But building membership is not enough. In order to consolidate the influence that comes with an expanding membership, unions must prepare their members for participation in the democratic life of trade unionism and educate them to take up leadership responsibility. Any

union that is serious about its future must invest a considerable part of its resources in educating and training its members. Again, the participation of women and young people in these programmes must have the highest priority.

Unions must endeavour to make their organisations relevant to workers. This requires structures which are transparent, free and democratic. Every union member regardless of race, sex, religion or political beliefs must have the opportunity for full participation in union affairs.

If workers are going to turn the tide against rights' abuses, unions are going to have to look at the strength of their own organisations. Weak, splintered unions do not have the ability to represent their members with civil society, nor can they serve as a counter-weight to employers' violations of basic rights. Trade union unity is a prerequisite for the successful defence of workers' interests.

Unions must commit themselves unconditionally to upholding and enhancing the position of their members. The best way of safeguarding those interests is through effective collective bargaining.

In today's global economy, no worker in any part of the world is shielded from the effects of what is happening elsewhere. Unions in the textile, clothing and leather sectors, as elsewhere, need to recognise the international dimension of their activities and build support for global solidarity among their members. In a global industry, strengthening strategic cooperation beyond national frontiers is vital.

New mechanisms and approaches will be required. This must involve transferring power to new, more relevant trade union structures at local, national, continental and international level.

Unions must also stop operating in isolation, ignoring consumer interests and other pressure groups. Affiliates should broaden their contacts and forge alliances with others in civil society pursuing the same goals.

Unions need to increase their influence on employers and governments, demand full participation in tripartite discussion on key policy areas in their respective countries and seek the creation of joint structures within multinational companies at regional and international levels.

Faced with constant attacks on their members, unions must make full use of other measures, including trade mechanisms and corporate campaigning, to enforce international minimum labour standards. All affiliates should vigorously pursue the linkage of trade to respect for internationally recognised labour standards (freedom to form trade unions, the right to bargain collectively, and a ban on the use of child labour, prison labour and discrimination).

COORDINATION AND SUPPORT FOR TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT

Just as no worker can escape the impact of what happens within his or her country, in a global economy none is shielded from the effects of what is happening elsewhere in the world.

The role of the ITGLWF is to build and promote coordination of trade union activity within and between different countries.

(a) Headquarters

The rapid expansion of the ITGLWF's activities over the past years requires the adoption of new strategies and procedures to enable the Secretariat to implement the commitments contained in this action programme.

The ITGLWF will:

- improve communication with its regional organisations and its affiliates through the provision of telecommunication links and on-line services;
- develop its research capabilities, particularly in the field of corporate research;
- introduce a system of detailed and coordinated planning and prioritising of Secretariat activities, and establish administrative procedures that enable the Secretariat efficiently to plan its finances;
- ensure adequate staff training;
- aggressively pursue the payment of levies from all affiliates.

(b) Regional organisations

The regional organisations of the International are an integral part of the ITGLWF. While overall priorities and policies need to be taken at a global level, regional activities and relations will be increasingly handled by the regional organisations, which will be fully integrated into the ITGLWF's policy-making process to ensure a unified approach to issues.

The ITGLWF will:

- set in train a review of regional expenditure, with the aim of ensuring a balanced and adequate allocation of resources and securing greater efficiency in the delivery of services;

- provide adequate financial and logistical support for the African Regional Consultative Council and its two subcommittees, one for Anglophone Africa and one for Francophone Africa, as well as provide the means to ensure contact is maintained between the two:
- continue to devolve many aspects of the International's work to the regions and establish a clear distribution of functions to avoid duplication and to maximise resources;
- involve its regional organisations in the development of education and organising projects, as well as in international solidarity campaigns;
- ensure that the regional organisations have the maximum possible access to and support from the Secretariat in Brussels and that the regional secretaries are involved in the ITGLWF's internal decision making processes;
- ensure that the decisions adopted by the regional organisations are effectively fed through to the ITGLWF;
- ensure closer coordination and sharing of information between the regional organisations.

(c) Coordination of trade union activity

The globalising of the world economy requires a global trade union response. Unions need to improve coordination, to engage in strategic cooperation, to maintain the strength of solidarity and to present their case forcefully and aggressively to an often hostile world. This will necessarily involve strengthening regional and international trade union structures and delegating authority to them in certain spheres of activity.

If unions are to turn the tide against rights abuses in the workplace, they are going to have to strengthen their organisations. Weak unions do not have the ability to represent their members with civil society, nor can they service as a counter weight to employers' violations of basic rights. Trade union unity is a pre-requisite for the successful defence of workers' interests.

