



**UNITED,  
WE GROW  
STRONGER!**

**International  
Domestic Workers  
Federation  
(IDWF)**

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Annual Report 2016

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# INTRODUCTION

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Words from Myrtle Witbooi,  
IDWF President

Another year has passed and we keep growing stronger and stronger.

Our voices, our campaigns, take place day after day around the world.

We remain an “open door” for all domestic workers, wherever they may be.

**We will not, and cannot, stop our work  
until all are free.**

We have shown the world that if women stand together  
and are united we can overcome any obstacle.

**Victory will be ours.**

Once again, I wish to thank to our General Secretary, our coordinators,  
our staff, and our loyal supporters for your commitment and hard work.

You are all very much appreciated.

# INTRODUCTION

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## Words from Elizabeth Tang, IDWF General Secretary

In 2016, we began to turn our 5-Year Strategic Plan into action! This required a great deal of hard work from everyone, but the achievements – many of which are noted in this report – speak for themselves.

For myself, it was gratifying to finally establish a functioning secretariat in Hong Kong to help manage and support our affiliates. I was also very pleased to be able to expand our staff presence to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region by welcoming Marie-José L. Tayah as Regional Coordinator, based in Beirut, Lebanon. This is a vital role in a region where the rights of domestic workers continue to be violated on a systematic and regular basis. This was sadly illustrated in December when domestic worker leaders, Sushila Rana and Roja Maya Limbu, were targeted by the Lebanese authorities for their legitimate efforts to organise fellow workers to advocate for their rights.

In Latin America, work with our affiliates focussed on laying the foundations necessary for IDWF's sustainability in the long term. We have now put in place a realistic and robust regional workplan focusing on the development of domestic worker leaders and regional coordination. Much work is still to be done, but with trust and cooperation I am confident we can build a strong presence in the region.

I would like to thank all our affiliates for the tireless dedication and commitment they showed throughout the year working for the rights and dignity of every domestic worker in the world. You never fail to deliver, even when this involves making big personal sacrifices. This annual report is a testament to your amazing work and achievements.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank those who supported the work of IDWF throughout 2016. Much of what you see in this report would not have been possible without their generosity.



# IDWF 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN - AREAS OF WORK AND HIGHLIGHTS

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## Federation Development

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### Development of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

#### **International Secretariat established**

By the end of 2016, the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) had successfully registered as a charitable organisation and established a functioning secretariat in Hong Kong SAR.

The secretariat is managed by IDWF General Secretariat, Elizabeth Tang. She is assisted by four members of staff: Regional Coordinator for Asia, Fish Ip (until September), Peng Choi (from October onwards); Accounting Officer, Ivan Wong; Project Manager, Kris Chiu; and Communication Officer, Yee Ting Ma.

#### **Expansion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region**

IDWF expanded its international presence through the appointment of a Regional Coordinator for MENA. Marie-José Tayah took up the post on 1 December 2016 and is based in Beirut, Lebanon.



## Affiliate Development

### Membership growth

By December 2016, the number of IDWF affiliates had grown to:  
58 domestic workers' organisations,  
representing over 500,000 domestic workers in 47 countries:

**19 countries in Africa,**

**10 in the Asia-Pacific,**

**12 in Latin America and the Caribbean,**

**5 in Europe,**

**and 1 in North America.**



## Capacity Building of Domestic Workers

In 2016, a total number of 2,743 domestic workers have been trained under projects supported by the OPIC, FNV, SASK, FES & ILO-Promote.

### Domestic Workers Leadership Formation Programme

The programme, initiated in 2016, aims to strengthen the leadership of IDWF affiliates. It contributes to IDWF's goal of training 950 domestic worker leaders as part of its 5-year Strategic Plan (2016 - 2020) and consists of three components:

- **To produce training manuals on planning and political education**
- **Conduct “Training of Trainers” (ToT) workshops**
- **Implement practicum\* in target countries**

By June 2016, a training manual on “Planning for Empowerment and Change” was drafted. This was followed by two 4-day intensive ToT regional workshops in Indonesia (31 July – 3 August) and Uganda (13-16 October). These workshops enabled the manual to be tested and 30 domestic worker leaders from IDWF affiliates to be trained.





