

***International Domestic Workers' Federation, Founding Congress,
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The Future of the Domestic Workers' Movement

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Comrades,

The subject of my speech should be the future of your movement, but who am I to tell you what your future is going to be?

You have created your future right here, these past three days.

You have opened your own road, by walking.

I can be short because there have been many speeches and everything has already been said here about your achievement – the Federation.

One thing, though, is clear: your future is with the labour movement.

You will contribute to shape it, perhaps more than you now realize.

You have created the first international trade union federation in history that will be run entirely by women.

The gender issue is now also a class issue, but it is in fact much older and more fundamental, because it goes back to the dawn of human society.

We still live in a patriarchal society and we will not reach our goal – a society fit for all human beings to live in – until we have shaken off this burden. You have taken a huge step in that direction.

You have also created a federation of workers who until recently were not even perceived as workers.

You have demonstrated that there is no such thing as "unorganizable" workers.

Under the impact of new forms of capitalism, the working class has changed and is still changing. It has become fragmented, unsure of its identity.

The trade union movement has not kept up with these changes. Its response has been confused and weak.

Our task is now to restore the identity of all working people as a class, and to restore the trade union movement as the instrument of its emancipation.

You are part of this process, you are part of the renewal of the trade union movement.

To do this, you must stay united. Do not ever let yourselves be distracted by party political or personal issues.

Always remember: the union comes first. The union comes first, and the Federation comes first.

Today we celebrate – the hard part starts tomorrow. But you are not alone. The allies your movement has attracted will stay with you, as long as it takes, until every battle is won.

i thank you.