



**International Domestic Workers Network Africa
& Global Network Africa
JOINT DECLARATION
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Times are changing for domestic workers but not fast enough and not always in the right direction.

The African member organisations of the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) and the Global Network (GN) hosted a conference on the 7-8 December 2012 in Cape Town to understand why the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work For Domestic Workers has not been ratified in Africa. To date, a year and half later, Mauritius is the only African country that has ratified Convention 189.

The ILO Convention 189 commits governments to protect the right of domestic workers to have fair contracts of employment, the right to belong to a union and the right to bargain. It also encourages governments to extend the health and safety conditions and social protections afforded to workers in other economic sectors to domestic workers – in short the convention recognises that domestic work is work and domestic workers are workers, and they play an important part in the socio-economic development of society. We are disappointed that instead of the expected wave of ratifications, government after government on the continent provided excuses for the delay.

Taking stock of the situation, we:

- a. understand that as long as domestic workers are not free, the lack of sustained economic development, widespread poverty and gross inequality will remain unsolved on our continent as shown by the inability to meet the millennium development goals.
- b. are optimistic that the activism promoting human rights and social protection which is driving progressive change in Africa and throughout the world is regrouping and that domestic workers' organisations are finding their place in this movement.

The African organisation of the IDWN and the GN therefore:

- a. recommit ourselves to step up the campaign for the ratification of C189 and will continue to knock ever louder on the doors of government, mobilise domestic workers' unions and the trade union and civil society movements to rally behind the ratification campaign, and double our efforts to educate domestic workers on their right to decent work and decent life.
- b. remain steadfast in our attempt to organise and gain the necessary power to bring about sweeping changes to the widespread colonial, racist, sexist and paternalistic relationships which exist between employer and employee in the domestic services sector on the continent.

Furthermore, will:

- a. immediately begin to identify and target African governments who are unnecessarily delaying the ratification of Convention 189.
- b. expose violations of the rights of domestic workers in African countries, blacklisting both the perpetrators as well as those governments which refuse to put in place corrective measures
- c. highlight best practice labour legislation and social protection mechanisms for domestic workers.

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