

WOMEN ON THE ROAD TO... a safe and healthy working environment

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Nearly 100,000 women road transport workers around the world are members of unions affiliated to the ITF. Yet we know that there are still many more women road transport workers who are not yet organised in the trade union movement, and they should be.

Many women work in customer service jobs such as ticketing or in administration. Some are bus conductors. Now more are getting jobs which were formerly seen as male-only, such as driving buses, trucks and vans. Some governments and companies are even encouraging more women into these jobs to fill labour shortages.

So this handbook is to encourage trade unions in the road transport sector to be more active in bringing more women workers into the union movement. We want to encourage positive changes in unions, to create unions that women will want to join and take active part in.

Women clearly want road transport unions to highlight safety and security more. In a survey among our affiliated road transport unions across the world, women were very vocal about wanting a healthier and safer work environment and a better work-life balance. Taking up these issues will benefit men workers too, and this joint action can only strengthen the union movement in each location and across the world.

As trade unionists and transport workers, ITF women and men must take gender issues seriously. It is a question of union democracy, and it is a question of union survival. It is work that is out of the comfort zone of some of ITF affiliates; but it is essential to raising working terms and conditions for all.

For many years we have shown that unions need women to be stronger, and that as women, we need our unions – at country level, regional level and internationally, within our global trade union, the ITF. ... From our point of view, all the problems that affect working women are trade union problems."

Alicia Castro, AAA, Argentina, and member of the ITF Executive and Women's Committees representing Latin America and the Caribbean

Women in road transport

Traditionally, women in road transport have largely been in clerical and administrative jobs, as well as services such as cleaning. Employers also like to use women's interpersonal skills to handle contact with passengers; so they employ them in jobs such as ticketing and travel information, or as coach attendants and bus conductors.

Driving and engineering jobs have largely been seen as 'heavy' and therefore 'men's' work, and the number of women drivers is still relatively low. And yet increasing numbers of women are getting jobs driving taxis, buses, long-distance coaches, vans doing courier/home delivery services, and trucks, or as maintenance workers.

"With modern, power assisted vehicles, LGV (Large Goods Vehicle) driving does not require physical strength. Also many driving jobs do not involve any loading, unloading or manual lifting. The myth that driving is a 'dirty job' also requires to be dispelled."

Skills for Logistics, UK, July 2005

So the number of women in the road transport industry in many countries is rising, and set to grow further. Including these women in union activity will make unions stronger. But even – or indeed especially – where they are few, women workers need and have the right to be properly represented by trade unions and have their concerns taken up.

ITF survey of women road transport workers

During 2006-07, the ITF encouraged women road transport workers around the world to join in a survey about their health and safety at work. A form was made available, on paper and via the ITF website, in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese.

As many as 380 women replied, from 14 countries: Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Guinea, India, Italy, Lithuania, Mauritius, Spain and the UK. Further interviews were carried out in South Africa. Women attending the ETF women's conference in October 2007 also gave information, particularly on violence at the workplace. We would like to thank all of them for sharing their experiences and ideas with us. You will find what they told us throughout this booklet.

Nearly three-quarters of the women said they were concerned about health and safety issues. As many as 43% said they were "very worried", the highest level of concern. Top problems were their employers' failure to deal with stress and violent attacks, and bad sanitation. This reply is typical:

"As a former international driver I am very concerned about:

- 1. Safe parking.*
- 2. Lack of toilet and washing facilities.*
- 3. Safety.*
- 4. Length of time away from home (up to 6 weeks)."*

Truck driver, UK

So these are key concerns for women road transport workers which the ITF is encouraging trade unions to take up. Doing so will help protect women from the hazards they currently face. It will also give more women road transport workers confidence that the union is working for them, and so encourage more to join and become active. As a result, our unions will gain in strength.



