

ITUC Global COVID-19 Survey



25 May – 28 May 2020
Key Findings

Executive Summary

A global jobs crisis is sweeping across the world with eighty-seven percent of countries reporting that companies in their country have announced that they are laying off workers as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic.

The Americas and Europe are being hardest hit with 100% of countries in the Americas and 90% of countries in Europe saying companies have begun to layoff workers. 80% of countries in Africa and 76% of countries in the Asia-Pacific have companies where workers are losing their jobs.

The global trade union movement is calling on governments to put in place recovery and resilience plans which include:

Job protection and job creation

Income protection and minimum living wages

OH&S including global standards and provisions for safe workplaces

Universal Social Protection to build resilience

Responsible business conduct through supply chains

Government accountability with social dialogue and the provision of privacy rights

These are the foundations for the new social contract between government and societies where people and the planet are on equal footing with economy.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic we faced a convergence of crises, massive inequality was driving an age of anger with civil unrest and distrust in democracy that was already recognised as a major risk to economies and societies. And we faced the choices associated with the best and worst impacts of technology devoid of a rights base.

Government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic with track and trace apps are exposing the fault lines in the use of technology from the digital divide to concerns over privacy.

Almost half (49%, or 49 countries) who completed this survey said that their government does or intends to use a smart phone app to track and trace people who have been exposed to Covid-19.

The wealthier G20 (88%) countries and OECD (75%) countries have the highest uptake of the use of track and tracing apps. While only 27% of countries in Africa and 33% of countries in the Americas have governments, who intend to use a smart phone app to track and trace people who have been exposed to Covid-19.

In those countries which intend to use a smartphone contact tracing app, 69% have concerns about the privacy provisions of the app and the use of personal data. These are felt most strongly in the Americas (80% of countries) and Europe (78% of countries).

While governments are responding to the needs of workers well in 63% of countries, tracking data shows that 10 countries now have a more negative view of their government's responses to the pandemic.

Over half of countries (58%) believe that employers are responding badly to the needs of workers affected by the virus, tracking data shows an increase in countries where employers are responding badly.

The importance of recovery and resilience plans that are built on social dialogue with a new social contract at their centre will be a test of government and employer action in the coming months.

Introduction

130 trade unions from 100 countries took part in the fourth ITUC Global Covid-19 Survey between 25 May – 28 May 2020.

Six questions were asked using an online survey platform to measure the uptake and concerns around contact tracing apps, worker layoffs due to the pandemic and assess how well or badly governments and employers are responding to the crisis.

ITUC affiliates will be asked regular survey questions to track the global response to Covid-19 and identify trends in support of international and national advocacy and campaigning. Three questions monitoring the government response and assessing how well or badly governments and employers are responding are tracking questions that will be asked in each survey.

16 G20 countries including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the UK and the USA.

32 out of 37 OECD countries including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the UK, the USA.

68 non-OECD countries

Regions:

- 26 countries in Africa
 - 15 countries in the Americas
 - 19 countries in Asia-Pacific
 - 40 countries from the Pan European region of the ITUC (PERC)
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Government Responses to COVID-19

25 May – 28 May 2020

Global Findings

Over half (58%, or 58) of countries are undertaking a partial reopening of workplaces, businesses and community spaces. 7% (or 7 out of 100 countries) are undertaking a full re-opening.

21% of countries are containing the spread of the virus with national lockdown measures and closure of schools and non-essential businesses, while 13% are delaying the spread of the virus with the promotion of handwashing, working from home, social distancing and border restrictions for international visitors.

Just 1 country (1%) said that the Coronavirus is not a major threat to public health or the national economy.

Global – Tracking Data

58 countries have completed each of the four waves of this survey (17–23 Mar, 30 Mar–2 Apr, 20–23 Apr and 25 May–28 May). The results for these countries are listed below¹:

	Survey 1 17 – 23 March 65 countries	Survey 2 30 March – 2 April 65 countries	Survey 3 20 – 23 April 65 countries	Survey 4 25 – 28 May 58 countries
Contain the spread of the virus with national lockdown measures.	32 countries (55%)	40 countries (69%)	35 countries (60%)	9 countries (16%)
Partial re-opening of workplaces, businesses and community spaces.	—	—	11 countries (19%)	41 countries (71%)
Delay the spread of the virus with promotion of hand washing.	24 countries (41%)	17 countries (29%)	11 countries (19%)	6 countries (10%)
Coronavirus is not a major threat to public health or the national economy.	2 countries (3%)	1 country (2%)	Nil	Nil
Full re-opening of workplaces, businesses and community spaces.	—	—	1 country (2%)	2 countries (3%)

¹ **Note:** only data for those countries that completed each of the four waves has been included so results may differ from the global average and from previous tracking data.

