International Labour Organization

Issue paper on COVID-19 and fundamental principles and rights at work

Issue paper on COVID-19 and fundamental principles and rights at work

International Labour Organization

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2020

First published 2020

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Licensing), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: rights@ilo.org. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with a reproduction rights organization may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit www.ifrro.org to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

FUNDAMENTALS

Issue paper on COVID-19 and fundamental principles and rights at work / International Labour Organization, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS), Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), Geneva: ILO, 2020.

ISBN: 978-92-2-033105-7 (Print); 978-92-2-033104-0 (Web PDF)

Also available in French: *Document thématique sur les principes et droits fondamentaux au travail face à la COVID-19*, ISBN: 978-92-2-033110-1 (Print); 978-92-2-033109-5 (Web PDF), Geneva, 2020; and Spanish: *Documento temático sobre los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo frente a la COVID-19*, ISBN: 978-92-2-033112-5 (Print); 978-92-2-033111-8 (Web PDF), Geneva, 2020.

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: www.ilo.org/publns.

Visit our website: www.ilo.org/fundamentals

Cover photo: © Woman operator wearing metal mesh gloves for cut protection and a mask while working during the COVID-19 pandemic in the cutting section of a garment factory (Indonesia). The ILO-IFC Better Work Programme aims to improve working conditions and boost the competitiveness of the garment industry. © ILO-IFC Better Work Programme

Printed in Switzerland

Photocomposed by Bip-Bip, Geneva, Switzerland

Contents

1. COVID-19 and the fundamental principles and rights at work IV

2. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining 6

3. Elimination of forced or compulsory labour 10

4. Abolition of child labour 14

5. Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation . 18

6. The road forward: fundamental principles and rights at work and the COVID-19 response 22

Boxes and figure

Box 1.
ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 1

Box 2.
The status of fundamental principles and rights at work pre-COVID-19 3

Box 3.
Fundamental principles and rights at work, human rights and COVID-19 4

Figure 1.
Policy framework: Four key pillars to fight COVID-19 based on international labour standards 23

1. COVID-19 and the fundamental principles and rights at work

For the millions of workers already in vulnerable situations, the COVID-19 crisis can have devastating consequences: their fundamental rights at work are under threat, pushing them and their families towards greater insecurity. Safeguarding and extending fundamental principles and rights at work will therefore be critical to the success of both immediate and longer-term responses to the crisis in the world of work.

A factory worker in Jakarta (Indonesia). The ILO is supporting companies to ensure that COVID-19 health protocols are followed in all types of work. © ILO/F. Latief

At this moment of crisis, safeguarding the four fundamental principles and rights at work – the freedom to organize and bargain collectively, and the freedom from forced labour, child labour, and discrimination in employment and occupation – is more important than ever (Box 1). These rights are not only at heightened risk from the crisis but also constitute the foundation for building back a better, more just world of work in its aftermath. Universal and inalienable human rights in and of themselves, they are also essential enablers of decent work and social justice. They are the starting point for a virtuous circle of effective social dialogue, better incomes and conditions for workers and employers, and formalizing the informal economy.[1]

Box 1.
ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Adopted in 1998, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work commits ILO Member States to respect and promote principles and rights in four categories, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions.

These categories are: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

The ILO Declaration makes it clear that these rights are universal, and that they apply to all people in all States – regardless of the level of economic development. It particularly mentions groups with special needs, including the unemployed and migrant workers. It recognizes that economic growth alone is not enough to ensure decent work, equity and social progress, and to eradicate poverty.

The following are the fundamental ILO Conventions and Protocol:

- **Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)**
- **Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930**
- **Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)**
- **Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)**
- **Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)**
- **Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)**
- **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)**
- **Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)**
- **Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)**

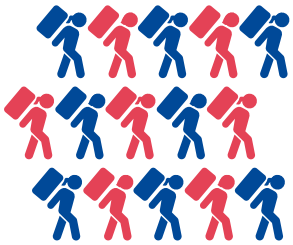
The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic shockwaves accompanying it are placing unprecedented pressure on the world of work, and on the workers and employers whose livelihoods depend on it. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the equivalent of 400 million full-time jobs were lost because of the crisis in the second quarter of 2020 alone.[2] Workers and enterprises eking out an existence in the informal economy are hardest hit. An estimated 1.6 billion informal economy workers, accounting for 76 per cent of informal employment worldwide, are significantly impacted by lockdown measures and/or are working in the most affected sectors.[3] Young workers are more likely to be in informal jobs and have been particularly affected. More than four out of ten young workers were in heavily exposed sectors when the crisis struck.[4] Income losses for these workers in situations of vulnerability are likely to be massive, leading in turn to a sharp rise in poverty rates. As demand has collapsed and supply chains have been disrupted, the crisis has also had a devastating impact on micro- and small enterprises and own account workers in the informal economy. Most lack the savings or credit necessary to cushion the economic shock.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses new threats to fundamental principles and rights at work on a number of levels. The crisis is causing a dramatic rise in socio-economic vulnerability, in turn raising the opportunity cost of education and fuelling concerns that more families will turn to child labour to make ends meet. Millions of workers have been left without an income as a result of the pandemic, and without any savings or social protection to fall back on, increasing the pool of workers vulnerable to debt bondage and other forms of forced labour. A new wave of xenophobia and stigma has found expression in the world of work, and pre-existing discrimination in respect of employment and occupation has intensified. A rise in informality and new pressures on labour rights in some countries have added to the challenges workers face to organizing and bargaining collectively.