1. SAFE AND SECURE?

"Four of our routes are in rural areas... Our radio system is so inadequate that they do not work in certain areas for lengthy periods of time. As a female driver it is unnerving to be in the middle of nowhere with no radio contact. I feel that, because there has been no rape assault or major accident, the company doesn't feel it is necessary to put the money into an upgraded system. I feel this is much more important to our safety than my male bosses do!"

Bus driver, Canada

"As a woman driver, I was threatened once and prefer not to work late as there is no security and most turnaround points are lonesome."

Truck driver, Barbados

"I used to carry a canister of CS Gas with me. I have 10 years experience driving 40 tonne trucks in Europe. To improve women's safety, all factory estates should have secure parking with facilities. Re-fuelling facilities are often far from habitation; you feel very exposed to attack whilst filling up for 20 minutes at a time at such places."

Truck driver, UK

"Concerned about safety at the bus depot: No working security cameras; ticket people have no security glass, area is wide open opportunity for people to reach over. Bus depot has been a place for junkies to hang out... Payment clerk has to walk though - everyday with money in hand (no cameras working in case something happens)."

Clerical worker, UK

"No, we are put at the mercy of urban violence."

Bus conductor, Brazil

Of all the issues facing women road transport workers, safety, security and freedom from violence and harassment are of utmost concern. 57% of those answering the ITF survey are worried about violence; and nearly half of them said there were no controls in place to deal with it, or they didn't know of any, or they left the box blank. Women road transport workers are feeling very vulnerable.

Bus drivers, conductors and ticket agents speak of bus stations where the security cameras don't work, and of bus cabs where they are not protected from thieves after the cash. Women are often preferred for jobs in contact with the public, but this means they have to face abuse from frustrated passengers. Lack of safe transport to and from work at night puts many women in danger of sexually-motivated attacks.

Meanwhile, women truck drivers tell of ill-lit and lonely stopover/turnaround/refuelling areas and, if they need to call for help, of communication systems to the depot or the police which don't function. They are left exposed to huge risks.

Unhappily, women also report poor behaviour from male work 'colleagues' and managers. There may well be pornography up on workplace walls. They may be at the receiving end of distasteful 'jokes', unwelcome advances, or even worse attacks. Sexual disempowerment is a major factor in the spread of HIV/Aids. All unionists, men and women, should be active in rooting it out. Such disrespectful and potentially dangerous behaviour is more common in industries such as road transport where women are under-represented. So there needs to be an extra effort by unions where there are fewer women workers.

But many incidents are not reported. Often, women fear that if they do, they will lose their job. Male colleagues may shrug it off with an attitude that 'it comes with the job'; they imply that, if a woman can't handle it, she might as well leave. It would of course be better if they would join her in fighting for better protection for all – for women and men transport workers as well as the travelling public.

What your union can do:

"Unions could play a bigger part in issues surrounding women workers i.e. sexual harassment. Comments by drivers are made on a daily basis."

Bus driver, UK

"Well to start off with, we could have cameras that actually work instead of pretend ones. Really, what kind of protection is that? We could have a security guard - would make the workers and public feel more secure from riff raff... We could have emergency buttons installed for the ticket agents. A window that the dispatcher can see through to the inside of the bus depot would be nice so they can see if the ticket agents need help. These are grave concerns and people have been scared and hurt already – it shouldn't take a person being killed to have some simple steps taken."

Clerical worker, Canada

"Could use GPS locator in case of violence."

Bus driver, Canada

"Courses in self-defence."

Tram driver, Austria

"The same as men – look out for our personal safety. In my union, the Health and Safety Rep within the work place is very involved, but in many respects we are at a loss with the company when it comes to securing any gains."

Ticket officer, Spain

- Better design of cabs and cash systems to limit theft;
- Security cameras that work;
- Security guards on board passenger vehicles as well as in depots;
- Emergency procedures, e.g. panic buttons;
- Night transport for women to and from work;
- Safe reporting of incidents, without victimisation;
- Victim support systems;
- Training for male workers and managers against sexual harassment and violence.