Amongst those who have completed the four waves of the survey, the following movements have occurred since the last time the survey was run:

- 2 countries moved from containing the spread to delaying the spread.
- 26 countries moved from containing the spread to a partial re-opening.
- 1 country moved from delaying the spread to containing the spread.
- 7 countries moved from delaying the spread to a partial re-opening.

G20 Findings

11 of the 16 G20 countries (69%) in this survey are undertaking a partial re-opening.

2 countries are undertaking a full re-opening.

Just 1 country is containing the spread of the virus, while 2 (13%) are delaying the spread.

OECD Findings

26 of the 32 OECD countries who completed this survey are undertaking a partial re-opening (81%).

2 (6%) are delaying the spread of the virus, while 2 (6%) are containing the spread of the virus.

2 countries are undertaking a full re-opening.

Regional Findings

Region	Partial re-opening of workplaces, businesses and community spaces.	Full re-opening of workplaces, businesses and community spaces.	Contain the spread of the virus with national lock down measures.	Delay the spread of the virus with promotion of hand washing.	Coronavirus is not a major threat to public health or the national economy.
Americas 15 countries	7 countries (47%)	1 country (7%)	5 countries (33%)	2 countries (13%)	Nil
Africa 26 countries	9 countries (35%)	1 country (4%)	11 countries (42%)	5 countries (19%)	Nil
Asia-Pacific 19 countries	12 countries (63%)	1 country (5%)	2 countries (11%)	4 countries (21%)	Nil
Europe (PERC) 40 countries	30 countries (75%)	4 countries (10%)	3 countries (8%)	2 countries (5%)	1 country (3%)

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Tracing Apps

Global Findings

Almost half (49%, or 49 countries) who completed this survey said that their government does, or intends to use a smart phone app to track and trace people who have been exposed to Covid-19.

51% (51 countries) say their government does not have or intend to use such an app.

Of those 65 countries planning a partial or full re-opening;

25 have or intend to use a tracing app.

40 do **not** have or intend to use a tracing app.

G20 Findings

Across the 16 G20 countries who completed this survey, 14 (or 88%) have or intend to use a contact tracing app.

Just 2 (13%) do **not** have or intend to use such an app.

OECD Findings

24 (75%) of the 32 OECD countries who completed this survey have or intend to use a contact tracing app.

8 (25%) do **not** have or intend to use such an app.

Regional Findings

Does your government use or intend to use a smart phone app to track and trace people who have been exposed to Covid-19?

Region	Yes	No
Americas 15 countries	5 countries (33%)	10 countries (67%)
Africa 26 countries	7 countries (27%)	19 countries (73%)
Asia-Pacific 19 countries	14 countries (74%)	5 countries (26%)
Europe (PERC) 40 countries	23 countries (58%)	17 countries (43%)

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Union attitude to Tracing Apps

Global Findings

34 countries (or 69%) have concerns about the privacy provisions of the app and the use of personal data.

15 (31%) do not have concerns.

G20 Findings

Across the G20 11 countries (79% of the 14 countries who have or intend to use the app) have concerns about the privacy provision of the app and the use of personal data.

Just 2 (21%) do not have concerns.

OECD Findings

Of the 24 OECD countries who have or intend to use the app, 17 (or 71%) have concerns about the privacy provisions and the use of personal data.

7 (30%) do not have concerns.

Regional Findings

Does your union have concerns about the privacy provisions of the app and the use of personal data?

Region	Yes	No
Americas 5 countries	4 countries (80%)	1 country (20%)
Africa 7 countries	5 countries (71%)	2 countries (29%)
Asia-Pacific 14 countries	7 countries (50%)	7 countries (50%)
Europe (PERC) 23 countries	18 countries (78%)	5 countries (22%)

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Company layoffs

Global Findings

87% (87 of 100 countries) have reported that companies in their country have announced that they are laying off workers as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic.

Just 13 countries (13%) said companies are not laying off workers in their country.

G20 Findings

Of the 16 G20 countries who completed this survey, **all** said that companies in their country had announced they would be laying off workers as a result of the pandemic.

OECD Findings

Across the 32 OECD countries who completed this survey, 31 (97%) said that companies in their country had announced layoffs as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic.

Just 1 country said companies had not announced layoff as a result of the pandemic.

Regional Findings

Have companies in your country announced that they are laying off workers as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic?

Region	Yes	No
Americas 15 countries	15 countries (100%)	Nil
Africa 25 countries	20 countries (80%)	5 countries (20%)
Asia-Pacific 21 countries	16 countries (76%)	5 countries (24%)
Europe (PERC) 40 countries	36 countries (90%)	4 countries (10%)

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Assessment of government responses

Global Findings

63% of countries believe that their government is responding **well** to the needs of workers affected by the virus

37% of countries believe that their government is responding **badly** to the needs of workers affected by the virus

Almost two-thirds of countries (63%, or 63 countries) who responded to this survey believe that their government is responding **well** to the needs of workers affected by the virus.

