

6-7 APRIL
2022

GLOBAL DEAL
CONFERENCE

A BETTER FUTURE FOR
ESSENTIAL WORKERS

| SUMMARY REPORT |



MODERATOR: SABINA DEWAN
President and Executive Director
JustJobs Network

INTRODUCTION

More than 500 participants registered for the [Global Deal Conference: A Better Future for Essential Workers](#), which took place virtually on the 6th and 7th April 2022.

The event brought together 22 high-level representatives from governments, business, trade unions and civil society who, over four panel discussions explored how social dialogue can be used to ensure better working conditions for essential workers.

These panel discussions focused on the main challenges essential workers face: fair pay, access to social protection, occupational health, and violence at work.

Sabina Dewan, President and Executive Director of JustJobs Network, moderated the conference and guided the panellists through

two rounds of questions, the first posed by the moderator and the second drawn from the audience. The questions focussed on the key measures taken during the pandemic to improve the conditions of essential workers, and review how they can be sustained in the longer term.

Launched a few days before the event, the [background note](#) provides some context for the conference discussions. It describes the current working conditions of essential workers worldwide, includes some of the solutions that social dialogue facilitated and highlights some of the actions that could help enable a better future for them.

This summary report gathers the key messages from each panel discussion.



6-7 APRIL | GLOBAL DEAL
2022 | CONFERENCE

Fair pay and decent working conditions

The COVID-19 pandemic underlines the crucial role that essential workers play in supporting economies, societies and businesses. It is also a reminder that the value of their work is not always reflected in their remuneration and working conditions. This panel highlighted how social dialogue was mobilised during the pandemic to secure a fairer remuneration.

01

The pandemic has spotlighted pre-existing challenges of low pay and insecure work. To achieve lasting change, policy needs to strengthen social dialogue so that workers can have their voices heard in the workplace.

“

The first important step is to clear out misunderstandings and building mutual trust. If a company invests enough time and energy in such a mutual and respectful dialogue this will in the long run be greatly rewarded by facilitating the local negotiations with Trade Unions.

Åsa Domeij, Head of Sustainability, Axfood

02

Fair work means offering all individuals effective voice, opportunities, security and fulfilment in the workplace. Some of the most illustrative examples of how social dialogue can support fair work include associations of workers negotiating with global buyers to pay piece rates that match local minimum wages, and tri-partite committees setting wages for entire sectors and activities in specific regions.

03

Social dialogue is about building constructive partnerships that take into account both workers' needs and the difficulties businesses are going through because of the pandemic. Balancing rights and responsibilities of workers and employers through social dialogue generates benefits for all.



LAURENCE BOONE
Deputy Secretary-General,
Chief Economist and G20
Finance Deputy
OECD



RICHARD LOCHHEAD
Minister for Just Transition,
Employment and Fair Work
Scotland



SHARAN BURROW
General Secretary
International Trade Union
Confederation



MARK MITTELHAUSER
Associate Deputy
Undersecretary for
International Affairs
United States of America



ÅSA DOMEIJ
Head of Sustainability
Axfood



JANHAVI DAVE
International Coordinator
HomeNet International

Access to social protection

Social protection is an indispensable shock absorber that prevents workers from being exposed to powerful negative risks as it provides access to healthcare and income security. However, many informal workers and workers in other forms of non-standard employment do not have access to social protection. This panel examined the initiatives taken by governments and social partners to cover such gaps.

01

60% of the world's workforce and 90% of workers in developing countries tend to work in jobs without access to basic social protections.

“

Health systems tend to be oriented towards curative medicine, but for informal workers (as for all citizens) it is not only the cure that is important, but also prevention of ill health. Informal workers do not have access to sick leave and they lose income when they are unable to work.

Laura Alfery, Director of the Social Protection Programme, WIEGO

02

Although health care workers in the public sector are to an important degree in formal employment, globally, millions still lack access to social protection and other essential rights, such as the right to be paid fairly or the right to join a trade union.

03

Extending social protection to all workers ensures public authorities can better provide good care services for all.

04

To broaden the coverage of social protection to all workers including those who are not in standard employment, the pooling of resources at sector-level can be considered. These resources can then be managed to provide social protection by a tri-partite welfare board.



