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The global economy is no more stable today than it was six years ago. The scourge of unemployment and inequality is driving economic instability. One in two working families are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or the reduction of working hours. Young women in particular are most affected by the jobs crisis.

Meanwhile, more than half of the world population say their incomes have fallen behind the cost of living in the past two years.

Global citizens feel abandoned by their governments because they are seen as failing to tackle unemployment and prioritising business interests over the interests of working families.

The state of the world for working families is bleak. Unemployment is again rising above 200 million and youth unemployment is a problem in nearly every nation.

The ITUC Global Poll 2013 covers the adult populations of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The findings represent the opinions of more than 3.7 billion people, or according to UN estimates about half of the world population.

Financial crisis reaches new depths

Over the past two years, a large number of people (49 percent) have directly experienced unemployment or the reduction of working hours – either in their own job or that of a family member.

The pain is felt harshest in South Africa (73 percent) and Spain (73 percent). Self employed workers are heavily hit (62 percent). Young women under 35 years of age are particularly hard hit (57 percent).

Unemployment breeds inequality. A dramatic 76 percent of those who get by with ‘great difficulty’ have direct experience with unemployment or partial unemployment. This contrasts with just 29 percent of those who get by ‘very well’ being directly impacted by unemployment or partial unemployment.

Global citizens are hurt by the financial crisis

Two-thirds of the respondents (63 percent) rate their national economy as bad. More than half the respondents (58 percent) say they have seen their family incomes fall behind the increase in the cost of living.

One out of eight respondents (12 percent) are struggling financially and can no longer pay for basic living expenses like housing, food and electricity; more than half of all respondents (59 percent) are no longer able to save any money.

Future generations will not be better off

Fifty-five percent of the global respondents expect future generations to be worse off than their own. Just twenty-three percent expect future generations to be better off. Sentiment is particularly gloomy in Europe where only 10 percent expect future generations to be better off. China and India are the only two countries with a majority of the respondents expecting future generations to be doing better than their own.

National governments are seen as failing

When it comes to fighting unemployment and defending the interests of working families, global citizens feel abandoned by their governments:

- **Failing to tackle unemployment.** A dramatic 80 percent of the respondents say their government has failed to tackle unemployment effectively.
- **Prioritising business interests over worker interests.** When asked whether their government is focusing more on the interests of ‘working people and their families’ or focusing more on the interest of ‘private companies, investors and financial institutions’, more than half of the respondents (59 percent) choose prioritising business interests. Just 13 percent believe their government is more focused on the interests of working families.
- **Serious doubt about effectiveness of current labour laws.** Global citizens also continue to doubt whether current labour laws provide adequate job security (63 percent) and fair wages (65 percent). To a lesser extent, global citizens also express concern (38 percent) about the effectiveness of current labour laws to secure reasonable working hours.
- **Women voice the deepest uncertainty.** Women are less optimistic than men about the direction of their countries, with 54 percent who think their country is going in the wrong direction.
Unions offer hope for improvement
Unions offer hope for a better future: more than two out of three respondents (68 percent) agree that ‘workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers’.
In the face of increasing lack of trust in institutions, governments need to heed the warning signs.
Only 13 percent of people think that governments are acting in their interests and 26 percent are disenchanted or worse disengaged with the belief that governments acting in the interests of neither people or business. This is a serious risk to trust in democracy.
Workers need an urgent plan, a plan for our economy and society which gives families hope for the future.
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation

The road forward
A five point plan for jobs, decent wages and social protection
The ITUC Global Poll 2013 shows global citizens support a five point plan towards reducing uncertainty and inequality, a plan offering hope for billions of workers.

Jobs: Investment in infrastructure, new green technologies and industries
There is overwhelming support for ‘public investment in education, research and new technologies’ (92 percent support) and ‘public investment in clean energy and environment-related industries’ (88 percent support).

Fair wages: ensure reasonable wages through fair prices
When confronted with the choice between paying the lowest possible price for goods and services and paying ‘a little more for most goods or services if companies paid workers a reasonable wage’, half the world’s population prefer paying a little more to paying the lowest possible price.

Strong labour laws: adopted and strengthened national and international labour rules
Global citizens continue to express very strong, emotionally anchored support for a wide range of national labour laws and international standards including:
• ‘The right to strike for better wages, conditions and health and safety.’ (99 percent in favour, of which 75 percent ‘strongly favour’)
• ‘Establish and protect a decent minimum wage.’ (89 percent in favour, 68 percent strongly)
• ‘All companies, businesses and employers should pay workers a reasonable wage regardless of where they work.’ (95 percent in favour, of which 55 percent ‘strongly favour’)
• ‘Give workers the right to collectively bargain.’ (91 percent in favour, 47 percent strongly)
• ‘International companies should be subjected to international rules for the working conditions of the employees making their products and services, no matter which country the workers are in.’ (91 percent in favour, 46 percent strongly)
• ‘Give workers the right to join a union’ (89 percent in favour, 44 percent strongly)

