The Platform Economy

Preparatory Meeting, 29-30 January 2018, Ottawa

International Labour Organization
I. What is the Platform Economy?

- **Platform Economy**
  - Labour platforms
    - Crowdwork
    - Virtual activities or services that are performed independently of the location
  - Capital platforms
    - Work on-demand via apps
    - Physical activities or services that are performed locally
II. Scope of the Platform Economy

Where are crowdworkers located?

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- 600,000 workers (equalling 0.4% of total U.S. employment) are working in the gig economy

- 3% of UK adults performed work via online platforms at least once a week

- Between 1% and 5% of the adult population of the EU has earned some income in the platform economy at some time
III. Characteristics of Platform Work
Findings from ILO’s survey of crowdworkers

- Important source of income
- Crowdworkers appreciate the flexible work arrangement
- Risk of underemployment
- Low pay rate
- Unpaid searching time
- Monitoring and rating system
- Mechanism to raise concerns
III. Characteristics of Platform Work
Findings from ILO’s survey of crowdworkers

Mechanisms to raise concerns

IV. Employment status

Employees or independent contractors?

• Venue where this issue will be resolved

• Lack of social protection risk of informality

• Challenges to freedom of association and collective bargaining
VI. Policy questions

• How can existing legal and institutional frameworks address platform work? Are they “fit for purpose”?
• What enforcement mechanisms are needed?
• What are the right mechanisms to address platform workers’ grievances?
• How can social protection systems cover platform workers?
• How can we guard against the dangers of informality?
• How can challenges of representation and organisation be addressed?
• Is an augmented workforce desirable?