The ITGLWF will:

- conduct research, monitor trends, and draw up policy guidelines on important issues affecting our sectors;
- seek to make available to unions in developing countries the benefits of information technology;

- launch a wide-ranging examination of the structural changes needed in union organisation in the sector to combat the impact of globalisation;
- encourage affiliates to promote unity within the trade union movement at national level;
- solidify relations between Global Unions, as well as strengthen the coordination and integration of the international trade union movement, in order to avoid the duplication of activities, to maximise the use of resources and to avoid unnecessary conflict at international level;
- in cooperation with the affiliates concerned, seek the establishment of national co-ordinating committees or councils in those countries where there are a number of ITGLWF affiliates but no existing mechanisms for co-operation or co-ordination;
- work for the realisation of a strong Manufacturing Global Unions Federation structured to include democratic and representative sectoral mechanisms;
- encourage those of its affiliates with multi-Global Union Federations' affiliations to work to advance the aim of a single manufacturing Global Union Federation;
- seek co-operation agreements with each of the Global Union Federations in manufacturing, those co-operation agreements to be individually tailored to each Global Union Federation;
- encourage work on co-operation and co-ordination and sharing of facilities and services among the Global Union Federations in manufacturing and including policy co-ordination, organising and campaigning, common services and regional facilities.

(d) Education and development aid

The long-term objectives of the ITGLWF's education and development aid programmes are to build strong, independent and democratic trade unions and to secure an increase in their membership and influence. However, the ITGLWF is aware that the extensive use of outside funding carries the major risk of creating dependence and reducing membership control over union structures.

The ITGLWF believes that development cooperation must aim at promoting and strengthening trade unionism, the self-reliance of trade union organisations and the improvement of working and living conditions of the membership. It must be a complementary support of the regular activities of the partner trade union organisations; projects must be at their initiative, co-funded by them and clearly involving their membership.

The ITGLWF will:

- operate the Secretariat's project department as a cost centre and continue to seek adequate funding from new and existing sources to maintain and extend the ITGLWF's trade union education activities;
- increase the involvement of the regional organisations in project development and implementation and particularly in developing best practice within the Regions with respect to organising and other trade union activities;
- identify the particular needs of project partners through a participative and consultative process;
- encourage affiliates to apply innovative and action-oriented methods and techniques;
- ensure that the ITGLWF Education and Development aid guidelines covering financing, planning, design, implementation, evaluation, accounting and reporting are applied to all areas of project activity, and are accepted by all parties involved in or wishing to become involved in ITGLWF project activity;
- adopt a systematic approach geared towards the achievement of financial independence, in order to ensure project partners do not become dependent on outside funding in order to maintain their democratic structures and run their core activities;
- work with project partners to ensure that high standards of reporting and financial accountability are applied not only to development programmes but also to the union's own management systems;
- assist project partners in achieving operational self-reliance, by helping them to develop a wide range of skills thus gradually diminishing their reliance on outside expertise;
- enter into a contract with the decision-making body of the project partner, clearly setting down the range

and scope of the project, the targets on an annual basis, the commitments of both the International and project partners, the level of input required, the financial and reporting requirements as well as the support services offered by the International and/or its regional organisations;

- work towards the introduction of a decentralised system of project management, based on effective and user-friendly administrative procedures and the use of electronic communication, and ensuring that project coordinators receive the necessary training;
- ensure equal opportunities for women in all education activities as well as seeking funding, on a regular basis, for programmes specifically for women trade unionists, and link compliance with women's participation to funding and other forms of assistance;
- continue to focus attention in regional workshops on priority issues such as collective bargaining, organising, campaigning for the defence of human and trade union rights, equality issues and health and safety;
- expand its activities in the development of educational materials, including the production of audio-visual materials;
- ensure better coordination with other international trade union organisations to increase the exchange of information and materials in order to avoid duplication;
- ensure that duplication of project activities is avoided and that synergies between programmes are identified and developed;
- assist affiliates in campaigning to achieve paid educational leave for their members;
- encourage affiliates to adopt a strategic planning approach to identifying objectives and action programmes to strengthen their organisations.

HUMAN AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

Too often in the past, international solidarity has been seen as the industrialised world's unions helping those in developing countries, as the rich helping the poor, as the strong aiding the weak.

At present many unions are unable to deal with the ramifications of globalisation, which has transformed the nature of trade union activity both at national and international level. Corporate power has increased dramatically, and the flexibility afforded by globalisation has severely weakened the bargaining power of workers. Overcoming these obstacles will require considerable changes on the part of the labour movement to improve coordination and activity in the field of international solidarity and organising.

Global solidarity benefits everyone, workers and their unions, in both the industrialised and the developing worlds.

In future, global solidarity must include organising across national frontiers and utilise the resources and experience of every single organisation representing workers within these industrial sectors, whether at national, regional or international level. The full and efficient utilisation of these combined resources is vital.