The adverse effects of the crisis are not of course distributed equally. They are being felt most by those who already belong to the most vulnerable and least protected segments of society, including the poor and socially excluded, workers and producers in the informal economy, migrant workers, people subject to discrimination, and those living in contexts of fragility, conflict and recurrent natural disasters. For them, the crisis is likely to exacerbate the risks of child labour, forced labour, discrimination in employment and occupation, and disempowerment.

Box 2.
The status of fundamental principles and rights at work pre-COVID-19

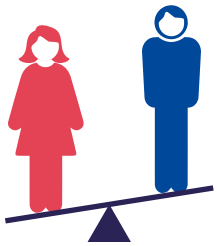
Despite important progress,
152 million children
were still in child labour worldwide
in 2016.



Nearly **25 million** women,
men and children were subjected
to debt bondage, trafficking and other
forms of forced labour in 2016.

More than **40 %**
of the world's population lives in countries that
have not ratified either ILO Convention No. 87 on
freedom of association or Convention No. 98 on
collective bargaining. In many countries that have
ratified them, violations of these rights persist in
law and practice.

On average, women are paid
20.5 % less
than their male counterparts,
and in many countries are effectively
excluded from certain occupations.



Hundreds of millions of
people suffer from discrimination in the world of
work, whether on grounds of race, colour, sex,
religion, political opinion, national extraction, social
origin, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation,
gender identity or other.

Sources: ILO, Global Estimates of Child Labour (2017); ILO and Walk Free Foundation, Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage (2017); ILO, Global Wage Report 2018/2019. What Lies Behind Gender Pay Gaps (2018); ILO, Equality and discrimination (2020).

▶ Box 3.
Fundamental principles and rights at work, human rights and COVID-19

ILO fundamental principles and rights at work give expression to universal human rights.

Responses to the COVID-19 crisis that are shaped by and respect human rights will result in better outcomes in overcoming the pandemic, ensuring healthcare for everyone and preserving human dignity. The ILO, as the specialized, normative agency for the world of work, collaborates closely with the United Nations to ensure the response to the pandemic remains human-centred, as envisaged in the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

The six key messages in the United Nations policy brief on COVID-19 and human rights underline the centrality of decent work in the response to the pandemic. They echo the relevance of the fundamental principles and rights at work:

1.
Protecting people's lives is the priority; protecting livelihoods helps us do it.

2.
Responses need to be inclusive, equitable and universal – otherwise, they will not beat a virus that affects everyone regardless of status.

3.
Civil society organizations, as well as the private sector and business, have contributions to make that need to be facilitated.

4.
Emergency and security measures, if needed, must be temporary, proportional and aimed at protecting people.

5.
We need global solidarity to ensure that all countries are equally effective in their responses.

6.
The global pandemic is revealing weaknesses that human rights can help to fix when building back better.

In its framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, the United Nations included key human rights issues and accompanying indicators for monitoring the human rights implications of COVID-19. These issues directly address human rights at work:

- Rights to health and life, special measures to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, and gender-specific interventions and protection
- Rights to information and meaningful participation of affected populations in decisions on COVID-19 related policy responses
- Addressing discrimination, racism and xenophobia
- Rights to social protection and decent work
- Right to liberty and security, fair trial and freedom of movement
- State of emergency and emergency legislation

Sources: United Nations, COVID-19 and Human Rights: We Are All in This Together (April 2020); United Nations, A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19 (April 2020).

This issue paper takes a first look at the likely impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on fundamental principles and rights at work, and the implications for public policy. It is situated at a point in time in which initial containment measures in some countries have been eased and economies have started to reopen, and as the world has embarked on the uncertain task of co-existing with the virus pending the development of vaccines and effective treatments. The issue paper builds on a separate note on the response of the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+) to the COVID-19 crisis.[5] It complements other ILO thematic papers and policy briefs on the crisis, and the United Nations policy brief on COVID-19 and the world of work.[6] The issue paper will be updated as the crisis evolves, and more information on impacts on human rights in the world of work becomes available.

