

**23 March 2020**

### **Trade Union Letter to the G20 Heads of State Meeting re COVID19**

Trade unions representing workers in G20 countries and around the world call for coordinated action by G20 leaders. An inclusive response to the COVID-19 pandemic must protect the health of all people and the incomes and jobs of all working people as the key to stability of business and the real economy.

Dear G20 leaders,

We thank those of you who have acted decisively to inject vital support for our health systems and for the health of workers on the frontlines in their countries. We ask you now to act together to extend that coordination in rapid partnership with other vulnerable countries.

Equally we appreciate the actions of those of you who have extended the following measures for workers and ask that all of you ensure such support for all workers, regardless of the employment relationship. Freelancers, platform or gig economy workers, migrant workers, the self-employed and informal workers all need security at this time and the real economy needs the capacity of working families to pay their bills and procure vital products and services. These measures should be implemented with the involvement of the social partners through social dialogue to maximise effectiveness and to ensure they have popular support.

- Paid sick leave from day one;
- Wage/income protection;
- Managed reduction of hours where necessary, with government support to maximise income security;
- Mortgage, rent and loan relief;
- Universal social protection and free access to healthcare;
- Childcare support for frontline workers in health, supermarkets, pharmacies and other vital areas.

We recognise that business may also need support but we urge governments to both prioritise small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) and require all business receiving support to maintain jobs and meet the test of the list of basic support for workers set out above. No company should be allowed to access government support and then lay off workers or force them onto leave without pay!

For multinational enterprises (MNEs) we request that for those whose headquarters exist in your countries, you require the responsibility from them that they maintain their obligations for supply contracts and workers in their supply chains.

Further your humanitarian support for developing economies must first and foremost support health services for all and pay for the foundations of universal social protections including unemployment income, child protection, maternity protection and pensions. Human survival is the greatest priority of all.

We also stress as we have with global business organisations including the ICC and the IOE that it is

imperative to see vital global coordination to keep the supply routes operational, particularly for medical products, food and other essentials.

We have noted with severe concern the reported doubling of export restrictions for essential COVID-19 related products over the past week. And our unions report to us extraordinary delays with border closures for transport workers. This is potentially disastrous for people in need, for business and for the health and safety of the vital workers.

While we understand the temptation for retreat into purely national interests, the globally integrated nature of supply chains cannot, even if it seems desirable, be replaced by domestic production in order to maximise the world's chances of minimising the toll of a virus that crosses borders with ease.

Further we request your leadership to support global coherence by working in partnership with international institutions including the ILO, the OECD, the World Bank and of course the WHO. They can deploy global responses and services in a timely and human-centred manner that meet these criteria for support.

But equally the IMF has a vital role to play. All direct financial support must embrace the priorities listed above but it is also the capacity to coordinate the approach of central banks with your support that is vital to maximising the chances of stability. This crisis could be, in aggregate, so much greater in its economic impact than the global financial crisis of 08/09 that it is imperative to act together.

Beyond these short-term measures and the inclusive stimulus you inject to protect people and businesses, trade unions stand ready to assist, through social dialogue with employers and the B20, in the design of what will be vital reconstruction policies.

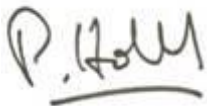
Only effective global cooperation can contain the potential human and economic toll of COVID-19 but it will take all of us working together.

Our very best wishes,

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Burrow', with a stylized, flowing script.

Pierre Habbard, General Secretary, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Habbard', with a simple, blocky script.