A social protection floor: governments step forward to protect the interests of workers and their families
Governments need to step forward and protect the interests of workers and their families to reduce inequality. There is overwhelming public support for a social protection floor with active income measures.
• ‘Affordable access to health care.’ (97 percent in favour, 76 percent strongly)
• ‘Affordable access to education.’ (97 percent in favour, 72 percent strongly)
• ‘Decent retirement incomes.’ (96 percent in favour, 74 percent strongly)
• ‘Affordable access to child care.’ (92 percent in favour, 58 percent strongly)
• ‘Unemployment benefits.’ (88 percent in favour, 49 percent strongly)

Make large and multinational companies pay their taxes
Global citizens want tax evasion to end. An overwhelming majority of global citizens (86 percent) support policies to stop large and multi-national corporations avoiding tax. 80 percent are open to raising taxes for large companies. People insist on more equality.
One in two working families are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or the reduction of working hours. Unemployment creates inequality and inequality is both social and economic poison. 

*Sharan Burrow, General Secretary ITUC*
Question

In the last two years, have you or someone in your family been unemployed, or had their working hours reduced?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Countries ordered from highest to lowest ‘yes’ (i.e., was unemployed or had hours reduced) score.

The pain of unemployment is widespread from Brazil, Russia South Africa, Europe and the US. 
John Evans, General Secretary TUAC
People across the world are facing serious financial pressure. Family incomes are falling behind the cost of living. Only 13 percent have income to spend to boost the economy.

*Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC*

**Question**

In the last two years, do you think that you and your family’s income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind, or stayed even with the cost of living.

Note N= 13,015 for 13 country average; Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation.

Largest don’t know response was just 1 percent.
The five European countries in the ITUC Global Poll 2013, including Germany have the bleakest situation in terms of income falling behind the cost of living.

Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC

Question

In the last two years, do you think that you and your family’s income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind, or stayed even with the cost of living.

Note N= 13,015; N is about 1000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was just 1 percent. Countries ordered from the highest score on ‘fallen behind cost of living’ based on pattern obtained when temporarily disregarding ‘stayed even’ responses.
Two thirds of respondents hold negative views of the economic situation in their country. Governments are making policies which are divorced from the very dignity of work that leads to stable economies and optimism.

John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC
**Question**

Thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (country)?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was just 2 percent. Countries ordered from highest to lowest score on (adjusted) score on ‘(very) bad.’

"The majority of respondents from BRICS countries are more optimistic about their economies, but as global growth stagnates they are becoming more anxious."

*John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC*
More people are struggling financially; over half of all respondents are no longer able to save any money. Only income led growth will stabilise economies. Yet leaders have no serious jobs plan, tax evasion is rampant and the distributional tools of collective bargaining and social protection are under attack.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

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**Chart 7: Personal financial situation**

- **Can Save**: 41%
- **Can't save**: 59%

**Question**

How would you describe your financial situation?

**Note**

N=13,015 for 13-country average. Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was 0 (zero) percent.

Answers combined for “You don’t have enough for basic essentials, like housing, food and electricity and You have enough for basic essentials, but you cannot save any money” (Can’t save) and “You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a little money and You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a lot of money.” (Can save)
Chart 8: Personal financial situation

Question
How would you describe your financial situation?

Note: N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was 0 (zero) percent. Countries ordered from lowest to highest score on combined score for ‘enough, can save a little’ and ‘enough, can save a lot’.

“Serious poverty is widespread in all countries, and large majorities of people cannot save money. Without jobs families are losing hope for the future.

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, General Secretary of ITUC-Africa”
Question
How would you describe your financial situation?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was 0 (zero) percent. Countries ordered from lowest to highest score ‘not enough for essentials’.

Chart 9: Personal financial situation: Not enough for essentials

More than one out of eight respondents lack the money for even basic essentials like food, housing and electricity. This picture well demonstrates prevailing hardships of people and pressing need for higher income policy as well as fairer income distribution.

Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary, ITUC – Asia Pacific
Widespread uncertainty persists. A fundamental driver for social and economic progress, confidence that our children and grandchildren will be better off is not in place in most countries. In some countries, families will face two generations of unemployment. This is a serious threat to economic recovery.

Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC

**Question**

Overall, do you feel future generations will be better or worse off than your own generation?

Note: N=13,015 for combined average; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Labels for ‘don’t know’ not shown. Countries ordered from highest proportion “worst off” to lowest, based on pattern obtained when (temporarily) disregarding “the same” and “don’t know” responses.
Question

For young people in your country how do you see their employment prospects?

Note $N=13,015$; $N$ is about 1,000 for each individual country.

82 percent of all respondents say employment prospects for young people are poor. The failed policy of austerity has left a legacy of extreme levels of unemployment, rising inequality and the marginalisation of a generation of young people.

*John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC*
The bloc of EU countries in the poll stand out for sombre perceptions of jobs prospects for young people. Almost half the European respondents believe employment prospects for young people are not only poor, but are worsening.

*Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC*
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.

Note $N=13,015$.

"Fundamental labour rights are good for working families and for the economy as more equal societies generate more stable demand – unions work."

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.

