



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021



## This virus will not undermine our fight!



**Never forget that a political, economic or religious crisis will be enough to cast doubt on women's rights. These rights will never be vested. You'll have to stay vigilant your whole life."**

Written 50 years ago by renowned feminist Simone de Beauvoir, these words resonate today as women the world over confront the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, there is good reason to fear losing the gains in equality achieved over the last 50 years as the pandemic amplifies gender inequalities and exacerbates the daily challenges faced by women. ILO and OECD reports confirm that women workers have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as they represent the majority of the workforce in sectors hardest hit by COVID-19-related job losses and reductions in working hours. In the Global South, women make up the majority of rural workers and informal workers most of whom do not have any social protection. Globally, women are more likely to be employed under precarious conditions including part-time work, thereby increasing their social vulnerability, and to take responsibility for the unpaid work of the family/home. Quarantines and lockdowns have dramatically increased gender based violence including domestic violence and sexual harassment.

But we should not despair. Our history is made of struggles. IUF affiliates have already successfully promoted and implemented equality policies.



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International Women's Day celebrates this ongoing fight. **March 8, 2021** is the day to reinforce a union equality agenda that includes commitments to:

- **Continue promoting women's leadership and women membership in unions**
- **Prevent women from losing their jobs by negotiating policies that keep them in work and give also specific attention to jobs that will be automated out of existence**
- **Help women find new jobs if they've lost them**
- **Negotiate gender hiring policies to recruit more women under better conditions, to widen job opportunities and to revalue jobs traditionally performed by women (through pay equity that includes equality mapping)**
- **Ensure that collective bargaining demands include equality impact assessments of policies related to COVID-19**
- **Prioritize the fight against gender-based violence in the world of work, including domestic violence, through the promotion of C190 and R206**
- **Gender-proof occupational health and safety**
- **Lobby for a gender-just food system from plough to plate**
- **Foster women workers' networks and participation within IUF transnational company activities**
- **Join campaigns to invest in quality, public care services which have the potential to generate decent jobs, particularly for women**
- **Negotiate child care provisions in CBAs**
- **Campaign to avoid cutting government subsidies and social protections, especially in health and education budgets, wages and pensions, which have a disproportionate effect on women and children**
- **Join civil society requests for gender-sensitive auditing of government responses to the COVID-19 crisis**

### **ON IWD 2021, THE IUF INVITES YOU TO JOIN THE FIGHT!**

International Women's Day traces its origins to March 8, 1857 when textile workers on New York's Lower East Side demonstrated for their rights. On an international level it was launched in 1910 at the 2nd International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen and first celebrated in 1911 by millions of workers in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

International women's Day is a product of the socialist labour movement, and it remains as true as ever that union membership is the best defense against discrimination. The most important fight is for the right for all workers to join and be represented by a trade union.