The practicum was then piloted with three IDWF affiliates in Asia. This enabled six participants of the ToT regional workshop in Indonesia to strengthen their planning and leadership skills through “learning by doing” on return to their home countries.

Those who took part in the pilot were: Sothy Yim (Alliance of Cambodia Domestic Workers), Renu Linda and Anjana Sagar (National Domestic Workers Federation – India), Zarni Myint and Marlee Soblek (Thai Domestic Workers Network), and Maia Montenegro (UNITED Domestic Workers Union – Philippines). The practicum took place between October and December 2016, during which the participants drafted work plans, implemented the plans in their local communities, and conducted an evaluation of their activities. Throughout the whole process they were supported by IDWF staff and local mentors.

“The practicum project for domestic workers is an ambitious and innovative project undertaken by IDWF and its partnering affiliates. It has the potential to serve as a viable model for organising domestic workers who are working under such conditions of precarity and adversity”, said Winnie Ng, External Consultant, Practicum India.



## **The key results were:**

### **Cambodia:**

By the end of November 2016, the Alliance of Cambodia Domestic Workers (ACDW) was formed with a new statute and 69 new paying members.

### **India:**

The two domestic workers leaders, Anjana and Renu delivered training to 40 domestic workers and recruited 148 new members.

### **Thailand:**

Twelve domestic workers successfully convinced their employers to sign written contracts with them and organized activities to gather and disseminate clear and updated information to network members and other domestic workers from Myanmar concerning their right to travel using the “Pink Card” (an immigration and work permit card).

\* Practicum involves activities emphasizing the practical application of theory, especially one in which a student gains on-the-job experience in a field of study.

## Campaigns and Research – Achievement of Legal Rights

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### Ratification of C189

Jamaica

**On 11 October, Jamaica became the 23rd country to officially ratify C189\*.**

The Jamaican Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, announced the ratification whilst participating in the United Nations High Level Panel on Economic Empowerment of Women at UN Headquarters in New York, recognizing the presence of Shirley Pryce, Executive Committee Member of IDWF and the Jamaica Household Workers Association.

There are an estimated 100,000 household workers in Jamaica who will benefit from the ratification.

\*The convention will enter into force on 11 October 2017.



Guinea

**On 26 December 2016, the Guinean parliament approved ratification of C189\*.**

One hundred and fifty members of the domestic workers trade union, Syndicat National des Employes de Maison (SYNEM-Guinea), who campaigned for ratification, were there to witness the announcement.

“It’s a first victory. But this is just the beginning. We promise to continue the struggle so that all the rights of domestic workers can be respected,” said Doukouré Asmaou Bah, General Secretary of SYNEM-Guinea.

\* Guinea subsequently ratified C189 on 25 April 2017. The convention will come into force in 25 April 2018.



# “My Fair Home” Re-launched

On International Domestic Workers Day (16 June), in conjunction with the 5th anniversary of the C189, the IDWF re-launched the “My Fair Home” together with the ten campaign Champions (<http://bit.ly/MFH10c>).



**CHODAWU**  
Tanzania



**CHODAWU-Z**  
Zanzibar



**We are the CHAMPIONS of MY FAIR HOME!**



Highlights include the campaign launch by the Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia (KSPI). They collected 317 pledges from members who employ domestic workers. Furthermore, they conducted a survey among the membership of the Metal Unions Federation (FSPMI) to identify domestic workers employers in preparation for longterm organizing of domestic workers from within the union.

The “My Fair Home” campaign was launched in 2015 as a collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and IDWF. It is part of a global campaign for the ratification of C189, encouraging individuals to commit to the standards and ethics enshrined in the convention.

Those who wish to make personal pledges can do so at here.