LUZ VIDAL HUIRIQUEO
Undersecretary of the
Ministry for Women and
Gender Equality
Chile



ROSA PAVANELLI
General Secretary
Public Services International



LAURA ALFERS
Director of the Social
Protection Programme
WIEGO



**JUANA COLLADO
ZAMBRA**
Treasurer
FESINTRACAP,
International Domestic
Workers Federation affiliate

Improving occupational health and safety

Many essential workers have been at the frontline of the pandemic, continuing to work in close proximity with others despite the risk of exposing themselves to the COVID-19 virus. This panel identified good practice cases and demonstrated how social dialogue can make a difference by providing essential workers with better health protection at work.

01

Social dialogue plays a key role when negotiating the availability of personal protection equipment, paid leave in case of sickness, and effective health safety training. As a result, it not only protects workers but also customers (retail) and patients (care).



Whether it's PPE, safe staffing, ventilation, harassment on the job or even the right to breaks, we were reminded time and time again during the pandemic of the critical role that unions and social dialogue play in making the work safe for essential workers. This offers yet another reason to prioritize bargaining and social dialogue for essential workers as we move forward.

Alke Boessiger, Deputy Secretary General, UNI Global Union

02

Health and safety committees were essential in preventing and minimising COVID-19 in the workplace.

03

Social dialogue helped facilitate the re-opening of workplaces and the restart of activity by giving workers the confidence that their return to work will be as safe as possible.

04

A key lesson from the pandemic is to ensure well-functioning structures of social dialogue are in place so that organisations are better prepared for future crises.



MATTIAS LANDGREN
State Secretary to the
Minister for Housing
and Deputy Minister for
Employment
Sweden



HAIYANI RUMONDANG
Director General for Labour
Inspection and OSH
Development
Ministry of Manpower,
Indonesia



LALEH ISPAHANI
Co-director
Open Society Foundations
US



ALKE BOESSIGER
Deputy General Secretary
UNI Global Union



RÉMI BOYER
Chief Human Resources
Officer & CSR
Korian

Ending violence and harassment in the world of work

Work-related violence and harassment have increased as a result of the pandemic and this has often taken the form of gender-based violence. Essential workers and those suspected of being contagious with COVID-19 have also been at risk of stigmatisation, discrimination, and violence. This panel discussed the measures that have been taken by governments and social partners to address the rise of work-related violence and harassment during the pandemic.

01

All workers, regardless of their form of employment, deserve work that is free from harassment and violence.

Spain is doubling its efforts to eradicate violence and harassment in the workplace based on the conviction that it is a democratic imperative to prevent any behaviour that undermines the human dignity or the physical, mental and moral integrity of workers, with special emphasis on sexual or gender-based violence at work.

Joaquín Pérez Rey, Vice Minister for Employment and Social Economy, Spain

02

ILO Convention 190 on ending work-related violence and harassment requires social dialogue. Consultation with social partners helps to address the challenges related to practical implementation, among other, defining violence, organising monitoring and reporting of breaches and addressing fear of reprisal.

03

A global agreement between a multinational enterprise and a global trade union can have a powerful impact as it covers all employees in all countries where the company is operating. The measures covered by such agreements can include training on violence and harassment; alert mechanisms; and effective complaint systems.



CLAUDIO MORONI
Minister of Labour,
Employment and Social
Security
Argentina



MOUSSA OUMAROU
Deputy Director-General
for Field Operations and
Partnerships
International Labour
Organization



SANDRA HASSAN
Deputy Minister of Labour
Canada



JOAQUÍN PÉREZ REY
Vice Minister for Employment
and Social Economy
Spain



SHAWNA BADER-BLAU
Executive Director
Solidarity Center



PHILIPPE SYMONS
Chief Ethics Officer
Sodexo



FRANCES ONOKPE
Federation of Informal
Workers Organisation of
Nigeria

THE GLOBAL DEAL FOR DECENT WORK AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The Global Deal is a multi-stakeholder partnership that aims to address the challenges in the global labour market to enable all people to benefit from globalisation. It highlights the potential of sound industrial relations and enhanced social dialogue to foster decent work and quality jobs, to increase productivity, and to promote equality and inclusive growth. The Global Deal welcomes governments, businesses, employers' organisations, trade unions, as well as civil society and other organisations to join the partnership.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

✉ globaldeal@oecd.org

🌐 www.theglobaldeal.com

🐦 [@theglobaldeal](https://twitter.com/theglobaldeal)

📅 [Subscribe to Newsletter](#)

▶ [YouTube](#)

