

GOVERNMENTS, GLOBAL EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS JOINTLY AGREE TO CALL FOR URGENT RATIFICATION OF ILO CONVENTION 181 TO BOOST EMPLOYMENT

Geneva, 26th October 2009 – Governments, global employers and trade unions have jointly agreed to urge ILO Member States for further ratifications of Convention 181 to help boost global employment at a time of economic crisis. This decision was reached at a tripartite conference organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva on 21 and 22 October to promote its Convention 181 on private employment agencies.

The International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies, Ciett, along with its trade union counterpart UNI Global, played a key role in bringing this conference about and in the dialogue that took place.

As a result of the discussions, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ITUC) and 30 governments from all around the world have adopted an official document summarising the points of consensus between the three parties, calling for further ratifications of Convention 181 and stressing:

- The positive contribution of regulated private employment agencies (PrEAs) to better functioning labour markets by facilitating transitions, helping reducing undeclared work, contributing to decent conditions for cross border labour migration and implementing national governmental employment policy.
- The fact that appropriate regulation on PrEAs should include and promote principles of C181.
- That regulation on PrEAs should be fair, non discriminatory and objective. Governments are called to identify and review unjustified obstacles which may hamper the opportunities for PrEAs to operate and, where appropriate, to remove them.
- That enforcement by public authorities and social partners of regulation which applies to PrEAs is key.
- That sectoral social dialogue should be promoted as the appropriate platform to negotiate working conditions for agency workers as well as the use of services offered by PrEAs.
- That cooperation between public employment services and PrEAs should be encouraged and developed in order to facilitate work mobility and transitions in the labour market.

“The low level of adoption of this crucial labour standard presents a major barrier to reducing unemployment and improve the functioning of labour markets,” commented Denis Pennel, Managing Director of Ciett. “It is urgent that additional countries ratify ILO Convention 181 - or at least implement the key principles of the convention through their national regulation - so that the private employment agency sector can better support workers and businesses in getting back on their feet. Ratification of Convention 181 is also a way to promote the ILO Decent Work agenda.”

ILO Convention 181 was adopted in 1997 by a consensus between all ILO members (governments, employers and workers). So far 21 countries have ratified it, while regulation on private employment agencies meeting principles of Convention 181 is in place in many other countries.

Indeed, ILO Convention 181 provides the legal framework for private employment agencies to operate and safeguards and protects the rights of agency workers. By allowing private employment agencies access to the labour market, Convention 181 also helps stimulate global job creation, as employment agencies can help meet and fill the flexible employment needs of businesses unable to create permanent posts, thereby eliminating a barrier to employment for many jobseekers.

About Ciett (www.ciett.org)

As the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies, Ciett is the authoritative voice representing the common interests of the agency work industry worldwide. Ciett is the only association that represents agency work at large - covering 40 countries - and in its diversity - gathering six of the largest multinational staffing companies as well as hundreds of thousands of SMEs.

Ciett promotes the contribution of millions of agency workers to the economy. Representing a well-regulated industry, members of Ciett refuse to compete at the expense of workers' rights and work hand-in-hand with governments to fight illegal work and social dumping.

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