(a) Organising and bargaining

Without the right to organise, the most fundamental of all worker rights, it is nearly impossible to secure or defend other rights. In developing and industrialised countries alike, trade union membership and influence are on the decline. Unions must halt that decline by broadening their membership base and by putting organising and recruitment at the forefront of all their activities.

Trade union experience is that the time-honoured process of collective bargaining between workers and employers is the most appropriate means of achieving a fair return for the labour.

The ITGLWF will:

- devote at least 15% of its total resources to organising;
- urge its affiliates to give priority to organising, including increasing unionisation in largely unorganised sectors, including the informal sector;
- work to secure strong, representative and sustainable union representation capable of adequately defending members and safeguarding their interests through collective bargaining;
- continue to support, in close coordination with the regional organisations, organising projects involving corporate research, strategic targeting, planning, international coordination and the creation of strong unions through majority representation and member involvement;

- analyse collective bargaining developments to identify the most effective approaches and strategies;
- ensure that the issue of collective bargaining is the centrepiece of all its trade union activities;
- develop its capacity to conduct corporate research and develop a database on companies in the industry;
- develop a global solidarity network to support organising through pressure on retailers in consumer countries;
- ensure coordination and transparency between various donor organisations supporting organising projects;
- vigorously resist any government or employer attempts to limit collective bargaining, including government intervention to regulate the outcome or suspend the practice of bargaining altogether, or to introduce individual contracts.

(b) Promoting worker rights

Exploitation is rampant in the textile, garment, leather and footwear sectors. Such exploitation is happening because of the intense competition in a globalised economy where in the textile, garment and leather sectors 160 countries are producing for export into only about 30 markets. It is happening because governments are unable or unwilling to enforce their own labour legislation. It is happening because employers are increasingly transnational corporations, often with a base in Korea and Taiwan and with no respect for either the country in which they operate or the workers they employ. And it is happening because retailers in industrialised countries push down the price paid to producers to levels that can only result in exploitation.

All of this is unnecessary and needn't happen. Indeed, it results in company inefficiency, low productivity and poor quality, hindering profitability. Workers' rights abuses are shortsighted, not just morally or socially, but also economically.

The ITGLWF will:

- in conjunction with its regional organisations, expose violations of worker rights wherever they occur and mobilise solidarity action among affiliates, as well as making representations to governments and employers, exerting corporate pressure, making use of consumer pressure, and securing media coverage;

- undertake, in conjunction with its regional organisations and other international trade union organisations, targeted campaigns aimed at certain countries or sectors where the gravity of the abuses warrants particular attention;
- exert pressure on governments to ensure they take responsibility and enact and enforce rules which will ensure that globalisation promotes development, secures a living wage for all workers and provides environmental protection;
- promote a common approach between the governments of the region based on respect for minimum international standards;
- demand that the Taiwanese and Korean Governments exert pressure on outward investors by:
 - imposing conditions on the export of capital;
 - influencing, through training for companies and company management, managements investing or intending to invest abroad;
 - using their embassies and other representation posts abroad to impress upon outward investors and their managers the need to respect national labour legislation and international labour standards;
 - using trade and investment delegations both inward and outward to highlight the need to adhere to international labour standards in all enterprises;
 - considering incentives for outward investing companies which respect international labour standards throughout their operations.
- strengthen awareness of rights' issues among affiliates, and further develop their ability to respond rapidly and effectively to any abuse of worker rights;
- encourage affiliates to use corporate codes of conduct as a tool for organising and bargaining;
- mount campaigns aimed at making consumers aware of the exploitation of workers in the textile, garment, shoe and leather sectors and mobilising them to demand that the products they buy are manufactured under fair labour conditions;

- maintain, through contributions from affiliates, an International Solidarity Fund to aid at short notice unions faced with major difficulties;
- organise each year a high-profile event, coordinated to take place on the same day around the world, to draw attention to the human and workers' rights violations occurring in the textile, clothing, shoe and leather industries;
- expand its links with non-government organisations working in the field of human rights whose principles and objectives coincide with those of the ITGLWF;
- vigorously pursue the linkage of trade to worker rights in all trade agreements with a view to rapidly eliminating the worst abuses of workers rights by making participation in world trade conditional upon respect for core labour standards;
- campaign in the lead-up to the World Cup 2006 in order to secure broad support to put pressure on FIFA to renegotiate and apply the code of conduct first negotiated in the late 1990s;
- promote respect by all governments for the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work relating to respect for the principles of freedom of association, effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour, effective abolition of child labour, and elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
- make full use of ILO supervisory mechanisms for the defence of human and trade union rights, and continue to maintain pressure to ensure that ILO procedures are updated to meet new challenges;
- make use of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, which targets ways in which multinational enterprise operations in home and host countries can build socially sustainable development, respect for human rights in the workplace, employment promotion and security, skills training, good working conditions and sound industrial relations;
- make full use of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, a set of standards that

embody the expectations of governments with regard to good corporate behaviour, and include the right to organise and bargain collectively;