## Hong Kong – Code of Practice for Employment Agencies (CoP)

On 13 January 2017, the Hong Kong SAR government published a Code of Practice for Employment Agencies (CoP). The CoP includes both existing statutory requirements for employment agencies and a new set of minimum standards. Although these standards are not legally binding, the government expects all employment agencies to comply with them, and will take into account their compliance when granting, renewing, revoking, or refusing their licence. The publication of the CoP follows a consultation on the draft (April to June 2016) that included input from IDWF affiliate, Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions (FADWU).

On publication of the CoP, the Hong Kong SAR Labour Department stated that it would “closely monitor [its] effectiveness” and that “If the [CoP] is far from satisfactory, [we] may consider adopting other means including [...] seeking legislative amendments [...].”

## Uniting Domestic Workers In Mexico - Advocating for ratification of C189

The campaign to promote C189 among domestic workers was carried out in five states: Chiapas, Colima, Mexico City, Puebla, Republic, and State of Mexico by SINACTRAHO domestic workers union. As a result 836 domestic workers became members. In response to strong campaigning by SINACTRAHO, trade unions, and other civil society organization, the Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare published a book called, “Domestic Work in Mexico: The Vast Social Debt” to promote the domestic workers’ cause.



# Domestic workers in Nepal demand rights to be enshrined in new Labour Act



In 2016, the Government of Nepal started the process of drafting new labour legislation under the Labour Act. The Labour Act is currently being reviewed by parliament and will be endorsed in the near future. The draft bill recognises domestic workers are workers, however, its provisions on the protection of domestic workers rights are vague. Of concern are the inclusion of a separate minimum wage, statutory holidays, and working hour regulations for domestic workers.

In order to gather input on how best to incorporate full legal protections for domestic workers in the draft bill, as well as raise awareness amongst domestic workers regarding the Labour Act, IDWF and the Home Workers' Union of Nepal (HUN) organised consultation meetings in ten districts (Bhaktapur, Dhading, Jhapa, Kabhre, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makawanpur, Morang, Sunsari, and Udaypur) in March and April 2016. As a result of the consultations 110 domestic workers joined HUN. The regional meetings were followed by a national consultation on 10 May 2016 where 65 domestic workers presented their recommendations on the provisions in the draft Labour Act.

# Migrant Domestic Workers Organising and Advocacy

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## AFRICA

Tanzania

### **Domestic Worker Unions Assemble - Ratify C189 to safeguard the rights of migrant domestic workers**

A 3-day capacity building workshop on migrant domestic workers was organised by IDWF in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) on 19-21 April 2016 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The workshop brought together leaders of domestic workers unions, rights activists, and government policy makers from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Participants identified several challenges facing East African migrant domestic workers, including lack of access to information, non-cooperation between sending and receiving countries, unscrupulous recruitment agents, and a lack of sufficient pre-departure training for prospective migrants. East African embassies, especially in Gulf countries, were criticised for being ill equipped to handle cases of abuse, including the inadequate provision of shelters.

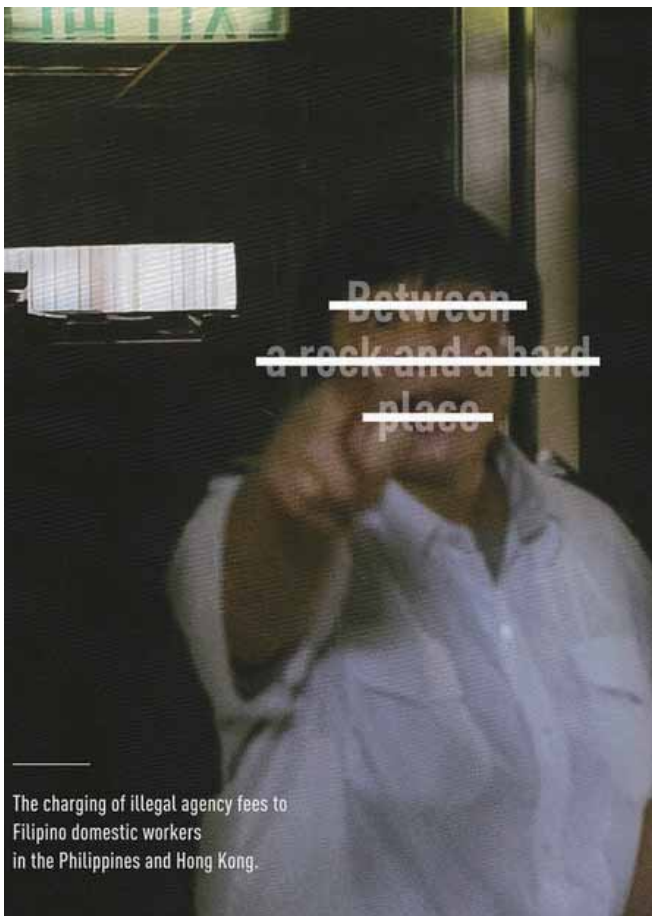
IDWF called on East African and Gulf countries to ratify C189 in order to protect the rights of domestic workers.

