

Conclusions of the ILO International Symposium on Trade Unions in Times of COVID-19 (17-19 November 2021)

A virtual international symposium organized by the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) brought together trade unions leaders, experts, academics, UN and ILO Officials to discuss about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work. Over 700 participants registered to this online Symposium held between 17 and 19 November 2021, to share their insights about strategies on how trade unions can shape the policy responses to the COVID-19 and contribute to the implementation of the ILO Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

Here are the main points highlighted during the symposium:

A: Key issues to consider...

OSH and Social Protection

- ✓ To protect life, income and livelihoods of frontline workers
- ✓ Social security systems to protect all workers

Safeguarding rights

- ✓ Need for strong labour institutions
- ✓ Universal Labour Guarantee for the protection of workers' rights regardless of their employment relationship

ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work

- ✓ A visionary framework to address the challenges of the future of work
- ✓ A global instrument to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic through a human-centred recovery

SDGs and Agenda 2030

- ✓ *Strong multilateral system to address the COVID-19 pandemic as global crisis*
- ✓ *The UN SDGs as remedies to tackle the pandemic and build a better normal in the post COVID-19 era*

B. Challenges

Growing Inequalities

- ✓ Between and within countries
- ✓ Special attention to vulnerable groups, including young workers, women, migrant workers and workers in the informal economy

Macroeconomic policies

- ✓ Fiscal and social policies adapted to protect most vulnerable groups
- ✓ Impact of the crisis on trade and global supply chains

C. Opportunities

Social Dialogue

- ✓ Effect engagement of social partners in the recovery to the COVID-19 crisis
- ✓ Inclusion of workers' organizations in the design of all policies affecting the world of work

New Social Contract

- ✓ Tackle the growing inequalities
- ✓ Promote decent work for all

New Technologies and Digitalization

- ✓ Build the digital gaps
- ✓ Provision of new services to trade union members, mobilize and organize new groups of workers, including those in the platform and care economies

D. Towards Trade Unions Revitalization

Strong and representative trade unions

- ✓ Constant and internal dialogue within labour movement
- ✓ Address internal governance issues
- ✓ Promote trade union unity and solidarity

Trade Unions as actors for change

- ✓ More engagement of trade unions on climate change and just transition
- ✓ Influence the society as a champion of social justice, for peace and democracy
- ✓ New strategies needed to address the impact of technological innovation and labour migration