WORKPLACE MAPPING

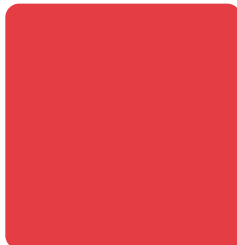
- Get together in a group of women who share the same or similar workplace or transport route.
- On the plan, mark where the unsafe areas are, using different colours to mark different types of problems.
- Use the plan to consider how safety could be improved (better design of buildings and vehicles, lighting, security cameras and guards, radio systems, training for work colleagues, etc.)
- Take the plan and your ideas to your union and your employer.



Workplace mapping fact sheet:

English: www.losu.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/worksite_mapping_fact_sheet.pdf

Spanish: www.losu.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/worksite_mapping_spanish_fact_sheet.pdf



2. TIME FOR A CLEAN-UP

No decent toilets for women:

"Being a male-dominated industry, it is my opinion that facilities are not provided as most men can relieve themselves 'wherever'."

Bus driver, UK

"The employers need to improve working conditions, provide us with hot water for cleaning the buses, improve the toilets, and improve shower room lighting and lighting on the premises during night time."

Bus cleaner, Lithuania

"Toilet facilities are an ongoing problem for both male and female drivers, but more so for females as we cannot, at some times of the month, pop behind bushes!!"

Bus driver, UK

In the ITF survey of women road transport workers, 63% said that there are **no** women's toilets for them to use. From Brazil to Barbados to Belgium, this is something that really indicates to women how little they are wanted in the industry.

If you cannot go to the toilet when you need to, you run the risk of internal infection, kidney damage, haemorrhoids and other conditions.

Where toilets and washrooms do exist, women repeatedly complain about how dirty they are – and therefore how unhealthy. Lack of access to clean drinking water is another common health complaint. Perhaps women have a greater awareness of the need for cleanliness because of their caring role at home. But if unions took up the demand for clean and sanitary conditions this would benefit the whole workforce. Most diseases don't distinguish between men and women.



Toilet breaks fact sheet:

English: www.losh.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/bathroom_english.pdf

Spanish: www.losh.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/bathroom_spanish.pdf

FREE TO PEE

In early 2006, women truck drivers who work at the big container port of Folkestone, UK, celebrated a victory. Following pressure from the T&G transport union, the harbour master announced the opening of a women's toilet. Their 'Free to Pee' campaign got going after an ITF Women's meeting in 2005 highlighted the lack of women's toilets there as an example of discrimination. The new facility at the HGV parking area is protected for women's use by a special key system.

The campaign continues across the UK. Branch Secretary Rachael Webb says that the women involved see this not only as a 'women's issue'. She adds, "Frequently having to 'hold oneself in' has very serious, even fatal, consequences for men who can develop prostate cancer. Our reasonable demand for toilet and shower facilities for all transport workers is a matter of importance for all of us."

Unite-T&G 'Free to Pee' campaign:

www.tgwu.org.uk/Templates/Campaign.asp?Action=Display&NodeID=93573

TUC 'Risks' newsletter, UK, February 2006:

www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/tuc-11400-f0.cfm#tuc-11400-4

Fumes: 62% of women in the ITF survey said that **no** steps have been taken to minimise their exposure to fumes. Vehicles are left standing in depots with their engines running, polluting the whole workplace. It ought to be relatively easy to get engines switched off, also to save fuel.

“Air conditioners need to be put into depot. With windows open, all we get is diesel fumes; way too hot in the building in summer; hard to work in. Also buses have been known to idle for 20 minutes in the bays.”

Clerical worker, Canada



Diesel exhaust fact sheet:

English: www.losh.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/diesel_english.pdf

Spanish: www.losh.ucla.edu/catalog/factsheets/diesel_espanol.pdf

Noise: 73% said that **no** steps have been taken to minimise noise; yet high levels of noise can damage any worker’s hearing; they can also badly affect the unborn child.

