Statement of Trade Unions in Arab Countries
Promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers

The representatives of trade unions in Arab countries participating in the Regional Workshop on the Role of Trade Unions in Promoting Decent Work for Domestic Workers in Arab Countries held in Beirut from 11 to 12 November 2010, reached the following conclusions, which they adopted unanimously:

1. **Domestic work is real work.** As such domestic workers must be treated equally as other workers and enjoy all the rights and legal protection granted to all other workers.

2. Trade union rights and freedoms, including ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98, provide workers, including domestic workers, without any discrimination, the right to **organize themselves into unions**, engage in collective bargaining, and have a say in the decisions that affect them.

3. The new Convention and Recommendation must **cover all domestic workers**, without any exclusion or marginalization.

4. **Ending all forms of discrimination against domestic workers** is an utmost priority, including but to limited to discrimination based on sex, national extraction, religion, colour, race, or belief.

5. Domestic workers have the right to enjoy **fair terms of employment, decent working and living conditions**, a safe and secure workplace, social security, health care, and **respect for privacy**. Terms and conditions of work should be reflected in certified written contracts that are legally binding and enforceable in countries of origin and destination.

6. Domestic workers, like all other workers, are entitled to **decent wages** and should be covered by minimum wages. Payments in kind should not be more than a limited proportion of the remuneration that is established with the agreement of the workers, and their cash value should be fair and reasonable.

7. It is necessary to ratify and apply the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), for the **effective protection** of domestic workers recruited or placed by employment agencies, including migrant domestic workers, **against abusive practices**.

8. Domestic workers have the right to **protection against all forms of abuse and harassment**, including failure to pay wages and withholding of documents, as well as physical, verbal, sexual, and psychological abuse. Such protection is the responsibility of countries of origin and destination, employers, employment agencies, and other intermediaries.

9. Children below the **minimum admissible age** as prescribed by relevant international labour standards and related national legislations must be forbidden from engaging in domestic work.

10. Domestic workers have the **right to justice**, and it is necessary to facilitate their free access to fair and impartial courts and dispute resolution mechanisms. Pro-active monitoring systems of their conditions should also be instituted.

Participants expressed their full commitment to promote Decent Work for All, including Domestic Workers, and pledged to work to take the necessary steps to follow-up at national, regional, and international levels.

They stressed in this context their absolute support for the position of the Workers' Group position for the adoption of an International Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers supplemented by a Recommendation, and the enactment of national laws and regulations that recognize the rights of domestic workers without any discrimination.

Participants committed to bring those views to the ILO as part of the process leading to the second discussion in June 2011.