- insist that governments and international organisations make the provision of technical and financial assistance dependent on respect for fundamental worker rights;
- assist affiliates in campaigning against the activities of government- or employer-sponsored organisations which infringe on the role and privileges of trade unions, including ‘Solidarista’ associations;
- continue to support the joint Global Unions’ Hong Kong Liaison Office (IHLO) to monitor trade union and workers’ rights and political and social developments in mainland China;
- maintain a ‘Register of Dirty Companies’, intended for companies which are directly responsible for serious violations of labour rights, and which consistently ignore all efforts to force them to remedy the violations they have committed. The aim is to drive renegade companies from the industry by calling on their existing customers to sever their contracts and on their potential customers to refrain from placing orders;
- make use of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, which targets ways in which multinational enterprise operations in home and host countries can build socially sustainable development, respect for human rights in the workplace, employment promotion and security, skills training, good working conditions and sound industrial relations;
- make full use of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, a set of standards that embody the expectations of governments with regard to good corporate behaviour, and include the right to organise and bargain collectively.

TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

International trade, which should lead to better working and living standards has, in practice, created enormous problems for workers. While many countries have become major exporters, most of those employed have seen little, if any, improvement in their living standards, as

discrimination and gross exploitation in violation of fundamental workers' rights have increasingly become part of global commerce. Indeed, as competition between countries has intensified, efforts by workers to share the benefits of growing export trade are often met with resistance or repression.

As a result, sectors which were once seen as the engine of development now often mean little more than short term insecure exploitative employment which can disappear overnight leaving nothing behind, no resources, no skills and no future. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the textile and clothing sectors where trade liberalisation from the beginning of 2005 is forecasted to result in the destruction of emerging and struggling industries with the consequent loss of millions of manufacturing jobs in some of the world's poorest countries.

Development does not just involve economic growth. Growth must be accompanied by social progress, which in turn will result in increased purchasing power and increased prosperity.

The ITGLWF will:

- demand action to halt the massive disruption likely to occur after the end of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing on December 31 2004, including:
 - the continuation of trade regulation after the end of the Textile and Clothing Agreement in 2005 and its extension to footwear;
 - strategies for the future that ensure that the benefits of production are fairly shared, where the workers involved can afford to become consumers, thus oiling the mechanisms for sustainable development;
 - tripartite involvement in all trade negotiations;
 - the inclusion of labour standards conditionalities in all international trade agreements;
 - measures designed to help emerging and struggling industries, particularly in developing countries, adjust to meet the threat posed by dominant producers such as China, including clear restraints on such dominant producers;
 - the promotion of trade based on respect for international labour standards through rewards and sanctions-based mechanisms;

- an urgent review of trade liberalisation particularly its impact on employment and working conditions in labour intensive industries such as textiles, clothing and footwear;
 - seeking commitments from multinational retailers and brand names that they maintain their existing country supply base; source only from suppliers respecting national law and international labour standards; ensure that workers displaced as a result of consolidation are re-employed by new or expanded suppliers and where, for geographical reasons, this is not possible ensure that such workers have opportunities for retraining and re-skilling with support services for workers and their communities.
- insist that any strategy for the future be based on providing support to help the industry adjust to meet the demands of international competition, which include providing a good quality product, priced affordably price, and produced in decent conditions, such a strategy to provide for intervention in areas such as:
 - respect for international labour standards;
 - worker development especially for women;
 - skills enhancement;
 - technology diffusion;
 - productivity;
 - improved management;
 - enhanced quality;
 - market development both internally and externally.
 - continue to campaign for the incorporation of workers' rights clauses in the agreements and procedures of the World Trade Organisation, such a clause to include freedom of association and protection for the right to organise, prohibit forced labour and child labour, and outlaw discrimination;
 - demand, as a first step, that the WTO establish a formal, permanent working group, with the full involvement of the ILO, which should be given formal consultative status at the WTO, with a defined work programme including:
 - a) a mandate to undertake analysis and to propose procedures and instruments for the treatment of core labour standards in the international trading

system;

- b) the examination of how to associate trade with respect for core labour standards, including positive incentives and assistance;
- c) the consideration of measures to be taken where trade liberalisation was associated with violations of core labour standards;
- d) review of the mechanisms of the WTO in order to promote openness and transparency and ensure consistency of trade negotiations and agreements with respect for core labour standards within the work of the WTO.

