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Minister of Labor, Family and Social Protection  
Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection  
str. Dem.I.Dobrescu nr.2-4 sectorul 1  
București, Romania

Your Excellency:

On behalf of Human Rights Watch and the International Trade Union Confederation, we are writing to thank your government for its historic vote in favor of adopting the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (“Domestic Workers Convention”) at the International Labor Conference on June 16, 2011, and to urge your government to promptly ratify and implement this groundbreaking new treaty.

The Domestic Workers Convention (ILO No. 189) establishes the first global standards for the estimated 50 to 100 million domestic workers worldwide, the vast majority of whom are women and girls. Domestic workers contribute substantially to the global economy, constituting up to 10 percent of employment in some countries. Migrant domestic workers provide billions of dollars in remittances for their countries of origin. Domestic workers not only provide a livelihood for themselves and their families, but also enable their employers to better their standard of living by maintaining employment outside the home.

Despite their important contributions, domestic workers have suffered historic discrimination and routine exclusion from labor protections that have left them vulnerable to a wide range of abuses and labor exploitation, including excessive hours of work with no rest, non-payment of wages, forced confinement, physical and sexual abuse, forced labor, and trafficking.

The new convention represents a significant breakthrough in labor rights, women’s rights, children’s rights, and human rights. Under the new convention, domestic workers are entitled to the same basic rights as those available to other workers, including weekly days off, limits to hours of work, minimum wage coverage, overtime compensation, social security, and clear information on the terms and conditions of employment. The new standards oblige states party to protect domestic workers from violence and abuse, to regulate private employment agencies that recruit and employ domestic workers, and to prevent child labor in domestic work.

Human Rights Watch and the International Trade Union Confederation strongly support the new Domestic Workers Convention and believe that it has the potential to improve the lives of millions of women and girls. Implementation of the convention will help protect domestic workers from exploitation and abuse, including trafficking into domestic servitude, and will

ensure a well-regulated sector that allows employers to compete on an equal basis. The recommendation provides states with valuable additional guidance for how decent work objectives can be achieved.

We were encouraged by the overwhelming support from ILO members in adopting the Domestic Workers Convention. Conference delegates adopted the convention by a vote of 396 to 16, with 63 abstentions and only one government delegation voting against adoption. The accompanying recommendation was adopted by a vote of 434 to 8, with 42 abstentions.

We urge all ILO member states to act promptly to prepare the domestic legal framework for the Domestic Workers Convention, ratify the convention, and implement its provisions. Specifically, we urge your government to:

- Submit the convention and recommendation to your national parliament or other competent national authorities in accordance with article 19 of the ILO Constitution;
- Review your national laws and reform them as necessary to bring them into line with the new convention and recommendation;
- Make a public commitment to ratify the convention and implement the recommendation and inform the International Labor Office of your intention;
- Ratify the convention and implement the recommendation as soon as possible; and
- Take appropriate measures to ensure the convention and recommendation's prompt and effective implementation.

Encouraging legislative reforms are already underway in many countries to recognize domestic workers and extend them equal protection under the law. Swift and widespread ratification of the new convention and recommendation will accelerate this process and help ensure that domestic workers are able to enjoy decent work and the dignity that they deserve.

We would welcome a response from your ministry, indicating your government's position regarding ratification of the new instruments, including any obstacles it may anticipate. Please feel free to direct your response to Mr. Noah Beaudette at [beauden@hrw.org](mailto:beauden@hrw.org) or Noah Beaudette, Human Rights Watch, 350 Fifth Avenue, 34<sup>th</sup> Fl, New York, NY 10118; fax +1 212 736 1300, or to Ms. Sharan Burrow at [info@ituc-csi.org](mailto:info@ituc-csi.org).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth Roth  
Executive Director, Human Rights Watch



Sharan Burrow  
General Secretary, ITUC

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