Most (56% or 56 countries) believe their government is responding **quite well**, while just 7% (7 countries) believe their government is responding **very well**.

37% (37 countries) believe that their government is responding **badly**. This includes 25 (25%) who believe they are responding **badly** and 12 (12%) who believe they are responding **very badly**.

Global - Tracking Data

58 countries have completed each of the four waves of this survey (17 -23 Mar, 30 Mar – 2 Apr, 20 -23 Apr and 25 – 28 May). The results for these countries are listed below²:

	Survey 1 17 – 23 March 58 countries	Survey 2 30 March – 2 April 58 countries	Survey 3 20 – 23 April 58 countries	Survey 4 25 – 28 May 58 countries
Governments responding badly	24 countries (41%)	23 countries (40%)	22 countries (38%)	25 countries (43%)
Governments responding well	34 countries (59%)	35 countries (60%)	36 countries (62%)	33 countries (57%)

10 countries now have a more negative view of their governments response to the crisis; 4 countries have shifted from **badly** to **very badly**, 4 have shifted from **quite well** to **badly** and 2 have shifted from **very well** to **quite well**.

3 countries now have a more positive view of their governments response to the crisis with 1 shifting from **badly** to **quite well** and 2 shifting from **very badly** to **badly**.

² **Note:** only data for those countries that completed each of the four waves has been included so results may differ from the global average and from previous tracking data.

G20 Findings

8 of the 16 (50%) G20 countries who responded to this poll believe their government is responding **quite well** to the needs of workers. No G20 countries believe they are responding **very well**.

8 G20 countries (53%) believe their government is responding **badly** – this includes 3 who believe that their government is responding **very badly**.

OECD Findings

71% or 22 of the 32 OECD countries who responded to this survey believe their government is responding **well** to the needs of workers. No OECD countries believe their governments are responding **very well**.

29% or 10 countries believe they are responding **badly** – including 5 who believe they are responding **very badly**.

Regional Findings**How well or badly is your government responding to the needs of workers affected by Covid-19?**

Region	Well	Badly
Americas 15 countries	4 countries (27%)	11 countries (73%)
Africa 26 countries	17 countries (65%)	9 countries (35%)
Asia-Pacific 19 countries	9 countries (47%)	10 countries (53%)
Europe (PERC) 40 countries	33 countries (83%)	7 countries (18%)

6 Assessment of employer responses

Global Findings

58% of countries believe that employers are responding **badly** to the needs of workers affected by the virus.

42% believe that employers are responding **well** to the needs of workers affected by the virus.

More than half (58% or 58 countries) believe that employers are responding **badly** to the needs of workers. This includes 14 countries (or 14%) believe that employers are responding **very badly**.

42% (or 42 countries) believe that employers are responding **well**, however; this includes just 1% (1 country) who believe employers are responding **very well**.

Global – Tracking Data

Across the countries who have completed all four waves of this survey, 60% now believe that employers in their country are responding badly to the needs of workers.

58 countries have completed each of the three waves of this survey (17 -23 Mar, 30 Mar – 2 Apr, 20 -23 Apr and 25 – 28 May). The results for these countries are listed below³:

	Survey 1 17 – 23 March 58 countries	Survey 2 30 March – 2 April 58 countries	Survey 3 20 – 23 April 58 countries	Survey 4 25 – 28 May 58 countries
Companies responding badly	26 countries (45%)	34 countries (59%)	31 countries (53%)	35 countries (60%)
Companies responding well	32 countries (55%)	24 countries (41%)	27 countries (47%)	23 countries (40%)

G20 Findings

Across the 16 G20 countries who responded to this survey, 11 countries (or 69%) believe that employers in their country are responding badly.

Just 5 countries (31%) believe employers are responding well.

OECD Findings

39% (13 countries) in the OECD that responded to this survey believe that employers are responding badly.

Most countries (19, or 61%) believe employers are responding well.

Regional Findings

How well or badly do you think employers are responding to the needs of workers affected by Covid-19?

Region	Well	Badly
Americas 15 countries	1 country (7%)	14 countries (93%)
Africa 26 countries	10 countries (38%)	16 countries (62%)
Asia-Pacific 19 countries	7 countries (37%)	12 countries (63%)
Europe (PERC) 40 countries	24 countries (60%)	16 countries (40%)

³ **Note:** only data for those countries that completed each of the four waves has been included so results may differ from the global average and from previous tracking data.