- insist that the WTO agree upon a range of measures to tackle the priority concerns of developing countries, including improved market access and positive incentives for all developing countries, especially the least developed, which respect core labour standards;
- demand that the WTO establish full transparency and openness towards other relevant agencies, in particular the ILO, and create consultative structures for trade unions and business, as well as ensuring opportunities for consultation and dialogue with non-governmental organisations and other elements of civil society;
- reject the use of any workers' rights provisions for protectionist purposes, while insisting that the systematic violation of fundamental workers' rights for the purpose of providing a competitive advantage over other countries which respect those rights is a particularly cruel form of protectionism;
- work to ensure that the United Nations 'Global Compact' helps to build global partnerships by creating an effective framework of multilateral rules for the global economy;
- encourage cooperation between developing countries to ensure that they secure for themselves a reasonable return for their exports;
- campaign to ensure that workers in the textile, clothing and leather sectors, through their trade unions, have the opportunity of participating in all national, regional and international negotiations on economic and trade matters;
- support pressure on governments and intergovernmental organisations to strengthen the

framework for monitoring and operation of international financial markets, constraining the volatility of short-term financial flows, and mobilising financial resources for social development;

- support pressure on the International Financial Institutions to act more consistently and more in coherence with the UN system, and to develop operational practices that are consistent with stated commitments in areas such as poverty reduction, gender equality, core labour standards, quality public services, and an international financial system that is supportive of stable and sustainable development in all regions;
- insist that all International Financial Institutions' loans for private sector development projects relating to the textile, clothing or footwear industries include conditionality clauses requiring respect for international labour standards by the companies involved;
- press international agencies to ensure that aid contributes toward balanced, equitable development by attacking unemployment and raising economic and social standards through practical projects involving education, housing, health care, water supply, sanitation, etc, as well as to strengthen public procedures for monitoring the implementation of aid programmes, including the active involvement of trade unions;
- support pressure on governments to re-assess their macro-economic policies with the aim of greater employment generation and reduction in poverty levels;
- press international agencies to cancel outright the debt of the poorest countries and provide for greater reductions in debt and interest payments for other indebted countries, and to increase multilateral aid to replace excessively expensive loans from the private banking sector;
- put pressure on international agencies to take action to halt illegal practices in trade in textile, clothing leather and footwear products, including the transshipment of goods to illegally circumvent quotas, the pirating of designs and the faking of labels and brand names, which destabilise the industry and

threaten employment provided by legitimate manufacturers and traders;

- campaign for used clothing donated for charity to be used for that purpose, and distributed free of charge instead of being traded in ways which destroy jobs in developing countries and impoverish textile, clothing, shoe and leather workers and their families;
- continue to monitor developments in international trade in textiles, clothing, and leather;
- continue to support the joint ICFTU/GUF representation in Washington to lobby the IMF and the World Bank to ensure a social dimension in international economic policy.

MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES

Multinational companies are becoming stronger than nation states. Generally, these international corporations are immune from the democratic controls which often limit the actions of national governments. The UN has noted that more than half of world trade is produced by multinational companies and more than one third of world trade is composed of goods transfers within different branches of the same multinational corporations. Two thirds of all international transactions in goods and services combined are dependent on multinational company operations.

The increasingly free movement of capital allows corporations to transfer production without regard to national boundaries to wherever costs are low. Often production is outsourced or subcontracted to ever smaller units of production. Some of the largest and most powerful corporations have very few direct employees but they are able to maintain the required quantity and quality of production by franchise or subcontract arrangements around the world. It is at this level that the worst employment practices are found.

The ITGLWF will:

- promote cooperation between affiliates dealing with the same multinational enterprises;
- build an organising strategy throughout the operations of selected multinationals operating in the sector, including European, US, Taiwanese and Korean companies, which covers the operations in importing countries, as well as contracting, subcontracting and licensing operations;
- in conjunction with its regional organisations, develop a dialogue with multinational enterprises

with a view to concluding international framework agreements-relating to trade union organisation and collective bargaining as well as to information and consultation rights;

- promote the creation of world-wide company councils within individual multinational corporations;
- encourage affiliates to make use of framework agreements and codes of conduct as a tool for organising workers and improving working conditions;
- campaign to reduce the number of codes of conduct in operation, to ensure they are firmly grounded in the main Conventions of the ILO, are managed on a multi-stakeholder basis and are applied with the same intent as the ILO Conventions and that they include a system of implementation, internal monitoring and viable independent verification, with regular impact assessments;
- campaign to ensure that codes of conduct are not used as a substitute for effective labour legislation, nor as an alternative to union organisation;
- demand that companies externally sourcing their production provide full disclosure of their suppliers worldwide;
- campaign to make merchandisers and retailers responsible for the conditions under which goods they market are produced;
- campaign for changes to national and international company legislation which would require companies to take into account and publicly disclose their social, environmental and economic impacts with a view to securing a legally binding international framework on corporate responsibility.

FREE TRADE ZONES

Millions of textile, clothing and leather workers around the world are employed in Free Trade Zones, special economic zones designed to attract foreign investment and promote export-led industrialisation. Today, there are 43 million workers employed in such zones, of which the majority are in China's ever-growing Special Economic Zones.