Vibration: 55% said that vehicles are not checked for vibrations; yet these too are a risk to the foetus.

Vehicle and cab design: Drivers’ seats and cabs are designed with men in mind, and then wrongly assumed to suit women’s bodies too. It should not be difficult to have seats which can be adjusted for different arm or leg length – for varying shapes of men’s bodies as well as women’s.

“The drivers’ seats are partially damaged and too difficult to reposition.”

Tram driver, Austria

What your union can do:

“Clean and neat toilets. Pure, cool water. Clean canteen.”

Clerical worker, India

“Better maintenance of toilet facilities. Separate toilet facilities for men and women.”

Truck driver, Belgium

“Pay more attention to the inhalation of fumes; ...safety gear most suited to women. Union needs to negotiate for security guards or devices to protect women who handle large amounts of cash.”

Bus driver, Barbados

“We have been asking for vibration mats - no luck... Better designed seats for female drivers to reduce bounce and vibration, also better adjustment.”

Bus driver, Canada

“Body mapping to determine problems. Exhaust studies for drivers sitting in lines up to 20 minutes behind running buses.”

Bus driver, Canada

BODY MAPPING

“When one person has an ache, it’s an ache. When everyone has it is almost certain it is an occupational health problem. Body mapping allows you the chance to see if ‘your problem’ is really a work problem.” Hazards magazine, UK

- Get together in a group of women who share the same or similar job.
- Draw the outline of a woman’s body, and ask each woman to place on it a mark where her body aches or hurts.
- Use the results to see whether a number of you are suffering similar symptoms.
- If so, discuss what the reasons might be, and any ideas for solutions.
- Take the outline and your ideas to your union and your employer.



Body mapping fact sheet:

English: www.hazards.org/diyresearch/bodymapping.pdf



3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

"There is also the health issue of differing shifts, disrupted sleep, weight gain and the life that consists of work, sleep and not much else."

Bus driver, UK

"Duty period is very hard; instead of regular work, extraordinary work given."

Sweeper, India

Many road transport industries around the world are being restructured, and employers react to global competition by cutting labour costs. They turn permanent jobs into temporary ones, and they do their best not to provide social benefits.

Women are generally hit worse by these changes. The areas where more women are found, such as cleaning, catering, and passenger services, are often the first to be outsourced, and in the process women lose vital benefits such as maternity leave and childcare support. So, where women are getting jobs, it is often in areas where their rights are not protected.

Women tend to be affected differently from men by restructuring, and sometimes this is difficult for unions to deal with. In fact, all around the world, women tend to be poorer than men, and so any loss of employment security and benefits hits women very hard; it means more poverty for them as well as their families.

Maternity rights: Many road transport employers do not want to deal with the fact that women workers get pregnant. They take any opportunity to take away the maternity rights that women have won. The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) reports a widespread practice in Eastern/Central Europe:

"Women are asked to sign their resignation paper – with an open date – as a precondition for getting a job. The date will be added the moment the worker's pregnancy is discovered."

'The Gender Dimension in the Transport Industry in Europe', ETF, 2005

www.itfglobal.org/files/seealsodocs/1129/The%20gender%20dimension%20in%20the%20transport%20industry%20in%20Europe.doc

"Women cabin attendants have to continue working on the long distance runs too long in their pregnancies. We tried to fight for two pregnant ladies to be given a place in the office. But management refused, saying this was only if someone was sick. Our arguments were not listened to, and both women lost their babies... The men drivers in the union were sympathetic – they are fathers and husbands. As men, they did also raise it in the union and with management."

Coach attendant, South Africa

Healthy babies are not just a question of women's rights; they are essential to all of society.

Long working hours: In the ITF survey of road transport women workers, over half reported they work more than 8 hours a day. In Brazil, 36% of women bus workers only get a break of half an hour or less during such a long working day. Around the world, truck drivers are particularly under pressure to put in long shifts. Each October for several years, the ITF has run a Global Week of Action on the theme 'Fatigue Kills! Cut Working Hours' because fatigue is a major, but preventable, cause of road accidents.