Note N=13,015. N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

From Spain to China, people agree that unions make for better workplaces.

Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC
Question
Do you think your government effectively tackled unemployment over the past year or two?

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

Chart 15: Has government effectively tackled unemployment?

People feel abandoned by their governments as they fail to tackle unemployment and prioritise business interests over worker interests.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC
The state of the world for working people and their families is very bleak. People, regardless of age, gender or education and across all countries, share a sense that governments have failed to tackle unemployment.

*John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC*
Question

Do you think that when it comes to deciding on economic policies, your government’s focus is on putting the interests of working people and their families first, or the interests of private companies their investors and financial institutions.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

Of critical concern is that only 13 percent of people feel their government are acting in the interests of people, and even more worrying, 28 percent of people say their governments are not acting in the interests of either people or business.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC
Chart 18: Government economic policies - whose interest first?

Disenchantment and disengagement is undermining confidence in democracy. The loss of trust is serious and must be addressed.

Victor Baez, General Secretary, TUCA

Question

Do you think that when it comes to deciding on economic policies, your government’s focus is on putting the interests of working people and their families first, or the interests of private companies their investors and financial institutions.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Countries ordered from highest score on ‘more focused on the interests of working people and their families’.
Despite rather regulated working hours, there is an evident coincidence between job insecurity and unfair wages. Strong labour institutions and actions against insecure work directly address this labour market deficit.

_Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary, ITUC – Asia Pacific_
Question
Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect workers fair wage.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know response omitted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest to lowest scores on ‘no’.

Chart 21: Fair wages

Question
Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect workers reasonable working hours.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know response omitted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest to lowest scores on ‘yes’.

Chart 22: Reasonable working hours
Question
Overall, would you say (COUNTRY) is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

Brazil, Russia, China and India share an optimism which contrasts with a pessimistic outlook from other nations.

Victor Baez, General Secretary, TUCA
Women are more pessimistic than men as they feel the impact of unemployment and inequality hardest.

*Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC*
Unions are calling on leaders to invest 1 trillion euro into infrastructure - less than half of the public money handed to the banks, according to estimates across Europe and the U.S. We simply have a message that people want action.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

Question
Please indicate your level of support for the following policies to create jobs, develop new industries and reduce unemployment: Government and public investment in education, research and new technologies; Government and public investment in clean energy and environment related industries.

Note \( N=13,015 \) for 13 country average.
There is a clear willingness to pay higher prices in exchange for reasonable wages for workers. Even people without real disposable income, and facing real inequality still indicate they are willing to pay extra for goods and services provided with decent wages.

*Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC*
The ill-timed move from stimulus to austerity has brought with it an attack on labour market institutions. Global citizens on the frontline of these attacks express overwhelming support for labour laws in each of the 13 countries.

*John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC*

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**Chart 27: Laws that protect workers**

The road forward – Five point plan: **Labour rights**

**Question**

Could you please tell me if you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following laws? Laws that protect the right to strike for better wages, conditions and health and safety, Laws that establish and protect a decent minimum wage for workers, Laws that give workers the right to collective bargain, so they can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions, Laws that give workers the right to join a union.

*Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. Items ordered from highest favour score to lowest score.*
People are demanding business take their responsibilities seriously. Support for international rules is robust, but with slightly greater intensity in BRICS countries.

John Evans, General Secretary TUAC

**Question**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? International companies should be subjected to international rules for the working conditions of the employees making their goods and services, no matter which country the workers are in.

Note N=13,015 for 13-country average; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses deleted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was 1 percent.
Virtually all respondents (95 percent) agree that international companies should pay workers a reasonable wage. You can’t build a global economy on exploitation.

*Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, General Secretary, ITUC-Africa*
Chart 30: Social protection policies

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<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Somewhat favour</th>
<th>Strongly favour</th>
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<td>Affordable health care</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable education</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement income</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable childcare</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment benefits</td>
<td>-11%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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Question

Would you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the government working on providing workers with each of the following items? Unemployment benefits, decent retirement incomes, affordable access to health care, affordable access to education, affordable access to childcare.

Note \( N = 13,015 \) for 13 country average. Policies ordered from highest to lowest ‘strongly’ favour.

Jobs, collective bargaining, a minimum wage on which people can live, social protection and essential services are the core elements of reducing inequality.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC
Five years into the economic crisis the threat posed by tax havens has not disappeared. We need action not words. A coordinated jobs plan could be funded by closing corporate tax loopholes.

*John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC*
This project covers the adult (18 years and over) populations of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the UK and the USA.

Essential Research constructed the survey in consultation with TNS Opinion and the ITUC.

TNS Opinion conducted the survey fieldwork through local partners Lightspeed Research. TNS Opinion was responsible for translations, the fieldwork in the 13 countries and data processing.

The survey was in the field from the 18 April and 1 May 2013.

The sample in each country has been selected by quotas to reflect national proportions in terms of age, gender and region.

In each country 1000 interviews were targeted for a total of 13,015 conducted interviews.

All interviews were conducted online.

SPSS software and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse and present the data.

This project was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.

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