



ITUC MAY 1ST STATEMENT - ONE WORLD: JOBS, INCOMES, SOCIAL PROTECTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic wreaks havoc around the world, we are experiencing the greatest display of solidarity in human history. Shutdowns and confinement now cover most of the world's population to prevent the rapid spread of the virus within communities and to protect the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. The economic and social impact as lives and livelihoods are put on hold has disrupted the world of work with low-paid insecure workers carrying the burden in too many countries. The focus of the pandemic response is rightly on containment and mitigation and supporting the health and care workers who are on the front line, and those in many other vital sectors. The spread of the virus is being fought in every workplace, everywhere in the world.

On 1 May, we salute the workers in health, care and other frontline sectors whose work is essential to saving lives and providing vital products and services.

Tens of thousands of people have died and many more will suffer lasting health effects. Two hundred million jobs are forecast to be lost, millions of people are at risk of being thrown back into poverty, and the vast inequality that already existed is growing yet deeper. The two-thirds of the world's population with inadequate or no social protection are severely exposed, with many facing destitution and starvation.

The impacts of this crisis have brutally exposed the failings of the model of globalisation which has been imposed on working women and men. Public health systems have been debilitated by austerity, and the erosion of workers' rights has left untold millions of workers exposed. Women, migrant workers, ethnic minorities and others who face discrimination are bearing a particularly heavy burden. This must change.

The antidote to this crisis is in the solidarity that is the lifeblood of trade unions, throughout history and today. All countries must work together to overcome the initial COVID-19 wave and to prepare for the future. We applaud those governments that are making full use of social dialogue to tackle the crisis and secure wages and income support for their people. We condemn those governments that refuse to cooperate with unions at home or with other countries internationally, deny the reality of the pandemic, or allow violence and human rights abuses at enormous cost to their own people. We equally condemn the corporate predators seeking to profit from the crisis. We demand that all companies respect workers' rights and insist that governments make sure that they do. We re-affirm our commitment to fighting the extreme right, to stop it from capitalising on this crisis and from further undermining democracy and human rights.

No one can be left behind. Massive investment in public health and in care to ensure that all have access, and the full respect for the rights of all workers, have to be at the heart of recovery, reconstruction and resilience.

The re-launching of the global economy must have three main objectives:

JOBS: Millions of jobs are being destroyed. Full employment must be the goal, with decent work for all; healthy and safe conditions; formalisation of informal work; and an end to precarious work.

INCOMES: The wages share of the global economy has been falling for decades and risks plummeting with this crisis. Minimum living wages must be in place everywhere, the right to collective bargaining has to be ensured for all workers and the gender pay gap must be closed.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: Billions of people have been left without social protection and are at grave risk from the devastating health and the economic effects of this crisis. Now is the time for global cooperation to fund social protection for all. The world cannot turn its back on those most in need now, nor can it turn its back on the necessity for reconstruction of an inclusive and resilient future.

These objectives are central to re-launching the economy and ensuring health and well-being for everyone on a living planet. We call on all governments and international institutions to work together to achieve them.

Wherever we are and whatever our differences, we live in one world. Trade unions know that solidarity works. We must make it work for the whole world.