But long working hours also don't fit with the rest of one's life. Many employers do not want to take account of the fact that their workers – men and women – have families, children and elders, to care for; or that we have any life outside of work.

"...we did have women in goods transport. They were truck and trailer drivers. Now there are only 2 or 3 who are women... There's a kind of competition to see who will work more for less pay. This situation means women lose opportunities because generally they have less time than men."

Rosa Maria Hernandez, Executive Committee member, ATM, Mexico

Flexible hours: Women are finding jobs in growing industries, for example, as home delivery van drivers. But these employers want their workers to do unpredictable work shifts and overtime which are not family-friendly. Women don't want employers imposing flexible work patterns on them. It can be a big source of stress.

What many women do want are quality flexible hours. Women want part-time, flexible work that lets them balance work with family responsibilities. So, women tend to refuse the long or flexible hours that men may accept – even though this can cost women their jobs.

Women express a greater need to fit work around the rest of their lives, and any union that takes this up is certain to impress women workers. But the work-life balance concerns men too. It should be an integral part of the union agenda.

Stress: Almost nowhere is stress recognised as a workplace health hazard. Recent research shows, however, that high levels of stress double the risk of painful periods and could also be linked to miscarriages, amongst other conditions.

"I am putting in my resignation at the end of June because of work-related stress. I have driven here for ten years. I am 55 and in great shape – my doctor says life is too short, your health is at risk."

Bus driver, Canada

NZ: WORKERS 'GET A LIFE!'

On 21 November 2007, a new Bill was passed in New Zealand giving workers with care responsibilities the right to request flexible working hours and to have employers respond. The coalition that campaigned for the new law included the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) and the National Distribution Union that organises bus and truck drivers. They were demanding quality flexible hours. CTU Secretary Carol Beaumont says, "This is an important first step, and gives business time to adjust. "We will continue, however, to advocate for all workers to have the right to request flexible hours."

www.union.org.nz/news/2007/carol-beaumont-opinion-piece-on-flexible-working-hours-legislation

NDU statement on 'Quality Flexible Work':

www.flexihoursnow.files.wordpress.com/2006/12/ndu-submission.doc

What your union can do:

"Organization that allows women to work and be mothers also."

Bus driver, Italy

"Women transport workers could be given set shifts to assist with childcare. We in our garage take each case on its merits and assist single parents with their family lives. It's a policy that should be taken up with all companies."

Bus driver, UK

Negotiate part-time and shift work, and job share arrangements, that meet women's need for family-friendly working hours; Include maternity/parental rights in collective bargaining; Encourage men workers also to promote a better 'work-life' balance.



Work/life balance fact sheet:

English: www.hazards.org/haz75/worldmapping.pdf



4. REACHING OUT TO WOMEN ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS

"Up to now the union has not mentioned anything and what would I gain from anything."

Bus conductor, Brazil

"The men don't want us to stand up and speak. They say that women are not 'fit' to attend meetings. If you try to speak, they say 'Shut up, you don't know what you are talking about.'"

Taxi driver, South Africa

"I've found, as an officer representing women transport workers, that some issues get overlooked and undermined. There are issues that only come out when women are properly listened to... women and pregnancy, childbirth, uniforms, access to toilets, sexual harassment, the way that working time is organised and issues around equal pay."

Diana Holland, Chair of the ITF Women's Committee, and National Organiser for Women, Race and Equalities, Unite-T&G, UK

LONDON BUSES: ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN DRIVERS

The first woman bus driver was hired in London, UK, in 1976. By 2003, there were over 1200, about 6% of the workforce. The next year, a working group of Transport for London, the bus employers and the T&G trade union was set up to bring more women into the industry by offering appropriate working conditions.

