

No explanation for refusals

The official reasons why Canada has not ratified ILO core Conventions No. 29, No. 98 and No. 138 are somewhat obscure, contradictory and difficult to understand.

Successive governments have failed to outline reasons for Canada's refusal to ratify the remaining three core Conventions. Details on which governments in Canada object to ratification and the precise nature of their concerns remain unknown. There has been no public debate, and little Parliamentary discussion regarding Canada's failure to ratify the three remaining core ILO Conventions.

Not only has Canada failed to ratify three of the core ILO Conventions, we have one of the worst ratification records of all ILO member States, having only ratified 31 of the ILO's 188 Conventions.

Canada's current ratification process for ILO Conventions is in serious need of greater transparency and Parliamentary debate.

Canada's ratification process must also incorporate to a much greater degree the well-

respected ILO principle of tripartism. When it comes to consulting the labour movement in discussions around ratification of ILO Conventions, the ILO's spirit of social dialogue and tripartism is nonexistent here in Canada.

Yes we can!

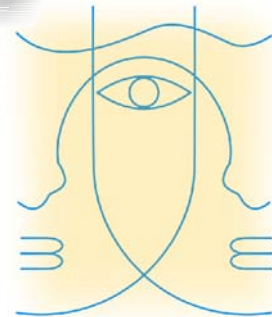
The labour movement must become more engaged in lobbying the federal, provincial and territorial governments to have a more transparent and public consultative approach to ratifying ILO Conventions. We should not accept the hypocrisy of our federal government playing a leadership role at the ILO in developing international labour standards while not being prepared to ratify all eight fundamental core ILO Conventions.

At a time when the core ILO Conventions are becoming increasingly important and recognized as a part of international trade agreements between countries, it is critical that Canada catches up with the overwhelming number of countries around the world which have ratified all eight core Conventions. There is no reason why we cannot.

ACTION NOW!

- **WRITE** your federal MP and member of your provincial legislature about your concern and shame that Canada is one of the few countries in the world not to have ratified all eight of the core ILO Conventions.
- **DRAFT** and sponsor a resolution to your union, Federation of Labour or Labour Council condemning Canada's refusal to ratify three core ILO Conventions: No. 29 Forced Labour, 1930; No. 98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, 1949; and No. 138 Minimum Age, 1973.
- **WRITE** your own opinion column for your local newspaper or union newsletter.
- **TALK** to anyone and everyone who will listen about Canada's poor record at recognizing and promoting the internationally-accepted fundamental rights of human beings at work.

To find out more on how you can help us pressure our federal, provincial and territorial governments to ratify all eight core ILO Conventions, go to www.labourrights.ca



Canada's
Shameful
Secret

Expose
it now!

FORCED LABOUR
CHILD LABOUR
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Canada's Shameful Secret

The Canadian
government's
failure to
ratify and
promote
ILO core
Conventions
respecting
fundamental
rights at
work



Canada just won't say no



Canada's
shameful
secret

CANADA HAS A SHAMEFUL SECRET: We just won't say no to forced labour, child labour and denial of labour rights.

Canada refuses to ratify three of the eight international standards recognized as being fundamental to the rights of human beings at work. We simply will not ratify universal standards governing forced labour, the minimum age for working and the right to collective bargaining.

This is an international embarrassment for Canada as it puts us close to the bottom of countries in the world which have not formally recognized the internationally fundamental rights of human beings at work.

These standards are referred to as the eight *core* Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and are recognized as being fundamental to the rights of human beings at work.

The core ILO Conventions have been ratified by the overwhelming majority of ILO member States. Unfortunately, Canada is one of only 56 countries in the world that have not ratified all eight.

The three
ILO core
Conventions
Canada
has **NOT**
ratified

No. 29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930

This fundamental Convention prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labour, which is defined as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered voluntarily". There are a few exceptions provided such as work required by compulsory military service or prison work of convicted inmates which is supervised by a public authority.

- Canada is one of only nine countries in the world that have not ratified Convention No. 29.

No. 98 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949

This fundamental Convention provides that workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination as well as the right to negotiate their terms and conditions of employment by means of collective agreements.

- Canada is one of only 29 countries in the world that have not ratified Convention No. 98.

No. 138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973

This fundamental Convention sets the general minimum age for employment or work at not less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, not less than 15 years (13 for light work).

- Canada is one of only 51 countries in the world that have not ratified Convention No. 138.

FORCED LABOUR
CHILD LABOUR
ANTI-UNION

Eight ILO core Conventions

The ILO has identified eight *core* Conventions as the basis on which all other workers' rights can be built. They provide for the necessary conditions for the improvement of individual and collective rights at work. The eight core Conventions cover four fundamental principles and rights:

- freedom of association and collective bargaining;
- elimination of forced labour;
- effective abolition of child labour; and
- elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

The eight ILO core Conventions which are recognized as fundamental to workers' rights worldwide are:

1. Convention No. 29 – Forced Labour, 1930
2. Convention No. 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948
3. Convention No. 98 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, 1949
4. Convention No. 100 – Equal Remuneration, 1951
5. Convention No. 105 – Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957
6. Convention No. 111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958
7. Convention No. 138 – Minimum Age, 1973
8. Convention No. 182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999.

Over two thirds of the 182 member States of the ILO (126 out of 182 countries), have ratified all eight core Conventions. Unfortunately, Canada is one of the few countries that have not ratified all eight. We are one of only 23 countries which have ratified five or less of the eight core Conventions.

International Labour Organization

The ILO is a United Nations agency based in Geneva, Switzerland specializing in developing and promoting international human and labour rights Conventions which are recognized around the world.

Since 1919, the ILO has maintained a system of international labour standards known as Conventions, aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. There are 188 ILO Conventions covering a range of fundamental labour rights to rights of workers in specific industries and trades.

These Conventions have been developed under the ILO's unique *tripartite* structure where governments, employers and workers' organizations from around the world cooperate and come to an international consensus on what the minimal labour standards for work should be. ▶