A young woman waiting in the crowd at the Migration Resource Center (MRC) in Kathmandu (Nepal), hoping to receive a visa in order to go abroad for work. Migrant workers contribute to growth and development in their countries of destination, while countries of origin greatly benefit from their remittances and the skills acquired during their migration experience. The ILO works to forge policies to maximize the benefits of labour migration for all those involved. © ILO/M. Crozet

2. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

The COVID-19 crisis is in many places making the realization of rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining more difficult, both in law and practice, which in turn hampers the development of responses to the crisis rooted in social consensus.

A construction worker building the new covered market in Sidi Bouzid (Tunisia) as part of an ILO project aimed at promoting youth employment, job creation and the use of local resources. © ILO/M. Crozet

Where the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are denied, workers are unable to exert agency or collective voice, to defend their rights and interests, or to positively influence the conditions of their working lives. This leaves them more vulnerable to other fundamental labour rights violations. The rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are also inherent to enabling social dialogue, and the effective participation of social partners in economic and social policy.

The challenge of ensuring the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining in the world remains large. Restrictions on the right to establish or join a trade union and on the right to collective bargaining persist in law and in practice in many countries. Violations of employers' right to freedom of association and collective bargaining also persist in some contexts. The challenge is even greater in ensuring effective access to representation, particularly in the informal economy. Over 2 billion workers, 62 per cent of all those working worldwide, are found in the informal economy; the vast majority remain without a collective and representative voice. Millions of own-account producers, and micro- and small enterprises operating in the informal economy also lack the benefit of membership in employers' organizations. As more workers and enterprises are pushed into the informal economy as a result of the crisis, effective access to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining is likely to diminish further.

The COVID-19 crisis is adding to the challenge of ensuring rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. In some contexts, labour rights, including the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, have come under pressure as part of broader government responses to the crisis. Within Europe, for example, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) received numerous reports of governmental interference in trade union rights and restrictions on freedom of association in the months after the crisis began. It notes a broader tendency, not just in Europe, of some governments "abusing emergency powers/decrees to fast-track legislative amendments curtailing trade union rights that were previously proposed and successfully blocked due to trade union opposition."[7] More broadly, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has raised concerns about the implications for workers of labour law amendments in a number of countries in the months since the outbreak of the crisis.[8]

The ILO has underscored that any amendments relating to trade union rights and labour relations should be based on meaningful prior tripartite consultation involving governments, and employers' and workers' organizations, and that they comply with international labour standards, notably the fundamental standards.[9]

More broadly, the ILO notes that freedom of opinion and expression and the related fundamental rights, including freedom of association,[10] may be the subject of restrictions or suspension during certain exceptional periods. Restrictions on those essential civil liberties should be confined to circumstances of extreme gravity and on the condition that any measures affecting the application of fundamental rights be limited, in scope and duration, to what is strictly necessary to deal with the situation in question.[11]

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association has called on states not to use state of emergency declarations during the COVID-19 crisis to impose wholesale restrictions on freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The Special Rapporteur stated that where new laws or regulations are adopted, any limitations on rights imposed must adhere to the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.[12] The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that it is essential that human rights are front and centre in government measures enacted in response to the pandemic.[13]

At the same time, the exercise of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining has proved vital to building effective, consensus-based responses to the crisis. In a growing number of instances, employers and workers are negotiating measures to mitigate or limit the consequences of the crisis on health, jobs and incomes, and to support recovery.[14] Negotiated agreements between employers' and workers' organizations have been critical in many settings to protecting workers' health and limiting the spread of the virus in workplaces. In Colombia, for example, the employers' organization of banana producers (Augura) and the agricultural workers' union (Sintrainagro) negotiated and signed a Bio Security Protocol.[15] Covering 22,000 workers, the agreement includes occupational safety and health protocols for personal protective equipment, physical distancing, handwashing, and cleaning and disinfection of work premises and equipment. Joint union-management health and safety committees monitor implementation.