## ASIA

Hong Kong

### **“Between a Rock and a Hard Place” – Project investigating illegal fees charged by employment agencies in Hong Kong and the Philippines**

In 2015/2016, the Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions (FADWU), Progressive Labor Union of Domestic Workers – Hong Kong (PLU), Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU), and IDWF worked together on a project that investigated the illegal fees charged to migrant domestic workers by employment agencies in Hong Kong and the Philippines. The project team was supported by Rights Exposure, an international human rights consultancy.



A team of PLU members were trained in conducting the research for the project. This consisted of qualitative interviews with 68 Filipino domestic workers. From these interviews a research report was produced that documented the systemic practice of charging illegal fees by recruitment agencies, in both the Philippines and Hong Kong, to Filipino migrant domestic workers. The report concluded that the Hong Kong SAR government's actions were wholly inadequate in protecting migrant domestic workers from unscrupulous agencies. The project team engaged directly with government representatives from both Hong Kong and the Philippines to raise their concerns. The PLU research team successfully developed relationships with key Legislative Council members, ILO officials, and staff in civil society organisations working with domestic workers. This helped forge a stronger alliance of voices speaking out on this issue in a variety of platforms.





# MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

## Lebanon

### Detention and deportation of Nepali domestic worker activists

In December 2016, two Nepali activists, Sushila Rana and Roja Maya Limbu, were detained by the General Directorate of General Security in Lebanon for violating local laws. On 10 December, Sushila was deported to Nepal. Roja was kept in detention before being deported at the end of January 2017.

Both Sushila and Roja were leaders of the Domestic Workers Union, formed in Lebanon in January 2015.

The union, the first of its kind in the MENA region, called for the abolition of the kafala system, organised demonstrations, held seminars with trade unions in countries of origin, and assisted migrant domestic workers experiencing problems. On 14 December 2016, IDWF, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and Human Rights Watch issued a joint public statement condemning the detention of Sushila and Roja and called on the Government of Lebanon to immediately release them. With support from Walk Free, over 45,000 signatures were collected for a petition demanding their release.



“This is a serious violation of basic human rights and the ILO’s core Conventions on the Right to Organise and on Freedom of Association”, said Myrtle Witbooi, President of IDWF. “We also call on the Government of Lebanon to observe and abide by Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that ensures the right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention.”



## NORTH AMERICA

### USA

#### **The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) campaign on immigrant rights**

The NDWA continued an intensive campaign for the rights of immigrants in the USA. The majority of NDWA members are immigrants, many of whom are undocumented.

The campaign included the highly publicized “100 Women, 100 Miles” pilgrimage from an immigration detention center to Washington DC during Pope Francis’ visit to the USA in September 2016.

## Participation in Regional and International Conferences and Events

IDWF was invited to speak at, participate in, and co-organise a number of regional and international conferences, and events by its partners and allies. Five key events are briefly detailed below.



European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) Women's Committee (BELGIUM, 2 May) - IDWF Europe Coordinator, Karin Pape, and Executive Members, Grace Papa and Wendy Paula Garlaza Quinonez spoke on the rights of domestic workers at the Women's Committee of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) in Brussels.

UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment (COSTA RICA, July) - IDWF leaders, Marcelina Bautista (Mexico), Carmen Cruz (Costa Rica), and Ruth Solar (Chile) participated in a consultation meeting of the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment in Costa Rica. The Panel has identified the care economy as a priority issue.







Association of Women in Development (AWID) Forum 2016 (BRAZIL, 9-10 September) – IDWF sent a delegation of nine members to participate in the AWID Forum. The forum, which takes place every four years, was entitled “Feminist Futures”. A diverse array of organisations took part, including those working on the rights of women, workers, LGBTI, and indigenous people. The forum gave space for the groups to share their experiences and vision for the future. IDWF participants led two workshops;

“Domestic Workers Organising Across Nationality and Ethnicity Lines” - speakers included Phosuk Gasing (Hong Kong), Wendy Paula Garlaza Quinonez (Italy), and Celeste Faison (USA).

“Domestic Workers Reclaiming Rights and Justice through Collective Power” - speakers included Shirley Pryce (Jamaica), Marcelina Bautista (Mexico), Ernestina Ochoa (Peru), and Myrtle Witbooi (South Africa).

Campaign to promote the rights of domestic workers in MENA (BAHRAIN, 1 October) – A campaign on the rights of domestic workers was launched during a 2-day workshop entitled, “Migrant Domestic Workers Advocacy and Empowerment in the Gulf Region”. The workshop was organised by the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) in co-operation with German institution Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and IDWF.







Congress on Domestic and Care Work (SPAIN, 1-2 October) – Wendy Paula Garlaza Quiñonez and Juanita Flores, members of IDWF Executive Committee, were amongst 300 workers who participated in the first Congress on Domestic and Care Work in Spain. Participants were given the opportunity to represent the problems that domestic workers face, such as social security, unemployment, migration legislation, occupational health, and safety among other issues.

### Summary List of international conferences where IDWF was represented:



## OUR KEY FUNDERS & PARTNERS

ACVCSC Service Union, Ford Foundation, FNV Mondaal, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, ILO – Promote, ITUC, IUF, Novo -Tides Foundation, Olaf Palme International Centre, SASK Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland and WIEGO.

## IDWF 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: WHAT'S NEXT

### IDWF's 5-Year Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

#### Overall objective

"By 2020, a strong, democratic and united domestic workers' global organisation will be contributing to the protection and advancement of the rights of its members and domestic workers everywhere."

In 2017-18, the IDWF workplan will help the organisation move towards achieving the five goals detailed below. The active participation of IDWF affiliates and continuous support from our partners will be vital in achieving these goals.

#### The Five Goals

#### Programmes & Activities in 2017-18

Federation Development – Increase membership to at least 670,000, in 80 affiliates, in 60 countries.

- Convene the IDWF 2nd Congress to elect ExCo members for next 5-year term
- Convene regular ExCo meetings to ensure the organisation is moving forward according to its rules and work plans
- To work with affiliates to expand their organisations with more members and leaders
- Identify and affiliate new domestic worker organisations
- Strengthen organisational infrastructure with tools, such as databases, social media platforms, etc. to facilitate sharing, networking and exchange among affiliates, between affiliates and the IDWF, and with other trade unions and CSOs
- Develop systems & tools to allow membership fee payment to be more efficient and convenient
- To actively identify new and additional financial resources to meet the needs of affiliates and increase IDWF's staff

## The Five Goals

## Programmes & Activities in 2017-18

**Strengthening Capacity Building** – 950 domestic worker leaders will have the capacity to deliver trainings to 20,000 domestic workers.

