



ITUC International Trade Union Confederation
CSI Confédération syndicale internationale
CSI Confederación Sindical Internacional
IGB Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund

Ayuba Wabba

President
Président
Präsident
Presidente

To all ITUC affiliates in India

Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC)
Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)
Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India (CFTUI)

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

HTUR

26 June 2020

Global trade union solidarity statement India national strike 3 July 2020

Dear sisters and brothers,

I write on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation to express our strongest solidarity to you and the mining trade union federation on the general strikes between 2nd and 4th July in India. This is the second mobilisation of the central trade unions within two months to oppose the reforms pressed by the Indian government while many parts of the country are still locked down. We fully support the strike declaration of the central trade unions and stand with you in this struggle.

The failures of the Indian government to implement its promises and protect working people's interests during the COVID-19 pandemic are clear. Millions of migrant workers that have lost their jobs are stranded for months in and outside India without health protection, food and shelter. Prohibitions on lay-offs, work suspensions and wage deductions handed down by the ministries have not been implemented. Healthcare and other frontline workers are not provided with adequate safety equipment or compensation. More workers will be forced to expose themselves to health risks at work as businesses re-open. Despite the risks and while taking into account social distancing and other safety measures, trade unions have been distributing food and other supplies to members and workers in the informal sector as they are ignored by government support programmes.

The ITUC calls for a new social contract to set the world back on an environmentally sustainable and socially just path. Government post-COVID-19 recovery plans must put people first. Resilience should be about job protection and job creation, income and minimum living wage guarantees, robust occupational health and safety standards at the workplace, universal social protection, responsible supply chains, and sound governance based on accountability and social dialogue.

From *Made in India* to the post COVID-19 *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* announced by Prime Minister Modi, the Indian government is seeking economic recovery on a contrary course through sweeping market liberalisations, privatisations and the dismantling of employment regulation and social dialogue platforms. The reforms pledged by the government on social protection, safety and health and minimum wages will not be meaningful without sound labour inspections and protection of the right to freedom of association at the workplace which are being suspended by state governments.

It is shameful that during the lockdown, fatal accidents have continued in chemical plants and coal mines which are packed with un-trained contract workers in workplaces without safety budgets, equipment and rules. You have legitimate concerns about the disastrous consequences of privatisations of state-owned companies and the public sector when social and employment benefits to

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the society as a whole, as well as transparency, social consensus and safeguards to mitigate negative impacts on workers and the community are not guaranteed.

The ITUC and the Global Union Federations condemn the suspension of labour laws by the Indian government. The International Labour Organization has expressed grave concern about the situation following complaints from the Indian trade union movement. The Indian government must observe its international obligations under the international labour and human rights treaties which underpin international cooperation and investment.

Brothers and sisters, we applaud your struggle to stand up and fight against this anti-worker model which sets a bad example for developing countries in the Asia Pacific region. We fully support your demands to call upon the central government to repeal the state directives that infringe international labour standards, stop privatisation in its current form, and to re-convene the Indian Labour Conference and social dialogue meetings with trade unions.

India is one of the ten worst countries for the working people according to the latest ITUC Global Rights Index. The ITUC and the international trade union movement are closely following the situation in India and we stand in solidarity with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B. ...', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary