

# International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



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## **IUF Statement to the meeting of G20 Tourism Ministers, October 7, 2020**

The International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is the global trade union federation representing workers throughout the hotel and tourism sectors. The IUF is composed of 423 affiliated trade unions in 127 countries representing over 10 million workers.

COVID-19 has decimated the tourism sector. In most countries, hotels are closed or open with very low occupancy. In Europe, where the second wave of contagion is accelerating, some countries have already limited or are considering limiting the opening hours of bars and restaurants. The IATA predicts that global pre-COVID-19 passenger traffic will not return before 2024<sup>1</sup> and tourism, which depends largely on air traffic, will suffer the same impact.

In our statement to the G20 Tourism Ministers in April 2020, we highlighted the danger that to rebuild the sector without strong trade union voices guiding policy development would guarantee a tourism sector that left millions of workers behind. Our affiliates are constantly reporting ongoing rights violations in hotels and restaurants. Under the cover of COVID-19, trade union rights, enshrined in ILO Conventions, are being suppressed. There are frequent dismissals of trade union leaders aimed at eliminating the union from workplaces. Employers in tourism too often decide unilaterally on "survival" plans. Wage cuts and reduced hours are imposed not negotiated. Safety protocols are developed and implemented with little or no negotiation with unions. Safe tourism requires safe workplaces. Safe workplaces require safety protocols negotiated with unions.

Again, we call on the G20 to adopt an agenda that puts workers first and that fully protects workers' right starting with the full application of ILO Conventions 87 on freedom of association and 98 on collective bargaining.

On UNWTO's World Tourism Day (Sept 27), the IUF called on employers, governments and UN agencies to "Build Back Tourism Better"<sup>2</sup> by committing to a safe, secure and sustainable tourism sector with workers' rights at its center. We reiterated our demand to the United Nations World Tourism Organization that the IUF must be part of the Global Tourism Crisis Committee where trade unions are not represented.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-07-28-02/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/7951>

On behalf of the many millions of workers in the tourism sector who are currently laid-off or unemployed, we call on G20 members to:

- Develop and implement in negotiation with trade unions protocols to protect hotel workers. These must include provision of personal protective equipment, transport and occupational health and safety training. These protocols must apply to all workers, including those with non-standard forms of employment;
- Ensure that bail-out policies for the tourism sector enable a shift to sustainable tourism built on decent working conditions and an end to precarious work in tourism. Bail-out funds should be linked to tourism companies' efforts to retain and support employees;
- Refuse to bail out companies registered in offshore tax havens and prohibit the use of government bail-out funds for shareholder dividends and share buybacks;
- Regularise all undocumented migrant workers to guarantee access to health care;
- Insist that hotels suspend optional housekeeping programmes where guests can voluntarily forego housekeeping services;
- Ensure that gender inequalities are not exacerbated in the context of this pandemic. In addition to their employment, women often also have to take care of their families, elderly and sick relatives. It also highlights that quarantine and physical isolation have led to an increase in domestic violence. Governments must do everything possible to implement or strengthen a comprehensive warning and protection system. We call on Governments for the ratification and full implementation of ILO Convention 190;
- Where necessary, work with trade unions and employers to establish short-time work schemes so that workers are not let go during COVID-19 lockdowns but continue to receive their wages or a percentage of their wages. Where short-time work is not possible and lay-offs are unavoidable, there need to be targeted measures to provide income support and health care coverage for tourism workers;
- Call on the UN World Tourism Organisation to include the global trade union federations representing tourism workers in its [Global Tourism Crisis Committee](#).

The rebuilding of tourism cannot happen without the active participation of the trade unions representing workers in the tourism sector. It is crucial that governments, employers and trade unions work together for sustainable tourism which protects local communities and the environment, and which guarantees quality work and living wages. We are ready and willing to work for sustainable tourism. We welcome further discussion on our action points.

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**References:**

[IUF Safe Return to Work during COVID-19 Demands: HRCT](#)

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