



Need human-centered recovery from COVID-19: Ministry of Labour, employers and workers affirm at ILO event

The panel deliberated on the ILO's Global Call to Action which prioritizes an economic recovery that is “fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient”, by the creation of decent jobs for all and addresses the inequalities caused by the crisis.

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The ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) organized a **“Tripartite national dialogue on global call to action for a human-centred recovery from COVID-19 crisis in the context of India”**, on 10 December 2021. The tripartite congregation discussed the four priority areas of inclusive economic growth and employment; protection of all workers; universal social protection; and social dialogue, in the context of India, over the course of two panel discussions.

The Honourable Minister, Shri Bhupender Yadav, emphasized that the government is willing to engage with the trade unions on all issues. The Minister pitched for technological advancement, skilling and lifelong learning while underscoring the importance of health and safety of both organized and unorganized workers. The Minister highlighted that the government is working on building worker capacity and on collecting the data about the unorganized sector, which is translating into schemes like the SVANidhi scheme, which is to empower street vendors whose livelihoods were hit hardest by the pandemic. He stated his belief of the ILO's Decent Work mandate being encapsulated in Article 21 of the Constitution, which the government is committed to fostering and furthering.

Also holding the charge of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Minister reiterated the importance of climate justice for the world. He highlighted that being a developing nation, India had set Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of committing to achieve 40% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030, which the country has managed to achieve by November 2021.

Mr Sunil Barthwal, Secretary, MoLE moderated the panel, **‘Universal Social Protection and protection of all workers for a human centered sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 in the world of work in India’** which deliberated upon the gaps in social protection for workers that the pandemic brought to the fore. The group discussed how tripartism was critical to closing the coverage and finance gaps for creating sustainable social protection systems, and how those would adapt to respond to rapidly changing realities and future shocks. The panel underscored the importance of reducing institutional fragmentation to improve access, raise awareness about coverage gaps and overlaps while promoting and strengthening good governance.

The second panel, **‘Inclusive economic growth, employment and Social Dialogue for a human centered sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 in the world of work in India’** was moderated by ILO DWT/CO–New Delhi Director Ms Darmar Walter. The panelists highlighted strengthening women's labour force participation and the shift from informal to a more formal economy being central to a just transition that helps pivot a green economy. Better working conditions that boost productivity enable a move towards more formal arrangements for businesses and workers, including gig and platform workers was

central to the discussion. The pandemic has made apparent the need for alternative work practices along with the need for redoubling of efforts to promote fundamental rights and international labour standards.

“In the aftermath of the pandemic, the country is now experiencing a V-shape recovery and hopefully, the employment to population ratio will soon return to the pre-pandemic level. This makes advocating for the four tenets of the ILO’s Global Call to Action of inclusive economic growth and employment, protection of all workers, universal social protection and social dialogue crucial in building a workforce and economy that is resilient to unforeseeable shocks, prevented against future crises and is working towards building a better normal,” said Ms Dagmar Walter, Director, ILO DWT/CO–New Delhi

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