As a result, women-only recruitment days have been held at bus garages, where women looking for a job could speak to women who are already driving. Though not in large numbers, more women have been taken on, and there are 'women mentors' in the depots to support them. There are also some limited tax breaks and vouchers to help with childcare costs, as well as women's facilities provided.

Since the 'Oyster' card system was brought in for passengers to pay their fares, not much cash is handled on London buses, and this has reduced the risk of violence. All buses have a radio system and an alarm button, and are satellite-tracked for security. There is a big poster campaign across the city warning the public against any violence towards transport staff, women or men. Plus the T&G has introduced a 24-hour service for women to report any incidents of harassment or violence. There is training for staff and all managers that emphasises zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviour.

What is more, there are now more women union representatives from the London Buses workforce. They are continuing to work on issues such as childcare and flexible work patterns.

'Women in the Bus Industry' Action Plan for London Buses, July 2004, can be found at: www.itfglobal.org/files/seealsodocs/5822/Women%20in%20the%20bus%20industry%20working%20group.pdf

"Modern buses are no more physically demanding than cars. So gone are the days when you had to be the world's strongest man to drive one. Or a man at all, for that matter."

Transport for London

www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/corporate/jobs/currentcampaigns/womenbusdrivers

What your union can do:

“Women workers must become aware about their rights in the case of safety and health issues. Unions must arrange awareness programmes and safety training programmes for road transport women workers.”

Clerical worker, India

“You could start by taking care of the psychological state of workers, because the company does not worry about people only the quality of the service.”

Stand-by bus worker, Brazil

“At my workplace, as union representative, I try to hear what is the issue and discuss a solution with management. If they don’t comply, we put the pressure on until a resolution is reached.”

Bus driver, Bermuda

“R-Team: Respect is a group of a few workers to whom we can address complaints and who discuss these complaints.”

Maintenance worker, Belgium

Encourage women to get together to discuss their health and safety concerns, for example by doing body-mapping and workplace-mapping in groups (see sections 1 and 2);

Encourage reporting of sexual harassment, bullying and violence at the workplace, for example by setting up a safe complaints system and/or a victim support system;

Ensure that women are included in health and safety training, including self-defence;

Facilitate more women union organisers, and women mentors/groups to support women who are new to their job (in the workplace /or in the union);

Organise an event involving women road transport workers, to raise awareness within the union and/or among the general public. It could be:

- On **25 November, United Nations International Day Against Violence Against Women**, joining in the annual ITF campaign ‘Say No to Violence Against Women’.
- On **8 March, International Women’s Day**, perhaps joining the Global Day of Action of women transport workers organised by the ITF.
- During the **ITF Global Week of Action** for road transport workers that takes place each **October**, make sure that women are fully represented.

On 25 November, United Nations International Day Against Violence Against Women, in 2006... the transport unions in Jordan, held a one-day seminar and workers wore T-shirts saying, ‘Stop Violence Against Your Sister’, ‘Stop Violence Against Your Mother’, ‘Stop Violence Against Your Daughter’.

On 8 March, International Women’s Day, in 2007... the Lithuanian Transport Workers’ Federation held meetings with top trade union officials and business managers countrywide giving women workers the opportunity to express their views, problems and possible solutions, under the slogan ‘fight locally - think globally’. In Vilnius, to raise public awareness about the issues that women workers face, trade union activists visited women drivers on their routes.



5. EQUALITY = STRENGTH

“Working under stress. No chance to develop ourselves. Male dominating society.” **Sweeper, India**

“Until workplace sees women as equal to men, violence (verbal, emotional and sometimes physical) will continue. Although it is ONLY the minority that harass and encourage harassment, they often stick together (old boys club) and make it impossible to get witnesses to go against and put it in writing so harassment can be stopped. Education is a MUST and discipline should be more than just a minor slap on the wrist.” **Truck driver, Canada**

Diana Holland, who chairs the ITF Women’s Committee, tells a story about men and women in a bus garage divided by their different needs. The women felt the union was not listening to them or taking their issues seriously, while the men were frustrated by the women’s demands for something to be done about the unsuitable uniforms and access to toilets when they wanted to concentrate on issues they considered more important for the bargaining round. “When both groups realised that if they joined together they could achieve gains all round, it was a breakthrough” she recounts. “Communication is the key to overcoming the divide and communication must include all.”

