



May 1, 2011

## **MAY DAY MESSAGE**

As we celebrate May Day 2011, our domestic workers like millions around the world are not recognized as workers like other workers. And even as the International Labour Organization would at its 100<sup>th</sup> session in Geneva vote positively on an ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, many countries including Singapore may continue to exclude domestic workers from national labour legislation. These women working seven days a week and more than 16 hours a day are just not protected by law on their labour rights.

HOME has been at the forefront making our stand firm, “Domestic work is work not slavery”. It is inhumane for anyone to socially isolate another human being from their family and friends. For ten months, Mary was not allowed to contact her family back home. Hence she went missing for those months, as her husband and parents were in despair over her unexplained absence. A Filipina domestic worker served her employer for 13 years and was denied the right to return home for her wedding on May 5. Another Filipina was denied her request to return home to bury her mother unless she compensates the employer for an early termination of contract. “I worked only 4 months”, she cried in anguish, “How could I possibly pay?”

Let the national labour movement not forget its raison d’être and not forget the class of workers excluded under labour legislation. Thus our labour movement must represent to government and employers the interests of the working class especially those who are voiceless in our society. These are the 200,000 migrant women domestic workers in Singapore who are not organized and recognized as workers and are denied their right as workers to observe International Labour Day on May 1 2011 in solidarity with Workers of the World.

Wishing all a Happy May Day!

Bridget Tan  
Founder-President