The ITGLWF deplores the exploitation of workers in many of these zones, where trade union rights are often ignored.

The ITGLWF will:

- continue to promote awareness of international standards concerning trade union rights among all parties involved in Free Trade Zones;
- continue to implement a coordinated organising and global solidarity strategy involving in-depth research and based on strategic pressure on targeted Free Trade Zone companies;
- encourage governments to integrate Free Trade Zones into their national economies, ensuring that national labour and social legislation is respected;
- support pressure on governments to enter into detailed tripartite consultations before the establishment of any further Free Trade Zones, and to create tripartite advisory committees on industrial relations as an integral part of FTZ management structures;
- encourage the governments of exporting countries to cooperate at regional level in establishing and adhering to international minimum standards in all parts of their countries, including Free Trade Zones.

WAGES AND WORKING HOURS

Low wages and excessively long working hours are a major issue for textile, garment, leather and footwear workers around the world.

Poverty wages and long hours are the direct result of inadequate prices and impossible delivery schedules. Manufacturers claim that were they forced to pay more they would lose the orders and were they forced to reduce working hours they could not meet delivery deadlines and would thus be penalised. Merchandisers and retailers, in turn, claim that the field is incredibly competitive and raising wages even just to meet basic needs would cause chaos and limiting overtime would make it impossible to get goods to consumers on time.

The ITGLWF believes that growing industrialisation and improved productivity should lead to reductions in the working day, week and year. This would also lead to a better integration of work and family life.

The ITGLWF will:

- provide assistance to affiliates engaged in collective bargaining, in particular through exchanges of information on wages, methods of pay and conditions

in other countries or in other parts of the same company;

- campaign for enforceable labour standards to ensure that unions are able, through the process of free collective bargaining, to ensure that every worker, regardless of his or her workplace, earns in a standard working week a living wage which meets at least legal or industry minimum standards and is always sufficient to meet basic needs of workers and their families and to provide some discretionary income;
- campaign for reduced working hours, with the objective of securing a 35-hour week in developed countries and a 40-hour week in developing countries as soon as possible;
- assist affiliates in resisting the practice of forced overtime;
- demand that overtime be worked only in short-term exceptional business circumstances, and in all cases be limited to 12 hours per week;
- encourage and assist affiliates to secure two consecutive days off in the working week;
- encourage and assist affiliates to seek to secure a minimum of three weeks holiday with pay;
- campaign for the universal ratification of the ILO Convention on part-time workers;
- disseminate information on the detrimental effects of night work on the health of workers;
- campaign to secure a reduction in the retirement age with suitable pension provision.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Working conditions in the textile, garment and leather industries around the world increasingly demand special attention and effort from the international trade union movement. Every year, some two million men and women lose their lives through accidents and diseases linked to their work. In addition, workers suffer 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million occupational diseases each year.

The failure of many governments to enforce health and safety standards means that efforts to improve working conditions in one country can be undermined by the flight of production to countries where workplace

safety is ignored. Ignoring occupational health and safety is one way by which international market operators can minimise costs, engaging in a form of "social dumping" at the real costs of workers' lives.

The ITGLWF will:

- support a strong international programme for health and safety at work focused on:
 - efficient legislation implemented at the workplace and progress through evaluation and control;
 - the attainment by the public authorities of the international and national health and security standards for their own employees;
 - the prevention of accidents and illnesses at work;
 - collective bargaining to establish committees and negotiate health and safety rights and duties at factory level;
 - the improvement of worker representation and the development of the information, consultation and participation of workers and trade unions on decisions in the area of health and safety and the organisation of work;
 - consideration of gender related aspects and problems.
- support pressure on governments in every part of the world to enact and effectively implement the strongest possible legislation, providing coverage and protection for every worker, including mandatory prison sentences for deliberately negligent employers;
- promote internationally-enforceable standards for a healthy and safe working environment, in particular ILO Conventions No. 155 on Occupational Health and Safety No. 103 on Maternity Protection, No.161 on Health Services at Work and No. 170 on chemicals;
- continue to liaise closely with the ILO in the preparation and implementation of all ILO health and safety initiatives affecting workers in our sectors;
- develop proper trade union methods of investigation and workplace assessment in order to identify priorities and needs and covering the different aspects of safety, health (including mental health) and well being;
- incorporate health and safety training as an integral part of its educational programmes and produce and

make available materials on health and safety issues for use in training;

- gather and disseminate information on legislation, agreements and practices applied in different countries, as well as details of research on health and safety matters;
- campaign for the development of ergonomic standards adequately addressing repetitive strain injuries and promoting the reduction of repetitive and monotonous work;
- continue to expose health and safety hazards in the textile, garment and leather sectors and conduct campaigns on health and safety issues of concern to its affiliates and their members;
- encourage and assist affiliates to promote awareness among their members about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it;
- observe the International Day of Mourning on April 28 each year, using the occasion to draw attention to the need for improvements in occupational health and safety;
- campaign for the elimination of the use of harmful products and procedures and support initiatives on the development of safe substitutes;
- support "right to know" campaigns on work-related risks and means of protection.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

While the introduction of new technology can be beneficial to workers by improving the competitiveness of enterprise and leading to enhanced job security and improved employment conditions, it also has severe social consequences and brings with it an ever-greater reduction in the number of workers in the industry.