Risk assessments must include women

“Our employer has no interest in evaluating risks, and is even allergic to it.” **Former bus driver, now clerical worker, Republic of Guinea**

It seems that road transport employers are failing miserably in their health and safety duties. The vast majority of women answering the ITF survey said there are no health and safety risk assessments, or they didn’t know of any – which means they weren’t involved.

Where there is a risk assessment, mostly it is the union that does it, according to the survey. It is clear that many unions are taking up health and safety issues.

The important point for women, however, is that most health and safety activities, whether by government inspectors, employers or trade unions, fail to consider gender differences. Research is largely carried out on men, and the findings are assumed to apply to women as well. Then, any legislation and standards are also usually based on men.

“Many occupational studies are gender-blind and label those who are the subjects for the investigation in such a way that it is not possible to decide whether men or women or both sexes were included.” **‘Gender equality, work and health: A review of the evidence’** World Health Organization, 2006

Unions need to make sure that a gender perspective is embedded in all health and safety activities, whether their own or that of the government or employers. Otherwise there are serious risks for the health of women and the children they bear, which in turn has an impact on the whole of society.

The simple truth is that, if you don’t have a gender analysis, then you don’t really understand the situation in front of you, and your strategies towards employers and governments will be weaker.

What your union can do:

"It is important that women participate actively in the union, as they can identify their problems and needs better than anyone else... We need to transform the standards in law, in collective bargaining, and also in union practices. By involving active women we will know what their needs are and we will come together in a representative union for men and women."

Maria Antonia Martinez, Women's Officer, CC.OO, Spain

- Find out where women are working in your industry and reach out to them;
- Listen to what women in your industry/union are saying, and act on it in collective bargaining with employers and in policy discussions with government;
- Include women in bargaining/lobbying teams;
- Educate men in particular about sexual harassment, violence and respect, and why this matters, not only to the health and safety of women but also to themselves;
- Make sure all your health and safety activities have a gender perspective;
- Where you have successes, pass the lessons on to others, including the ITF.

There is obvious scope for the men and women in road transport unions to work together. Many of the issues affect workers of both sexes – though they may often be prioritised differently. Union procedures and structures can and often do discourage women from being active, and from progressing in unions. ITF unions have found that by becoming closer to women members, these problems can be ironed out.

Healthy and safe working conditions, hours, leave, and pay: these are the things that make a difference to women transport workers' lives. Each issue has its gender aspects, which are of utmost importance, but in the end, women and men want the same things – decent work and fair treatment. What affects men affects women, and vice versa.

"A USEFUL EXERCISE"

The FGTE-CFDT in France surveyed its women members in the run up to a conference in 2004 to discuss new structures and activities. The union found that 10% of its road transport members were women, especially in a small group of motorway attendants. Liliane Debêche of the FGTE-CFDT says, "It was a useful exercise that allowed us to get a realistic view of our membership and to look at building new structures accordingly".

'Making Unions Stronger', ITF, resource pack and film, 2006
www.itfglobal.org/women/stronger.cfm

"... to meet the challenges of globalisation, we need a strong united trade union movement, with women not just organised in trade unions, but in key leadership roles at all levels, too. The areas that are less likely to be organised are areas where women are more likely to work – so to build organisation, you have to reach women."

Diana Holland, Chair of the ITF Women's Committee, and National Organiser for Women, Race and Equalities, Unite-T&G, UK

"The challenges remain huge. The power relations between men and women must change. We are still weak in many areas as structures are not robust, and in some unions women's issues and gender equality are not taken seriously enough."

Kate Matlou, South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (SATAWU) speaking at the ITF Congress in Durban, South Africa, in August 2006