- Publish two training modules: “Planning for Success” and “Political Education”
- Publish a “Good Practice Report” to showcase some of the activities among affiliates in Asia
- Conduct regional training of trainers workshop for French-speaking affiliates in Africa
- Implement domestic workers “Practicum” with affiliates
- Implement a regional leadership development programme in Latin America
- Conduct organisational assessment with five affiliates annually to identify key challenges and needs for strategic planning

**Effective Campaign and Research** – IDWF will have the resources necessary to conduct theme based campaigns and/or research

- To support affiliates’ advocacy and campaigning to ratify C189 and enactment of local laws, targeting countries such as Antigua, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ghana, Nepal, and Tanzania
- To launch advocacy and campaign actions on gender-based violence at work and the ILO process, including development of two toolkits and regional workshops in Africa, Asia, and Latin America
- Publish a handbook on child domestic workers and conduct awareness raising workshops in selected countries
- To support affiliates in implementing the “My Fair Home” campaign and to build a network of supporters in at least 10 countries including Bahrain, Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and Uganda

## The Five Goals

## Programmes & Activities in 2017-18

Migrant Domestic Workers Organizing – 200,000 migrant domestic workers will be members of IDWF

- Convene at least three capacity building workshops for affiliates in Asia, Africa and Middle East.
- Provide capacity building to support migrant domestic workers advocacy and organising in Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon
- Organise skills training for refugees and migrant domestic workers in Lebanon
- Conduct research in Morocco and Tunisia on migrant domestic workers
- To represent migrant domestic workers in regional dialogues and processes such as GFMD, Colombo Process, etc.
- Conduct a regional leadership workshop for Filipino migrant domestic workers leaders followed by “practicum” in four countries

Representation of Domestic Workers – IDWF affiliates will have the needs of their membership represented at an international level through increasing representation in global trade union organisations, and strategic partnership with civil society organisations.

- To work collaboratively with the ILO, trade unions, and other CSOs in its advocacy and campaigns on gender-based violence, care economy and migrant domestic workers
- To participate in the International Labour Conference in 2018.
- To register IDWF with the ILO and UN Commission on Status of Women as a workers representative body
- Supports affiliates to build alliances with multi-sector unions or national trade union centres in national, regional and international levels

# INFORMATION ON THE IDWF

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## About

- **Globally there are about 67.1 million domestic workers**
- **80% of domestic workers are women**
- **11.5 million domestic workers are international migrants**

The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) is a membership-based organisation of domestic workers led by women. It was founded in October 2013, at an inaugural Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The key objective of the IDWF is to be a strong, democratic and united domestic workers' global organisation in order to protect and advance domestic workers' rights in every country.

The IDWF is also affiliated to two other global organisations:



International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF): <http://www.iuf.org>



Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO): <http://www.wiego.org/>

# THE IDWF TEAM

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President: **Myrtle Witbooi**, South African Domestic and Allied Workers Union, South Africa

Vice-President: **Ernestina Ochoa**, IPROFOTH, Peru

General Secretary: **Elizabeth Tang** <elizabeth.tang@idwfed.org>

## IDWF Executive Committee:

### Titular members:

**Juanita Flores**, National Domestic Workers Alliance, USA

**Phobsuk Gasing**, Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions, Hong Kong

**Wendy Paula Galarza Quinonez**, FILCAMS, Italy

**Shirley Pryce**, Jamaica Household Workers Association, Jamaica

### Alternate members:

**Gillian Atwell**, National Union of Domestic Employees, Trinidad & Tobago

**Asmaou Bah**, SYNEM, Guinea

**Sonu Danuwar**, Home Workers Trade Union of Nepal, Nepal

**Grace Papa**, ACV-CSC Service Union, Belgium

**Antonia Pena**, National Domestic Workers Alliance, USA

**Elena Perez**, Asociación de Trabajadoras del Hogar, Dominican Republic

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Middle East & North Africa: **Marie-José L. Tayah**, Lebanon <Mtayah@idwfed.org>

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FITH · IDWF · FITD

## **International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)**

# **“UNITING FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS’ RIGHTS!”**

The International Domestic Workers Federation  
commits to unite  
all domestic workers at all levels (local, national and global)  
to overcome the exploitation and abuse  
experienced by domestic workers across the world.

It is part of a global labour movement,  
seeking to join forces with all workers in the struggle  
to change power relations  
and to secure justice, dignity, security and peace.



Website: [idwfed.org](http://idwfed.org)



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