

HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATION

“CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EXTENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION FRAMEWORKS TO GIG AND PLATFORM WORKERS IN INDIA”

FRIDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2023

THE VICEROY, HOTEL CLARIDGES, NEW DELHI, INDIA

Background:

The digital economy has been expanding at a rapid pace and gaining prominence globally. Digital labour platforms¹ are a distinct part of the digital economy and have risen fivefold in the past decade globally in the taxi and delivery sector on location-based platforms, and on online labour platforms². There has been a tremendous increase in the number of digital labour platforms in developing countries and they are being embraced with the hope of creating gainful employment opportunities.

NITI Aayog's recent study, 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy - Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work'³ estimated that the number of gig and platform workers in India reached 7.7 million in 2020. The size of this workforce is expected to grow almost three-fold by 2029-30 to about 23.5 million⁴. Given the expected large unorganized workforce, the report strongly recommends the extension of social security for gig and platform workers in India. The proposed social security recommendations resonate closely with the Government of India's intention to develop a comprehensive social protection scheme for gig and platform workers as articulated in the Code on Social Security 2020⁵. In furthering India's commitment to decent work, assuming the presidency of the G20 this year, India has clearly laid out that gig and platform economy and social protection a priority area for the Employment Work Group⁶.

¹ The emergence of the gig or platform economy is one of the most important new transformations in the world of work. An important component of the platform economy is digital labour platforms which includes both web-based platforms, where work is outsourced through an open call to a geographically dispersed crowd ("crowdwork"), and location-based applications (apps) which allocate work to individuals in a specific geographical area, typically to perform local, service-oriented tasks such as driving, running errands or cleaning houses.

² ILO (2021) World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work
International Labour Office [2021 World Employment and Social Outlook \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/publications/2021/06/25th-june-final-report-27062022.pdf)

³ NITI Aayog. (2022). *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work*. niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-06/25th_June_Final_Report_27062022.pdf

⁴ NITI Aayog. (2022) *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy: Perspectives and Recommendations on the Future of Work*. niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-06/25th_June_Final_Report_27062022.pdf

⁵ The Code on Social Security enacted in, 2020 (CoSS 2022), Chapter IX Section 114(I) speaks of the framing of appropriate social security schemes for gig and platform workers.

⁶ pib1914413.pdf (labour.gov.in)

The ILO has raised considerable concerns in the organization of work on digital labour platforms regarding inadequate social protection coverage for workers engaged on such platforms⁷.

The ILO's flagship report World Employment and Social Outlook 2021 highlighted that "the majority of workers on digital labour platforms do not have social security coverage".

In this regard, given the urgency for the development of social security frameworks, the ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia, and Country Office for India along with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, is organizing a 'High-level consultation on the challenges and opportunities of extending social protection frameworks to gig and platform workers in India'.

Objectives:

The objectives of the high-level consultation are as follows:

- To identify challenges and opportunities for the extension of social protection to gig and platform workers and develop recommendations for actionable policy interventions and capacity-building needs for key stakeholders.
- To build and consolidate relevant networks for collaboration and facilitate strengthened coordinated efforts through social dialogue with ILO constituents, platform organizations, academia and other key stakeholders going forward for the benefit of gig and platform workers in India.

Participants:

Senior officials from the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Commerce, NITI Aayog, various international governments, Employers' and Workers' organizations, platform organizations, private sector, civil society representatives, foundations, academia and other stakeholders are expected to attend the consultation.

Format, Date and Location for meeting:

The consultation will be organized in a hybrid (in-person and virtual) format on Friday, 27 October 2023 at The Viceroy, Hotel Claridges, New Delhi.

⁷ OECD (2018) Behrendt, C., Nguyen, Q. A., and Rani, U. Social protection systems and the future of work: Ensuring social security for digital platform workers. International Social Security Review, 72: 17– 41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/issr.12212>



REGISTRATION

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Inaugural session	9.30- 10.05 am	• Welcome Address and overview – Dr Shahra Razavi, Director-Social Protection-ILO, Geneva • Mr Sanjay Bhatia, Ex-President-All India Organization of Employers • Mr Hiranmay Pandya, President- Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh • Keynote Address by Mr Ramesh Krishnamurthi, Additional Secretary- Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India • Vote of Thanks- Mr Ravi Peiris, Senior Specialist for Employers' Activities and OIC-ILO-Decent Work Team, South Asia and Country Office- India, New Delhi
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GROUP PHOTO

10:05 AM- 10:15 AM

SESSION-I**10.15- 11.30 am: An overview of extending social protection to gig and platform workers in India: a multi stakeholder perspective**

Brief description: Social protection for India's informal workforce has consistently been an important policy mandate pursued by the Indian Government. In demonstration of its commitment for extending universal social protection coverage, GoI introduced the Code on Social Security 2020 that articulates the need for social protection of gig and platform workers. *In this opening session, key stakeholders will elucidate their roles and responsibilities in fulfilment of CHAPTER IX (Social Security for unorganized workers, gig workers and platform workers) of the Code. Participants will share their diverse perspectives sourced from the various responsibilities they shoulder towards gig and platform workers in India.*

