



## South African Domestic Service And Allied Workers Union

*Newsletter 4  
March - June 2012*

***A year has gone by, after the adoption of International Labour Organisation's (ILO)***

***Convention 189 for Domestic Workers.*** We have worked so hard for nearly four years, to ensure that our work is recognised as decent work! On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011 we made history when Convention 189 was adopted.

In this year gone by, only one government has signed the ratification of Convention 189. We set ourselves a goal: We want at least 12 governments to sign, one each month as part of the international **12 to 12 Campaign** with the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) and International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN).

South Africa should be the second government to sign and ratify 189, meaning it becomes labour law, as South Africa was the most supportive and vocal government leading the campaign for Convention 189 at the International Labour Conference.

***We urge our government to sign, and ratify, Convention 189!  
South Africa, take the lead and  
Africa will follow!***

***- Hester Stephens, President***



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## **JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> DECLARED INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS' DAY!**

On June 16<sup>th</sup> 2011, at the 100th International Labour Conference in Geneva Switzerland, the world's governments, workers and employers voted yes to the ILO Convention 189 to guarantee the basic rights of domestic workers. ***June 16 - the day that workers won the historic victory has become International Domestic Workers' Day.***

On June 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, the first anniversary of our huge victory. We celebrate and fight on! We say strong and loud to governments:

**Ratify Convention 189!**

**Review national laws and practices!**

**Reform them !**

***First step for South Africa:*** Ratify the Convention – Take the lead and Africa will follow ! South Africa is a global leader in the field of labour legislation for domestic workers and worked for the adoption of 189.

Many requirements of 189 are already met by existing laws. Important amendments to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Labour Relations Act are needed to comply fully with the Convention. *All workers should learn what Convention 189 means in the workplace!*

### ***Second step for South Africa:***

*That the recommendations of Convention 189 become law. Amend labour legislation related to domestic workers' rights. This includes setting of Minimum Wages and Working Conditions.*

***Next steps:*** These laws should be implemented, monitored and inspected. South Africa can only do it by employing more labour inspectors. Regular inspections will ensure that employers are abiding by the law, and that domestic workers' rights are implemented in the workplace, every day.

***SADSAWU celebrates the first  
International Domestic Workers'  
Day at Community House  
Cape Town Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June***



**OPEN LETTER TO:  
South African Government  
Minister of Labour  
Nelisiwe Oliphant**

*Dear Honourable Minister,*

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. This was a great and historical day in the lives of Domestic Workers all over the world.

However, it is now one year later and we are still waiting on the Ratification of Convention 189.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012, domestic workers had a side event at the ILO. We as South Africa had the SADSAWU President present, and an invitation was sent to the Minister's office. It was a sad day for us when the office did not send a representative to address the meeting where there were 9 the domestic workers representing 9 countries discussing the ratification of Convention 189.

We appeal to our Minister to please sign this very important document.

This Convention 189 is about us Domestic Workers, and for us Domestic Workers.

Don't deny us our freedom and dignity - we refuse to be the slaves of the nation any longer.

And, we are workers also.

Thanking you,

Hester Stephens and Myrtle Witbooi  
*President Secretary General*





## **SADSAWU'S FIRST HOME, COMMUNITY HOUSE (CH), DECLARED HERITAGE SITE**

3 May 2012

As a centre of militant spirit and action, Community House played an important role in South Africa's history in the mid-1980s. In Apartheid South Africa repression was at a high, the worker's movement was reviving with the an intense struggle for liberation. As a site for mass struggles, CH bore witness to the unifying role of labour in the struggle for liberation. For many throughout the country, Community House symbolised organised opposition to inequality, discrimination and oppression. Today, as home to a community of activists engaged in broader struggles for social transformation, Community House retains this symbolism.

***It stands thus as an authentic symbol of resilience, of fighting spirit and of hope for the future.***

From this site some of the largest strikes and anti-apartheid campaigns were organised during the 1980s and 1990s that mark its historic significance. The labour movement played a critical role in shaping South African history but within national heritage, these stories remained largely untold. In the 1980s a number of labour and community activists were commemorated in the halls and foyers within CH.

***Those who demonstrated selfless dedication to the struggle for the liberation of the South African people. All were detained by apartheid's security police. All with the exception of one were murdered by the apartheid state.***

***Their histories of struggle and sacrifice represent the histories of thousands of others who were detained, tortured and killed by the apartheid regime... Elijah Loza, Storey Luke Mazwembe, Jeanette Curtis, Ashley Kriel, Neil Aggett, Imam Haron and Wilfred Rhodes.***



***"We domestic workers were running the kitchen here and catering for events. The COSATU Conference in 1987 was our first big one, another highlight was celebrating Mandela's birthday."***

***SADSAWU remembers and salutes Ma Mafenuke and Margaret Louw in the struggle for domestic workers' rights.***

***Florrie De Villiers "It's a great day that domestic workers are back in Community House"***



## RATIFY CONVENTION 189! SUPPORT THE "12 TO 12" CAMPAIGN



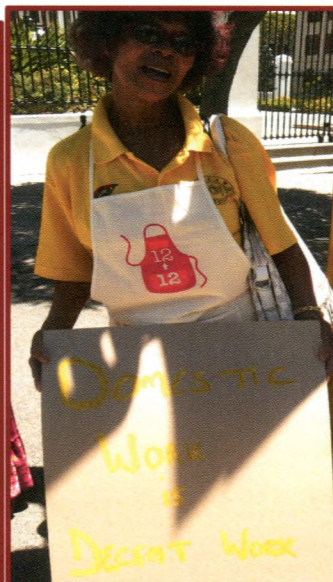
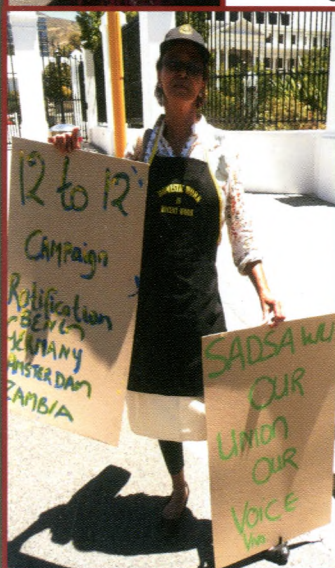
SADSAWU, and the The International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) supports the International Trade Union Confederation's "12 by 12" campaign, aiming to get 12 countries to ratify the C189 in 2012. To launch this campaign, on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, domestic workers' organisations and



