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PRESS RELEASE

New ILO global report on equality at work 2007

Workplace discrimination persists and is taking on new forms

JAKARTA (ILO News): Despite major advances in fighting discrimination at work, mounting inequalities in income and opportunities and significant and persistent forms of workplace discrimination are causing growing concern, according to a new report by the International Labour Office (ILO) published recently.

In its most comprehensive report on discrimination to date, the ILO's "*Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*"¹ provides a global picture of job-related discrimination, citing both progress and failures in the struggle to fight discrimination ranging from traditional forms such as sex, race or religion, to newer forms based on age, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status and disability.

"The global picture of the struggle to overcome discrimination shows a mixture of major advances and failures," the ILO report says, citing progress since its first edition issued four years ago (See "Time for Equality at work", ILO 2003) and noting that most of the ILO's 180 member States have ratified its two core conventions on discrimination and are thus committed to creating legislation and policies against discrimination.

The report will be released in Indonesia on Monday, 14 May 2006, at Peninsula Hotel, Jakarta. It will be launched by Linda Wirth, ILO Gender Specialist and Director of SRO ILO Manila and Alan Boulton, Country Director of the ILO in Indonesia. The launch will be followed by panel discussions on gender discrimination titled "How do Women See Women?", presented Kemala Chandrakirana, Chair of Komnas Perempuan, Eileen Rachman, Director of EXPERD, HR Consultant, Ari Sunarijati, FSPSI Reformasi, and Maria Hartiningsih, senior journalist from Kompas. They will discuss a variety of issues related to Indonesian working women, ranging from laws and regulations, equal working treatment and conditions, to gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

¹ *Equality at Work: Tackling the challenges. Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference, 96th Session 2007, International Labour Office, Geneva. This Report may also be consulted on the ILO Internet site (www.ilo.org/declaration). ISBN 978-92-2-118130-9, ISSN 0074-6681*

These issues discussed are closely linked with the major theme of the Report, which is the persistence of gender gaps in employment and pay and the need for integrated policies addressing sex discrimination in remuneration and occupational segregation by sex. For example, the report states that throughout the European Union, the difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men across the economy throughout all establishments has remained high at 15 per cent.

Female labour force participation rates continued to rise significantly, currently at 56.6 per cent, thus narrowing the worldwide gender gap in labour participation rates. However, women still represent a distinct minority in legislative, senior official or managerial positions throughout the world, holding only 28.3 per cent of these senior jobs.

The report also provides many examples of discrimination on the basis of race and religion, social origin, caste or indigenusness, as well as against migrant workers. And it warns of the consequences of discrimination against younger and older workers, as well as inequalities based on sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, or a person's disability.

"These barriers to equality can prevent societies from realizing the full potential of today's globalized economy," the report says. The promotion of equal opportunities for decent work for all women and men, irrespective of race, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, is one of the means to advance in this direction.

The Global Report recommends a series of steps to combat discrimination and achieve the ILO's proposed action plan. These include promoting gender equality through more integrated and better-coordinated global action; mainstreaming non-discrimination and equality into ILO Decent Work Country Programmes taking into account specific needs of different groups; enacting better laws and promoting better enforcement; more effective non-regulatory initiatives such as government purchasing, and lending and investment policies; and helping workers and employers make equality a reality at the workplace through mechanisms such as collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct.

The Report is part of a series of studies issued annually on core ILO labour issues and was prepared under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1998. The Declaration focuses on four fundamental principles – freedom of association, the elimination of child labour, the elimination of forced labour and discrimination.