

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

New global poll: Workers in the digital economy deserve the same rights as workers in the real economy

21 June 2016 (ITUC OnLine): Technology itself is not a threat to decent work – it is how it is managed and in whose interest that matters, said international labour unions ahead of an OECD Ministerial meeting on the Digital Economy in Mexico.

“The digital revolution provides opportunities for decent jobs and quality services if governments regulate business behaviour as we expect them to do in traditional industries. The next wave of technology can play a huge role in the transformation to a zero-carbon/zero-poverty world, but governments need to accept their responsibilities to ensure that transition is just, and that social dialogue, labour rights, social protection and effective regulation are at the centre of the process,” said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation.

The ITUC 2016 Frontlines Poll found 82 per cent of people agree that companies which provide services using internet platforms should provide workers with the same rights and protections – sick leave, paid holidays, pensions and union representation – as other workers receive.

Labour unions set out a three-point social license to operate for all registered businesses that reply on digital platforms – they must:

- Pay tax in the country where they earn income;
- Contribute to social protection where national social protection systems include such contributions;
- Be held accountable by law for the employment relationship and other relevant regulations.

The ITUC Frontlines Poll 2016 covering nine countries with 55 per cent of Global GDP and 45 per cent of the world’s population demonstrates strong public support for governments to assert the rule of law in the digital economy.

Agreement was highest in those countries from Asia that were polled: China (91 per cent), South Korea (87 per cent) and India (86 per cent).

A large majority of each population agreed with the statement: 84 per cent in Argentina, 81 per cent in Germany and the UK, 78 per cent in France and Canada and 70 per cent in the USA.

“The future of work starts now. Workers’ rights must be respected, minimum wages on which workers can live with dignity must be guaranteed, and collective bargaining rights for all workers and social protection must be ensured. Decent work requires the rule of law,” said Sharan Burrow.

“The dangers and risks accompanying the growth of platform work in the digital economy are not all new, as there are already plenty of outsourced janitors, retail workers or manufacturing workers in the ‘old economy’ that can explain what ‘on demand’ means in terms of

underpaid, insecure jobs with restricted access to social security,” said John Evans, General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC).

“There is the need for collective bargaining rights for all workers. Trade unions are seeking to ensure that 21st-century technology does not result in 19th-century working conditions for platform workers. Allowing workers to organise in unions and bargain collectively have to be part of a ‘new bargain’ – workers and increasingly regulators recognise that it is important that the ‘new economy’ employers do as well.”

TUAC is holding a special forum with civil society, private sector and public sector and union participants ahead of the OECD Ministerial to look at the specifics of ensuring that the digital economy has a positive overall impact on employment and economic equality ([http://www.tuac.org/en/public/e-docs/00/00/12/30/document\\_doc.phtml](http://www.tuac.org/en/public/e-docs/00/00/12/30/document_doc.phtml)).

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Read the 2016 ITUC Frontline Poll Digital Economy

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-frontlines-poll-2016-special-17595>

The ITUC Frontline poll was carried out by TNS Opinion 14 – 22 April 2016 in nine countries: Argentina, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, South Korea, the UK and the US.

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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