

## Briefing Notes:

### **International Labour Standards, Supervisory Mechanism and ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up: Role and Responsibilities of Trade Unions**

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Call centres, one of the emerging areas of employment in many countries, are often characterized by their employers' anti-trade union attitudes. The most fundamental rights of workers - Freedom of Association (FOA) and Right to Collective Bargaining (CB) - are habitually neglected in call centres, and for many workers, their engagement in trade union activities could mean the end of their contract at the call centres.

Such a situation is surely unacceptable. The denial of, or disrespect for, FOA/CB in call centres is undoubtedly and indisputably an infringement of the internationally agreed and guaranteed rights of workers, and this is true regardless of the location of the call centres and provisions of the local labour legislations. And, wherever such infringement occurs, workers or unions concerned can, and should, challenge the injustice by effectively employing all the available legal, or non-legal, remedies available for them, particularly those provided at the international level.

There are in fact a number of international instruments available for workers and unions to create and secure the "enabling environment" for organizing and collective bargaining. The most important of all are the ones adopted at the tripartite decision making bodies of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and those include in particular Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Convention 98 on the Right to Collective Bargaining, and also the ILO Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (ILO F.P.R.W. Declaration).

It is important to note that any instrument must be used properly and effectively to exercise its full potential and power. The ILO instruments are not exceptions. The key issue for workers and unions is, therefore, whether or not they have sufficient knowledge and skill to effectively utilize the ILO instruments, and whether or not they actually use them.

In this presentation, the following points will be discussed:

- 1) Trade unions in the world have not been maximally utilizing the power of the ILO instruments;
- 2) The first step for UNI affiliates to effectively organize call centres is to keep the ILO informed of all cases of violation of the fundamental workers' rights using the ILO instruments; and
- 3) Such a steady effort will help unions create and promote "an enabling environment" for organizing and collective bargaining.

[For further study/reading]

Training Manual on ILS	<a href="http://www.itcilo.org/actrav/english/library/library_ils.html">http://www.itcilo.org/actrav/english/library/library_ils.html</a>
Training Manual on ILO F.P.R.W. Declaration	<a href="http://training.itcilo.it/actrav/decl_man/netscape.htm">http://training.itcilo.it/actrav/decl_man/netscape.htm</a>
Online Training on ILO F.P.R.W. Declaration	<a href="http://www.itcilo.org/actrav/declaration_gen/declaration_00.html">http://www.itcilo.org/actrav/declaration_gen/declaration_00.html</a>
Texts of ILO Conventions	(En) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm</a>
	(Fr) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/french/convdisp1.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/french/convdisp1.htm</a>
	(Sp) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/spanish/convdisp1.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/spanish/convdisp1.htm</a>
Ratification of Conventions by Country	(En) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm</a>
	(Fr) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/french/newratframeF.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/french/newratframeF.htm</a>
	(Sp) <a href="http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/spanish/newratframeS.htm">http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/spanish/newratframeS.htm</a>
Role of workers' organizations in the implementation of ILS	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm">http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm</a>
	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/french/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm">http://www.ilo.org/public/french/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm</a>
	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm">http://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/standards/norm/sources/noterole.htm</a>