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PRESS RELEASE

Regional Conference towards a Domestic Workers' Convention

JAKARTA (ILO News): Domestic workers' organizations in conjunction with national trade union centres and trade unions from all over Asia will gather to discuss the issues relating to domestic workers' labour rights and how best to fill the protection gaps inherent in many national laws during 7 – 9 October at Sari Pan Pacific Hotel, Jakarta. Concrete action plans will be developed towards the adoption of standards-setting for domestic workers in the form of a convention supplemented by a recommendation.

The three-day Conference will be officially opened by the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, HE Muhaimin Iskandar, Chairman of Parliament Commission IX, Ribka Tjiptaning, Chairperson of the Global Network, Elizabeth Tang, and Director of the ILO in Indonesia, Peter van Rooij.

With the recent release of the ILO *Third Report on Decent Work for Domestic Workers*, or more commonly referred to as the Brown Report, much debate has erupted about the proposed Convention and supplementary Recommendation concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers that is due to be voted in June 2011 at the 100th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva.

In preparation for the historic vote, regional workers' groups have gathered to discuss the contents of the instruments and provide their input which is due in November 2010. They have much to discuss as the problems are vast and involve many different levels of cooperation.

Domestic workers work longer hours, earn lower salaries and have fewer days off than most other workers. However, in spite of their exposed work situation, most countries specifically exclude them from labour legislation and social protection applicable to other workers. Accordingly their work conditions are not monitored and as a result they are highly susceptible to exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous agents and employers.

Domestic workers working overseas are in most countries equally excluded from protections applicable to migrant workers in other sectors, and as a result migrant

domestic workers suffer high rates of exploitation, physical and sexual violence perpetrated by employers and agents.

Domestic workers have, supported by trade unions, increasingly succeeded in organizing themselves to address these labour and human rights violations, and the three-day regional conference is a measure of the success of workers' organizations in representing and advocating for fundamental labour rights for disadvantaged workers.

At the regional conference, participants will coordinate their campaign strategies for 2011 and develop a joint action plan for implementation of the proposed ILO Convention.

This conference is part of the global effort of setting an international labour standard for domestic workers. This work will culminate at the 100th session of the ILC in 2011 when member countries will adopt or reject the new international standard on labour conditions and protection of domestic workers. The ILO's Law and Practices Report entitled "Decent Work for Domestic Work" of April 2009 provides a detailed study of and justification for the need for international labour standards for domestic workers.

The Conference is jointly conducted by the ILO, Global Network, International Domestic Workers Network, in collaboration with the three main trade union confederations in Indonesia (KSPSI, KSBSI, KSPI), Jala PRT (National Advocacy Network on Domestic Workers), JAKERLA PRT (Indonesia Advocacy Network for DW Convention) and co-organizer MFA (Migrants Forum Asia).

Eighty participants from 15 countries will attend the Conference. The participating countries, among others, include India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Hong Kong, China, Philippines, South Africa, Malaysia, Australia, Peru, Belgium and Indonesia.

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