

International treaty on domestic workers' rights to come into force next year – UN



A domestic worker in India at the early stages of preparing rice for consumption. She will be paid 100 rupees after drying 80 kilograms of rice grain. Photo: ILO/Mohammad S. J.

5 September 2012 – A United Nations treaty which provides a set of international standards to improve the lives of millions of domestic workers worldwide has now been ratified by a second Member State, the Philippines, allowing it to come into force next year, the world body announced today.

The Convention on Domestic Workers, which states that workers around the world who care for families and households must have the same basic labour rights as other employees, was adopted at the annual conference of the UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) last year in Geneva.

To enter into force, however, the Convention required ratification by two countries. In June, Uruguay became the first country to ratify it.

“Today’s ratification by the Philippines sends a powerful signal to the millions of domestic workers who will be protected when the Convention comes into force,” said ILO’s Director-General, Juan Somavia. “I hope it will also send a signal to other Member States and that we will soon see more and more countries committing to protect the rights of domestic workers.”

Recent ILO estimates based on national surveys or censuses in 117 countries place the number of domestic workers at a minimum of 53 million, but experts say there could be as many as 100 million across the world.

In developing countries, they make up at least four to 12 per cent of those in wage employment, and around 83 per cent of them are women or girls, many of whom are migrant workers.

“The new standard covers all domestic workers and provides for special measures to protect those workers who, because of their young age or nationality or live-in status, may be exposed to additional risks,” ILO said in a [news release](#).

The Convention also states that domestic workers must have the right to reasonable working hours, weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours, a limit on in-kind payments and clear information on terms and conditions of their employment, as well as the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

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