The textile, clothing and leather sectors have not made optimum use of valuable technology and often rely instead on driving down wages to reduce labour costs. Unions have mainly been ignored in the process of introducing new technology, and inadequate vocational training has left workers unprepared for the consequences of the drive for greater productivity. In many developing countries multinational companies relocating to Free Trade Zones have failed to deliver on their promises on transfers of technology.

The ITGLWF will:

- encourage affiliates to demand full participation at all levels in the decisions leading to the introduction of new technology, ensuring that any reductions in the workforce take place on a voluntary basis, through early retirement, or by a policy of no new hirings, rather than through lay-offs, and that technological change brings with it improvements in employment conditions in order to compensate for higher productivity;
- assist affiliates in securing commitments on training and retraining in order to equip workers for change by ensuring they are adequately trained to carry out new tasks or work with new equipment, thus helping them avoid unemployment;
- work with affiliates in campaigning for increased attention from governments and employers on training and retraining;
- press governments to ensure that inward investment assists in the transfer of technology and industrial development, as well as to ensure that the transfer of technology is accompanied by a transfer of knowledge about the effect new equipment and processes have on those who use them.

WOMEN WORKERS

The ITGLWF recognises that the majority of workers in our sectors are women, and that there can be no real trade union democracy without full and equal participation of women at all levels of the trade union movement.

Worldwide, the majority of women in the sector continue to be concentrated in unskilled, low-paying jobs, and are frequently discriminated against in educational and training opportunities. Technological change has heightened these problems.

Furthermore, women are disproportionately affected by violations of human and trade union rights, which occur most frequently in the informal sector, in export processing zones and in small scale businesses, which employ a high proportion of women. In addition, sexual harassment at the workplace and even in unions is common.

Moreover, in most countries it is women who generally assume the burden of family responsibilities, which diminishes their opportunities to pursue full-time employment in conditions of equality.

The ITGLWF will:

- ensure the full participation of women in all activities and structures of the ITGLWF and its regional organisations, including working towards a goal of half of all members of its governing bodies being women;
- improve the quality and quantity of its statistical information about women workers and the extent of their participation in affiliated unions;
- vigorously monitor its education and development aid activities to ensure that they are geared to full equality for women;
- undertake action to assist affiliates to secure equality of treatment, opportunity and remuneration in all their structures, activities and agreements;
- support pressure for full access for women to employment, promotion, education and training opportunities through the implementation of joint positive action programmes and equal opportunities policies at the workplace, drawn up with the full involvement of trade unions;
- encourage affiliates to take up the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace as well as within the trade union movement itself, and disseminate information on trade union policy and action aimed at protecting workers from this form of victimisation;
- increase its profile on women's issues by campaigning on women's rights and on events relating to women, including International Women's Day;
- lobby for a linkage between trade and worker rights which would make trading privileges conditional upon core ILO standards, including non-discrimination as set down in ILO Conventions Nos. 111 and 100 on the prevention of discrimination in employment and equal pay for work of equal value;
- encourage affiliates to campaign for the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 103 and

Recommendation 95 on Maternity Protection;

- support pressure on governments to ratify and implement ILO Conventions No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, in order to encourage equality and enable workers with family responsibilities to engage in employment without being subject to discrimination.

CHILD LABOUR

Tens of millions of children are exploited for profit every day. Over 250 million child labourers are denied the right to a childhood and to a proper education. As many as 113 million children do not attend school. Over one billion adults are today illiterate largely because, as children, they had to work instead of going to school.

Millions of their children, in turn, have to work in order for their families to survive, perpetuating a vicious circle of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment.

Children do every job imaginable, including producing textiles, clothes, carpets, shoes and toys. They often work in the most appalling conditions. Many die before reaching adulthood.

Poverty is often used as an excuse to cloak child labour. However, child labour in itself is a major cause of poverty and underdevelopment, and reliance on child labour can only worsen the economic plight of the communities concerned.

Child labour is also a crime against adult workers employed in the industry because it undermines job security and drives down wages and working conditions. In this competition, wages are often so reduced that the combined earnings of parent and child are less than the wage of one parent before.

