



Concept note

**Tripartite national dialogue on
Global call to action for a human-centered recovery from COVID-19 crisis
in the context of India
'Silver Oak', India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
Friday, 10 December 2021**

Organized by ILO in collaboration with MOLE, Government of India

Background:

In 2019 the International Labour Organization marked its centenary with the adoption by the International Labour Conference of **the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work**. The Declaration recognizes that the world of work is undergoing transformative change driven by technological innovation, demographic shifts, climate change, and globalization. It sets out a road map of action for the Organization and its tripartite constituents to shape and direct these changes through a human-centred approach to the future of work in the context of the persistent poverty, inequalities, injustices, conflict and disasters that continue to threaten shared prosperity and decent work for all.

The Declaration stresses the need for Increasing investment in people's capabilities to enable them to benefit from change at work; institutions of work to ensure adequate protection for all workers; and in decent and sustainable work for all. It equally stresses the critical role of international labour standards and of social dialogue in advancing these goals. It serves as a useful tool for further accelerating actions towards SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at large and reinforces the importance of social dialogue and multilateralism.

Nine months after the adoption of the Centenary Declaration, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. It plunged the world into an unprecedented health and economic crisis and uncertainty. The most disadvantaged and vulnerable were hit the hardest and in most cruel ways, exposing the devastating consequences of inequalities. ILO responded immediately to the pandemic with a Four Pillar Policy Framework based on international labour standards, for tackling the socioeconomic impact

through stimulating the economy and jobs: supporting employment, enterprises and income and protecting workers in the workplace.

The ILO Member States and their employer and worker representatives adopted in June 2021 a **Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery**¹ The Global Call has set forth a comprehensive agenda of measures to be taken by governments and social partners to achieve sustainable, inclusive and job-rich recovery from the pandemic crisis. It also calls for international cooperation and support from multilateral institutions to national “human-centred” recovery strategies.

COVID-19 and the world of work in India:

The pandemic had an unprecedented impact on lives and livelihood of people in India. The lockdowns imposed for preventing the spread of the virus, impacted the world of work and the socioeconomic crisis became evident. Labour market disparities, vulnerable rural economy and low level of female labour force participation were further exacerbated by the crisis. Migrant workers, women and children were severely impacted and so were the workers and businesses in the informal economy. The continuing ramifications make it clear that the pandemic is unlikely to be merely transitory and will have lasting effects on India’s future development.

Constituents’ Response in India:

The constituents in India – Governments, workers and employers played a crucial role in combating the outbreak and curbing the impact of COVID-19, ensuring the safety of individuals and the sustainability of businesses and jobs. The political leadership committed to economic and social recovery through a series of stimulus packages for revival of the economy and reform, relief and welfare measures for workers and enterprises. The national and the state governments devised measures to counter the impending socio-economic impact.

The ILO collaborated and supported EBMOs and Trade Unions as an immediate response- the Employers’ and Workers’ organizations provided inputs to the policy and extended direct support on ground to the extent possible. Capacity building in terms of developing new membership strategies and setting up new services, helped EBMOs to conduct studies on two important issues that arose on account of the pandemic in India: The new Ramifications on internal migration in India and the impact of working from home on Women Executives and Managers. The Unions took up initiatives including setting up

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_806092.pdf

Workers Information and Support Centres (WISC) in selected States; Developed guidelines for strengthening bipartite relations at the workplace; guidelines for TUs to structure their COVID-19 interventions based on evidence. In addition, ILO has facilitated discussions with the social partners on their strategic priorities for a medium to long-term recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The recommendations and priorities of the constituents will be also be reflected in key UN processes through the UNSDCF and in the ILO India DWCP 2023-27.

Based on consultations, the following is a snapshot of the priorities of the social partners in India in the **four key areas** outlined in the global **Call for Action**:

a) Inclusive economic growth and employment:	b) Protection of all workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling domestic policy and regulatory framework that supports growth of both the MSMEs and large businesses. - Boosting productivity; setting up mechanisms for supporting innovation, research and development, capacity building on new technology - Promoting female labour force participation - Developing capacities for higher level value chains and integration into global value chains; - Just transition and green growth (green value chain, skilling, and labour market information on green jobs) - Youth employment and Skill Development; LMIS, digital skills and skills for the future (including in green jobs and artificial intelligence) - Consolidation of central labour Acts to align with the contemporary requirements (for example social security coverage to gig and platform economy workers) - Employment generation and facilitating access to Decent Jobs - Promotion of decent work and wages; filling the gap between skills needed and available employment opportunities (for example through the National Career Services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing informality, ensuring wage security, health and safety, promoting rights at work - Prioritizing informal workers (E-shram portal launched, target to register all the 38 crore unorganized workers and link them to entitlements by central and state government) - Generate evidence and access to data on labour and employment. Using data for decision making (A survey on domestic workers is underway; e-shram portal launched and quarterly survey of workers has started) - Focus on women, youth and migrant worker - Advocating for equal employment opportunities for women, safe working conditions, work-life balance; Women in the care economy - Addressing challenges pertaining to informality, working conditions and social protection

c) Universal social protection	d) Social Dialogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling legal and policy environment and advocacy for social protection to informal/migrant workers. - Transition to formalization leading to rights based social protection - Provision of social protection for all the workers that contribute to the growth of the industry/business - Reorient and bring synergy among various social security schemes; monetization of entitlements to workers (for example EPFO-ESIC) - Advocacy and awareness raising on government schemes; supporting workers to access them. - Improving and expanding social protection coverage (reducing exclusion errors; simplification of processes for easier access) 	<p>Prioritize sustainable and inclusive recovery through social dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalize social dialogue mechanism and participatory decision making on issues pertaining to the world of work. - Promote Tripartism and consensus on key social and economic policies affecting labour, employment, productivity and economic growth - Capacity building for Decent work discussions at the state level - Training/ capacity building and collaboration with ITCILO (International Training Centre of the ILO) and South-South experience sharing.

The Indian economy is seen to be recovering after the second wave of the COVID-19 crisis however, it is imperative upon the constituents and stakeholder to use the crisis as an opportunity to lay the foundations for addressing the fault lines that have been thrown open by the crisis and move together to build back better.

Objective of the meeting:

- In a tripartite forum, discuss the Global call to action for a human centred recovery from COVID-19, in the four priority areas a) **Inclusive economic growth and employment;** b) **Protection of all workers;** c) **Universal social protection;** d) **Social Dialogue,** in the context of India.

The conference is envisaged to foster convergence and tripartite action contributing to the implementation of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and Sustainable Development Goals in India.