

Advancing social justice



- ▶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations agency for the world of work. It was founded on the conviction that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice.

The ILO brings together governments, employers and workers from its 187 member states in a human-centred approach to the future of work based on decent employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

The ILO's tripartite membership drafts, adopts and monitors the implementation of international labour standards on key world of work issues – ILO Conventions and Recommendations.

The ILO undertakes research and data collection across the range of world of work topics. It publishes flagship reports and a wide range of publications and working papers. Its globally renowned set of statistical databases are maintained and updated with nationally sourced labour market data.

The ILO manages a wide range of development cooperation projects in all regions of the world. Realized in partnership with donor countries and organizations, these projects aim to create the conditions for delivery of the ILO decent work agenda.

The ILO has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and field offices in more than 40 countries.

The International Labour Conference meets once a year to discuss pressing world of work issues, adopt new international labour standards and approve the ILO's work plan and budget.

The Governing Body, the Organization's executive council, meets three times a year in Geneva.



Promoting decent work

▶ Decent jobs

Not just any jobs. The ILO advocates investment in decent and green job opportunities, skills development, and economies that promote sustainable livelihoods.

▶ Social dialogue

Strong and independent workers' and employers' organizations are central to increasing productivity, resolving world of work disputes and helping build cohesive societies.

▶ Social protection for all

The ILO promotes universal social protection to ensure access for all people – including families with children – to healthcare and income security, particularly in cases of unemployment, sickness, disability, work injury, maternity, old age, or loss of a main income earner.

▶ Rights at work

The ILO prioritizes recognition and respect for the rights of all workers, including representation for the most vulnerable. It works to ensure that the international labour legal framework is relevant to a changing world of work.

▶ ILO history at a glance

The ILO is established by the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War on the belief that social justice is the condition for universal and lasting peace.

1919



1944



The Declaration of Philadelphia states that labour is not a commodity and identifies basic human and economic rights for member states to uphold.

The ILO becomes the first specialized agency of the United Nations.

1945



1969



The ILO is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work creates a set of core labour standards.

1998



2008



The Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is agreed.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives a key place to decent work for all.

2015



2019



The ILO marks its Centenary and adopts the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.



2021



2022



Safe and healthy working environments are established as a fundamental principle and right at work.

Gilbert Houngbo makes history as the first African elected ILO Director-General.

2022



▶ International Labour Organization

The UN agency for the world of work

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