The ITGLWF will:

- campaign for the elimination of child labour involving children under the age of compulsory schooling and in all cases of 15 years of age or younger;
- as the overriding priority, seek an immediate ban on new recruitment of children in the textile, garment and leather sectors, as well as the removal from the workforce of all children below the age of 12, with the provision of aid to their families or replacing them with adult members of the same family;

- campaign for the provision of education and vocational training to those children who remain in the workforce;
- promote a comprehensive approach that recognises that trade union organising is vital in reducing and eliminating child labour;
- promote and support action on child labour by all affiliates and where necessary to provide them with the educational assistance to undertake such action;
- promote the development of an international information exchange network on child labour involving trade unions, NGOs, and other relevant groups;
- promote awareness of the issue of child labour among the general public and among consumers;
- maintain close co-operation with the ILO and its International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC);
- campaign for the universal ratification and implementation of ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment as well as ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;
- seek the creation of international mechanisms for enforcing the prohibition of child labour, by linking trade to the respect for basic worker rights, including the prohibition of child labour as set down in ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment;
- press for legislation in importing countries which places responsibility on importers and retailers to ensure that child labour is not involved in the manufacturing process of their products;
- encourage governments to develop economic and social programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and providing basic education for all girls and boys;
- support international action on the economic and social causes of child labour;

- demand that all companies manufacturing directly or indirectly or retailing textile, clothing and leather products adhere to the Global Union's Code of Practice aimed at the elimination of the exploitation of children and the abolition of child labour throughout the sector;
- support an international boycott of hand-knotted carpets unless they carry a label, such as Rugmark, indicating they were not made by children;
- cooperate with non-governmental and other organisations whose objectives coincide with those of the ITGLWF.

INDUSTRIAL HOMEWORK

Because it is one of the most flexible forms of employment, homeworking has emerged as a key component of the restructuring of the global economy. The homeworker is often the last link in a network of international trade spread across continents, and producing goods sold by large retailers.

In most countries, homeworkers, usually women, are the most exploited of all workers, paid less than the minimum wage, without social security coverage, denied job security, and not even acknowledged as workers. Most do homework because they cannot find jobs outside, or because of family responsibilities or the lack of child care facilities. They are almost always isolated and at the mercy of their employers.

The ITGLWF will:

- encourage affiliates to run campaigns to organise homeworkers, to make them visible, to alert them to their rights, to bring them within the scope of collective bargaining and to negotiate agreements with retailers to promote respect for their rights;
- disseminate, on a regular basis, information on legal provisions as well as details of initiatives undertaken by affiliates and groups representing homeworkers;
- provide training to affiliates on the issue of homework;
- campaign for the universal ratification and implementation of the ILO Homework Convention No.177;
- support pressure on governments to translate the provisions of ILO Convention No. 177 into national

laws, by providing to homeworkers equal rights with workers in the workplace, by bringing homeworkers into the mainstream, by extending health and safety laws to homeworkers, as well as by bringing intermediaries into the open;

- support initiatives to make training available to homeworkers in order to improve their capacity to increase their earnings by taking on more skilled work or to find alternative employment;
- support pressure on governments to adopt long-term solutions to eliminate the hardship that makes it necessary for people to work at home, including the provision of affordable and available child care and care for the elderly and infirm, possibilities for parental leave and higher pensions;
- liaise with non-government organisations working with homeworkers that share the same objectives as the ITGLWF.

TRADE IN USED CLOTHING

Trade in used clothing is becoming the disease of the century in the textiles, clothing and footwear industries. It is creating enormous problems in every continent with tens of thousands of workers in the textiles, clothing and footwear sectors losing their employment. But while trade in used clothing creates poverty, is also a resource for the poor.

The ITGLWF will:

- campaign to ensure that used clothing donated for the poor is used for that purpose, and is distributed free of charge, thus avoiding the damage being caused in developing countries;
- target those, particularly charities, who collect and trade in second hand clothing regardless of its impact on the economies of developing countries;
- develop and disseminate information on the impact of second had clothing and work to educate the public who donate such clothing;
- maintain a forum on trade on second hand clothing using the ITGLWF web-site and the internet;
- campaign for recycling through means other than re-sale be pursued;

- campaign for poverty alleviation through sustainable economic development.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AFFILIATES

The ITGLWF can only implement the policies set down in this action programme with the full support of its affiliates.

Affiliates must:

- unconditionally defend and promote internationally-recognised trade union rights for all workers;
- respond promptly for requests for solidarity action;
- commit themselves to broadening the trade union base through making organising and recruitment the centrepiece of their activities;
- build trade union unity at national level;
- pay adequate attention to the international dimension of their activities and build support for international solidarity among their members, who should be aware of the ITGLWF and its policies;
- provide the Secretariat with all relevant information about the issues set down in this Agenda for Action and strive to ensure the implementation of the policies it contains;
- recognise their responsibility to pay their affiliation fees promptly to ensure that the ITGLWF can carry out the activities set down in this Agenda for Action.