- **Chair:** Mr Ramesh Krishnamurthi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India

Panellist:

- Mr Amitabh Kumar, Joint Secretary- Ministry of Commerce, Government of India
- Dr Shahra Razavi, Director, Social Protection Department- ILO Geneva
- Dr Sakshi Khurana, Senior Specialist (Labour, Employment & Skill Development)- NITI Aayog
- Mr Joyson Devasia, Head, Industry Relations and Human Resource Operations- Swiggy;
- Mr Shaik Salauddin, President-Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union

Moderator: Ms Mariko Ouchi, Senior Specialist for Social Protection, Decent Work Team, South Asia and Country Office- India, New Delhi

Discussion will be followed by question-and-answer session

**11:30 AM- 11:45 AM
TEA BREAK**

SESSION-II

11.45- 1.00 pm: Strengthening policy efforts for the extension of social protection to gig and platform workers

Brief description: In the recently concluded G20 meetings, it was unanimously agreed upon that nations must ensure strong, resilient, and sustainable social protection for all, including platform and gig workers. To achieve this, robust policies are imperative that ensure adequate social protection for workers in all types of employment including gig and platform workers, and to build universal social protection systems, including floors. In this session, panellists will engage in mapping state, national and global policy efforts to reflect contemporary policy prerogatives. *In this session, the ILO will also take this opportunity to introduce the standard-setting discussions on the platform economy due at the 113th Session at the International Labour Conference in 2025. The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India will also highlight the vision of the CoSS and its efforts for the extension of social protection for gig and platform workers that was further bolstered by the Government of India's commitment during the G20 deliberations. To complement this vision, State Governments that have identified gig and platform workers as an emerging segment of work creating robust employment opportunities and will present the opportunities, challenges and way forward in enacting this important legal framework.*

Panellist:

- Mr Nuno Meira Simoes da Cunha, Senior Specialist, Labour Market Institutions, ILO Geneva (virtual)
- Dr Dhanya MB-Fellow-V.V Giri National Labour Institute, Ministry of Labour and Employment;
- Mr Sunil Thomas-Joint Labour Commissioner and Executive Director, Kerala Institute of Labour and Employment, State of Kerala (virtual)

Moderator: Ms Mariko Ouchi, Senior Specialist for Social Protection, Decent Work Team, South Asia and Country Office- India, New Delhi

Discussion will be followed by question-and-answer session

**LUNCH BREAK
1:00 PM-1:45 PM**

SESSION-III

1.45- 3.15 pm: Advancing social protection for gig and platform workers: International learnings through multi-country policy initiatives

Brief description: Digitalization is creating profound transformations in the world of work, globally. In this session, various multi-country perspectives will be presented to understand how nations have built social protection systems for gig and platform workers. Given that existing social protection systems are oriented towards full-time, standard employment contracts, the discussions will engage in understanding social protection access for an emerging form of work that should be anchored in universalism and inclusivity. *In this session, panellists will provide how countries are navigating through the complex challenges in the gig and platform economy and interventions that provide social protection for gig and platform workers in their national context.*

Panellist:

- Mr Raul Frick Ruggi, Director, Social Security Division- International Social Security Association (virtual)
- Ms Ximena Altamirano, Project Officer-International Social Security Association (virtual)
- Agung Hari Cahyono, Agency Relationship Manager-Secretariat-BPJS Ketenagakerjaan-Case Study-Indonesia; (virtual)
- Ms Miriam Chaum, Senior Director-Global Head of Work, Economic Policy & Advanced Technologies, Uber Technologies (virtual)

Moderator: Ms Aya Matsuura, Specialist, Gender, Decent Work Team, South-Asia and Country Office- India, New Delhi

Discussion will be followed by question-and-answer session.

**TEA BREAK
3:15 PM-3:30 PM**

SESSION-IV

3.30- 4.30 pm: The way forward

Brief description: Social protection is a human right and essential to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The G20 has agreed on priority to ensure strong, resilient, and sustainable social protection for all, including platform and gig workers. *In this concluding session, the ILO will bring together key stakeholders to deliberate how the development of a comprehensive social protection framework for gig and platform workers in India will help realize a worker's human right to social security.*

Panellist:

- Mr Arvind Francis, Executive Director-All Indian Organization of Employers
- Ms Sonia George, Vice-President SEWA and General Secretary for Kerala SEWA
- Mr Deepak Joshi, Insurance Commissioner- Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Government of India
- Dr Jaskiran Bedi, Head- Public Policy, Zomato and Blinkit
- Mr Basudev Barman, Network Coordinator for OLA & Uber driver and Union- International Transport Workers' Federation

Moderator: Ms Mariko Ouchi, Senior Specialist for Social Protection, Decent Work Team, South Asia and Country Office- India, New Delhi

The discussion will be followed by question-and-answer session.

CLOSING SESSION

4.30- 4.45 pm: Summary Presentation- Dr Shahra Razavi- Director, Social Protection Department, ILO Geneva

4:45- 5.00 pm: Closing remarks- Ms Arti Ahuja, Secretary-Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India