

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Ahead of G20 Labour Ministers Meeting, International Poll by World Union Body Shows Global Governance Failure on Jobs

Brussels, 15 May 2017 (ITUC OnLine): The annual global poll commissioned by the 181 million-member International Trade Union Confederation shows that globalisation is failing people.

The poll shows that 73 percent of people are worried about losing their jobs and 80 percent say the minimum wage is not enough to live on. Half the population in thirteen of the G20 countries rate the economic situation in their country as bad.

“Too many governments have compromised people’s prosperity in the face of corporate greed with low wages and insecure work. The rules of the global economy have been distorted to put the interests of the richest 1% and corporations ahead of working people, and this power imbalance is driving mistrust in governments,” said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

The poll commissioned by the ITUC from global market research company Kantar Public covers a total of 16 countries representing 53 percent of the global population.

Released at the Labour 20 Dialogue in Berlin, ahead of the G20 Labour Ministers meeting, Sharan Burrow said the poll showed how globalisation and interconnectedness, coupled with exponential technological progress and innovation, have created incredible wealth but left too many working people marginalised and fearful of an insecure future.

The results of the poll conducted in March in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States is a warning that governments have all but abandoned responsibility for investment in jobs and tackling inequality and climate devastation, resulting in massive insecurity.

- Three in four (74 percent) are worried about rising inequality between the richest 1% and the rest of the population.
- 73 percent of people worry about losing their jobs.
- 66 percent worry about climate change.

More than seven out of ten people (71% percent) believe that working people do not have enough influence on how the rules of the global economy are set. 80 percent of people say the economic system favours the wealthy rather than being fair to most.

The poll shows deep levels of uncertainty about family income and job security.

- 80 percent don’t think the minimum wage in their country is high enough for a decent life.
- 80 percent of people have falling or stagnating incomes.

- One in two (49 percent) don't have enough money for basic essential or are barely getting by.
- Almost four in ten (38 percent) have directly experienced unemployment or reduced working hours in the last two years.

“The opportunities to grow sustainable economies, together with social protection, secure jobs and decent living wages exists, but urgent co-ordinated action is required by the G20. The dominant global trade model of supply chains is a model of labour arbitrage.

When 85 percent of people say it's time to rewrite the rules of the global economy to promote growth and share prosperity, G20 leaders should have the confidence to take action knowing that they have the support of voters,” said Ms Burrow.

The poll showed strong support for governments to take action:

- 71 percent say governments should be working towards a payrise for workers.
- 77 percent say governments should do more to make sure companies pay their fair share of taxes.
- 71 percent want governments to adopt new rules for multinationals to end abuse of workers through their supply chains.

“The world needs a pay rise to reverse decades of wage theft and to create growth. Inaction not only denies social justice to the world’s working people, but the growing despair threatens peace, democracy and security for everyone. Previous G20 commitments to invest in jobs, reduce the disparity between productivity and labour income share, increase participation of women and young people in the workforce and formalise informal work and ensure rights in global supply chains need to be put in place,” said Burrow.

The German G20 Presidency has realised that digitalisation is growing exponentially and that despite new opportunities, decent work will be further threatened by the absence of labour rights and employment protections.

“People aren’t scared of technology they’re worried about jobs. 85 percent of people believe new technologies will make jobs easier to do. But when 64 percent of people want their government to regulate the digital economy to promote employment and workers’ rights, governments have a clear mandate to act,” said Ms Burrow.

The ITUC will present the findings of the 2017 ITUC global poll at the Labour 20 Dialogue Forum attended by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin 16 - 17th May, ahead of the G20 Labour Ministers Meeting in Bad Neuenahr 18-19th May.

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The findings of the ITUC global poll represent the opinion of 53 percent of the global population. Kantar Public carried out the fieldwork online from February 20th – March 6th

2017. In each country approximately 1000 people were interviewed (in Guatemala 500) , with a total of 15,728 responses.

The ITUC represents 181 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates.

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