ITUC affiliated unions across the world held public actions across all continents in countries like Indonesia, Senegal, Kenya, Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Colombia. In South Africa SADSAWU showed support for ratification of 189 in front of the gates of Parliament.

### *In South Africa SADSAWU can report:*

- February – meeting held with the Labour Portfolio Committee regarding Convention 189,
- May - follow up meeting with Labour Portfolio Committee
- 25<sup>th</sup> May the Social Partners at NEDLAC supported Convention 189 and urges the Minister of Labour sign and ratify.
- We are now waiting for ratification which needs the signature and approval of the full Cabinet.

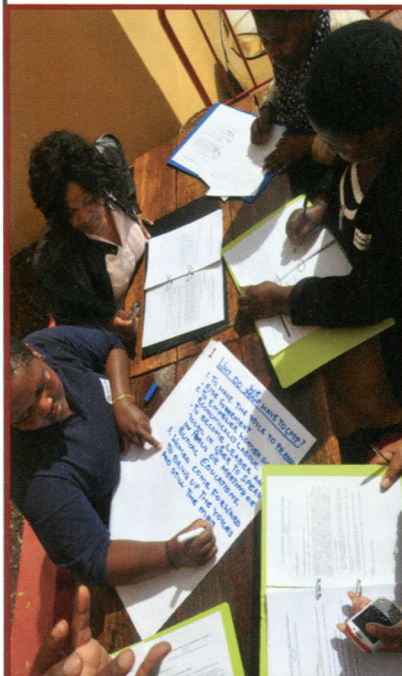




## **BUILDING SOLIDARITY ! SADSAWU ACTIVITIES**

### ***Johannesburg and Cape Town***

- SADSAWU comrades – Christine Anthony, Elizabeth Ely and Monica Ntuli formed the Change Team on the Peer Learning Workshop as part of a Gender Action Learning Programme coordinated by the Labour Research Service and Gender at Work.
- SADSAWU members had a workshop facilitated by Social Law Project from University of Western Cape and International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG)'s Nandi on "Strengthening SADSAWU Through Organising"



**LAUNCH OF KHAYELITSHA  
SADSAWU DESK IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH WORKERS WORLD MEDIA  
PRODUCTIONS (WWMP)**

*The office is open for domestic  
workers at these times:*

- Monday, Wednesday 2-7pm
- Saturdays 9am-1pm

*You can call and speak to, or  
sms Sindiswa at 0724117349*





## **MORE SADSAWU ACTIVITIES...**

**January** First Committee 2012 Planning Meeting

**February** Sea Point Branch Meeting - report on Convention 189

**With Congress of South African Trade unions (COSATU)**

- Workshop with COSATU on the role of the Committee

**March** COSATU's Gender Committee adopted a resolution to assist SADSAWU in the recruitment campaign.

### **International Solidarity:**

- Comrade Myrtle attended conferences in Switzerland, Ghana, Turkey and Brazil as part of the 12 to 12 Campaign.
- Comrade Hester attended the ILC in Geneva Switzerland, and a side event on 8<sup>th</sup> June, on the ratification of Convention 189 attended by 9 governments and domestic worker representatives.

## **MEMBER MILESTONES:**

### **Congratulations!**

- To the 10 members who will do an education course UWC and Ditsela. More details next time.

## **DESK OF GENERAL SECRETARY**

### **Myrtle Witbooi:**

*The year 2011 was a tremendous year for Domestic Workers with the adoptions of Convention 189. I urge all workers to join the union. Come learn more about your rights as domestic workers. We don't want labour laws just on paper, we need to empower know our rights as workers.*

*Why not join the union now?*

### **Thanks to:**

*All funder partners including Signals Choir/BremenBazaars, Ruth Kadalie, FNV Mondiaal, Solifonds, Global Network, ITUC, Solidar*

*And solidarity partners COSATU, LRS and UWC's Social Law Project, ILRIG*

## **RECRUITMENT ROUNDUP:**

*January to June 2012*

### **"Taking the Union to the Worker - to the Townships and Rural Areas"**

- COSATU's resolution resulted in a call to unions to assist SADSAWU in the recruitment campaign.
- The South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) responded strongly, assisting with two meetings of ± 350 workers.
- SAMWU Strand showed a high level of involvement, and a special thanks goes out to Comrade Zoliswa.

### **COMING UP:**

- Join SADSAWU on the 12 to 12 Campaign picket at Parliament Gates, Cape Town 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2-4pm

***It is time now to build our union!***

## **CONTACT SADSAWU:**

### **In Salt River Cape Town**

**visit** Community House, 41 Salt River Road

**call** 0214480044 / 0214480046

**fax** 0214480047

### **speak to, or sms:**

- Myrtle 078 841 4382  
myrtlewitbooi@gmail.com
- Margie 0722338541
- Hester 076 209 3005  
hesterstephens@gmail.com

### **In Johannesburg**

### **call / sms and speak to:**

- Eunice 0823440300
- Monica 0839258156

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