



## Open letter to UN member States

### **UN CSW 61 – Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work, 13 to 24 March 2017**

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW convenes annually under the auspices of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The negotiated outcomes of the meeting are known as “Agreed Conclusions”.

The theme of this year’s CSW is Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work.

The international trade union movement and civil society allies have welcomed the close collaboration between UN Women and the International Labour Organization (ILO), before and during CSW 61.

The ILO and UN Women collaborated closely in the production of expert materials to inform and assist governments during discussions at CSW 61 sessions and during the negotiations of the Agreed Conclusions. In an unprecedented move, the CSW meeting of experts, whose report also serves to inform the Secretary General’s report to CSW, took place at ILO headquarters in Geneva.

**This collaboration between UN Women and the ILO has been an excellent example of the cooperation between UN agencies which member States have consistently called for, in order to achieve a more coherent, effective and efficient UN system.**

We are shocked at the behaviour of certain UN, including ILO, member States aimed at removing from the draft Agreed Conclusions all references to ILO Conventions and Recommendations – and indeed to the ILO itself as a relevant agency in monitoring and follow-up of the Agreed Conclusions. In the case of the eight ILO fundamental Conventions, these same member States have acceded to the standards in question by virtue of being ILO member States. Decent work is central to women’s economic empowerment. The ILO is the custodian of the decent work agenda.

The position of those member States at CSW61 is incomprehensible, unmeritorious and disingenuous. We are therefore calling for the support of all Governments who do wish to see CSW 61 result in a real contribution to the implementation of the sustainable development goals (notably goals 5 and 8) and the advancement of women’s economic and social rights, through a more coherent and efficient UN system. We urge you to retain the references to specific ILO Conventions and to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as well as to the necessity for continued collaboration between UN Women and the ILO in follow-up of the Agreed Conclusions.

*Global Unions represent 72 million women workers worldwide and are present with a trade union delegation at the UNCSW61 represented by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Education International (EI), International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), Public Services International (PSI).*