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Commission on the Status of Women

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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and
to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic
objectives and action in critical areas of concern and
further actions and initiatives: priority theme**

Statement submitted by Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Gender-related violence in the workplace

Given that gender-based violence:

- (a) Is one of the most pervasive violations of many fundamental principles and rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- (b) Can never be justified in the name of honour, ideologies or religious and cultural beliefs;
- (c) Represents a serious obstacle to the goal of equality between women and men;
- (d) Prevents the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- (e) Occurs at all stages of women's lives; exists in private and public areas; occurs in all geographical regions; concerns a large percentage of workers who suffer it in the workplace;
- (f) Is due to abusive and unacceptable behaviour by one or more individuals and can take many different forms;
- (g) Concerns any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, as defined in article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993;
- (h) Can be one-off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour, be among colleagues, between superiors and subordinates or by third parties, and range from minor cases of disrespect to more serious acts, including criminal offences;
- (i) Includes bullying, mobbing and harassment based on a person's domestic circumstances, race, language, sexual orientation, political beliefs or opinions on trade unions, and national or social origin;
- (j) Hinders the exit from the current economic, financial, political and social world crisis since it exacerbates previous forms of marginalization, isolation and poverty, generates new ones and increases social instability;
- (k) Is increasing in many nations and areas of the world owing to the dramatic labour crisis, which is the worst since the 1930s;
- (l) Is also related to traditional practices that are harmful to women, including sexual and genital mutilation and forced weddings, which lead to an unbalanced balance of power between men and women;
- (m) Will be the main theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women; the session will provide an invaluable opportunity to develop actions aimed at combating forms of violence and discrimination against women.

Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, a member of the global trade union movement and of the International Trade Union Confederation, expresses its deep concern about the plight of millions of working women caught up in multiple

forms of violence in the workplace, which affect their chances of living decent lives in dignity and freedom, and condemns harassment and violence in all their forms.

In 2007, European social partners signed an autonomous framework agreement on harassment and violence at work. They condemned violence and harassment in all their forms and consider such issues as a mutual concern of employers and workers since they can have serious social and economic consequences.

In 2009, the annual International Labour Conference, which brings together the International Labour Organization (ILO) tripartite constituents, including member States and representatives of workers' and employers' organizations from the represented countries, acknowledged the need to set work-related strategies for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence.

Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro believes that urgent measures are needed at the international level to assist women workers to withstand the serious massive violence against women and the pressures of today and to establish a strategy to prevent and eliminate those practices.

The plan to prevent and eradicate gender-related violence at work should be comprehensive and should include the following elements:

- (a) Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity;
- (b) Considering gender equality and non-discrimination as cross-cutting issues in the four strategic objectives of ILO: fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism, as stated in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work;
- (c) Developing a policy at the national level for Governments and social partners, specifically for the world of work;
- (d) Promoting relevant national legislative frameworks together with implementation tools;
- (e) Addressing violence against women in the workplace through social dialogue, including collective bargaining where applicable, at the enterprise, sectoral or national levels;
- (f) Stressing the importance of elaborating effective measures to prevent, identify and eradicate stress-related illnesses, sexual harassment and gender violence at work;
- (g) Stating the responsibility of employers, in consultation with workers and trade unions, to determine, review and monitor the appropriate procedures for preventing and dealing with problems of harassment and violence in the workplace;
- (h) Requiring enterprises to have a clear statement outlining that harassment and violence in the workplace are not tolerated and specifying the procedure to be followed in case of problems, including investigation and dealing with complaints, taking appropriate measures against the perpetrator and providing support for the victim;
- (i) Identifying as particularly vulnerable to violence, women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, women migrants, including women migrant workers, women in poverty living in rural or remote communities,

destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women, displaced women, repatriated women, women living in poverty and women in situations of armed conflict, foreign occupation, wars of aggression, civil wars and terrorism, including hostage-taking, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action.