A garment worker shows his metal mesh gloves for cut protection on the factory floor of a clothing plant (Nicaragua). The ILO-IFC Better Work Programme aims to improve both compliance with labour standards, including work conditions, and competitiveness in global supply chains. ©ILO-IFC Better Work Programme

A variety of schemes to ensure business continuity and safeguard jobs have emerged through collective agreements. In the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, a crisis-related package was agreed between the employers' organization in the metal-working sector (Gesamtmetall) and the German metal workers' union (IG Metall). It included arrangements for short-term working, wage replacement and improved childcare arrangements for steel workers.[16] At the international level, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the ITUC and the IndustriALL Global Union negotiated a joint statement calling for measures to support garment manufacturers, and protect garment workers' income, health and employment.[17] Employers and their organizations have also negotiated guidelines and criteria with trade unions regarding the reopening of factories and companies in a manner that protects workers from possible contagion. In Uruguay, for example, representatives of employers' organizations and the trade union representing workers in the construction industry (Sindicato Único Nacional de la Construcción y Anexos - SUNCA), negotiated an agreement with the government on conditions for the resumption of activities in the construction industry.[18] In France, at the sectoral level, employers' and workers' organizations in the agro-food industry have published a joint guide to help companies prepare for the end of confinement and/or the resumption of activity.[19]

3. Elimination of forced or compulsory labour

The COVID-19 crisis is increasing the pool of workers vulnerable to forced labour and worsening work situations that are already exploitative.

Men working at an illegal logging camp in Ucayali, Amazon region (Peru). Peru is implementing a National Action Plan on forced labour, which includes measures to address forced labour in illegal logging in the Amazon region. ©ILO

Forced labour refers to work performed involuntarily and under the menace of any penalty. It involves situations in which persons are coerced to work through violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as manipulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to authorities. In addition to being a serious human rights violation in the world of work, forced labour is a criminal offence subject to appropriate penal sanctions. Forced labour is never excusable or rendered less a crime by severe economic pressures or other extenuating circumstances, such as those associated with the COVID-19 crisis.

The pandemic is magnifying some of the main drivers of forced labour, fuelling fears of a rise in the numbers of people involved in it. A growing body of evidence suggests that forced labour is driven in large part by socio-economic vulnerability and a lack of alternative survival options or coping mechanisms.[20] Socio-economic vulnerability has skyrocketed because of the COVID-19 crisis, as tens of millions of workers in the informal economy have found themselves without livelihoods or have had their earnings severely reduced, without a social safety net or savings to fall back on. Many workers are also facing, or may face, catastrophic health costs linked to the pandemic, which past health crises suggest can push people into forced labour.[21]

Debt bondage in particular is a concern in contexts of heightened socio-economic vulnerability.[22] There is a risk that some suddenly jobless workers, in urgent need of funds for household survival and without access to other forms of credit, turn to predatory lenders for loans, and that the workers and/or their families are forced to work under threat of violence or other penalties until the loans are paid off. The terms of such loans are typically deliberately obscure, and interest rates are often usurious, meaning that in many cases it is impossible to ever pay the debts in full. Other workers, already indebted but suddenly without any income, risk having to offer their labour or that of a family member, including children in some cases, to service their debts. Still others risk falling into debt bondage through exorbitant fees, withheld wages and other coercive practices of predatory recruiters.

Limited access to financial services,[23] unprecedented pressures on the microcredit industry and the closure of many community savings groups[24] exacerbate risks that workers in situations of vulnerability will resort to high-risk loans and consequently end up in debt bondage. High levels of pre-existing debt among the poor are also amplifying the risk of debt bondage in many geographies. In Cambodia, for example, workers owe an estimated US$10 billion in microfinance loans, and many have now lost their incomes due to COVID-19.[25] In India, a rapid crisis impact assessment involving 3,000 migrant workers in the construction sector revealed that nearly one quarter had debts they could not repay, and that 60 per cent of these feared violence from their creditors.[26]

While reliable statistics are scarce, there is already a substantial body of anecdotal evidence from different parts of the world of workers falling into situations of forced labour and trafficking because of the COVID-19 crisis, suggesting that this discussion is by no means merely speculative.[27]

The crisis is also resulting in a deterioration of working conditions that are already exploitative, moving workers further along the continuum of abuse that ends in forced labour and trafficking. There are growing accounts of additional difficulties facing workers – and especially migrant workers – who are already in situations of vulnerability. Tens of thousands of migrant workers, for example, have been reportedly stuck in hazardous conditions at different transit points, border crossings and work camps across Africa as countries close their frontiers in response to the pandemic.[28] These workers can be susceptible to traffickers falsely offering them alternative routes of transit.[29]

Migrant workers on the move have also been stranded at numerous other points worldwide.[30]

Laid-off migrant workers in some locations must also confront the expiration of their visas or work permits, and risk falling into situations of irregularity as a result.[31] Others face uncertain conditions, quarantines and stigma as they return without work to their home countries. For still others, travel restrictions have made it impossible to take up employment abroad for which they may have paid high recruitment fees and costs, in turn raising the risk of irregular migration movements, trafficking and debt bondage.[32]

Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, are among the many specific groups of workers who find themselves in situations of greater risk as a result of the pandemic. The ILO estimates that nearly three quarters of domestic workers around the world – more than 55 million people, of whom 37 million are women – are at significant risk of losing their jobs and income due to lockdowns and lack of effective social security coverage. Worst off are domestic workers in informal employment and therefore without a social safety net to fall back on; this group accounts for 76 per cent of those at risk of losing their jobs or working hours.[33] Human rights organizations have reported increased incidents of physical and sexual violence against domestic workers, as well as of homelessness and legal limbo when they lose their live-in jobs but are unable to return to their home countries.[34]

More broadly, countless workers in situations of vulnerability, in the industrialized and developing worlds alike, are obliged to remain in jobs that put them and their families at risk of infection with the virus, due to lack of other survival options or coercion from their employers.[35]

The economic upheaval associated with the COVID-19 crisis is also likely to create additional demand and opportunities for forced labour. As companies around the world struggle to cope with the surge in demand for medical supplies and equipment, for example, there are reports from human rights organizations of forced labour entering into their production in some locations.[36] There may also be pressure to lift import restrictions on these vital items, or to turn to prisoners, a group at particular

Woman threshing millet in Tahoua region (Niger). The ILO is supporting Niger's efforts to tackle the remnants of illegal traditional forms of slavery in the country. ©ILO/M. Crozet

risk of exploitation, to produce the supplies and equipment locally.[37] The urgency of maintaining food production and the food supply chain is also adding to risks of exploitation in agriculture, a sector with a history of forced labour in some locations.[38]

More broadly, there will be the risk of some firms, strapped by financial struggles in the aftermath of the crisis, relaxing their labour standards or being pushed into the informal economy, where it is easier for forced labour to take root. With the spike in demand in some sectors as global demand resumes, there will likely also be pressure on some firms to relax checks on fair recruitment,[39] or to resort to unauthorized subcontracting, in turn raising the risk of forced labour infiltrating supply chains.[40,41] Businesses everywhere must evaluate, monitor and act to mitigate these risks as economies reopen and production restarts.

The COVID-19 crisis is also affecting the ability of state and non-state actors to provide support and protection to survivors. As public resources and the attention of frontline state actors are diverted to the pandemic response, protection and support services for survivors of forced labour and trafficking are likely to deteriorate, increasing their risk of falling back into exploitative situations.[42] Non-governmental organizations providing vital protection services to survivors, including shelter, medical and psychological assistance, and reintegration programmes, are also likely to be adversely affected as donors turn their attention elsewhere in the face of pandemic exigencies. Options for workers themselves to come forward and report abuse have also narrowed in many contexts, as they face increased difficulties in reaching authorities and filing complaints due to higher restrictions on movement and surveillance, fewer face-to-face contacts with inspectors and social auditors, and greater difficulties in communicating with the outside world.[43] For those already engaged in court procedures, the crisis has meant delays in long-awaited court proceedings, and an even further reduction in their prospects for eventual remedy.

4. Abolition of child labour

The COVID-19 crisis is fuelling fears of a rise in child labour, as education is interrupted or no longer affordable, and hard-hit families must send their children to work as a survival strategy.

Syrian refugee children, victims of child labour (Jordan). Many of them work in agriculture and are involved in hazardous work. The incidence of child labour in agriculture is on the rise in Lebanon, especially in the Beqaa Valley region which hosts a large number of Syrian refugees. © ILO/T. Ross

COVID-19 could reverse a generation of progress against child labour.[44] While it is too early to determine the precise impacts, the weight of evidence from past crises, and what we know already about the current one, underscore the substantially heightened risk of child labour. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community committed to ending child labour in all its forms by 2025. In the absence of action to prevent, mitigate and address the impact of the pandemic on children, there is not only the risk of missing the target set under the Goals, but also of jeopardizing hard-won gains against child labour achieved over the last 20 years.

The economic and social crisis is hitting children and their families particularly hard, and more children could be pushed into child labour as a result. An estimated 42–66 million children could fall into extreme poverty this year,[45] adding to the estimated 386 million children already there in 2019, as their families suffer unprecedented job losses, lost income due to lockdowns, cut-off remittance flows, sudden catastrophic health costs and a host of other shocks stemming directly or indirectly from the pandemic. The pandemic is also fuelling fears of a looming food crisis and a dramatic increase in food and nutrition insecurity among vulnerable families.[46]

In such circumstances, a large body of evidence suggests that families may be forced to rely on child labour as a coping mechanism. We have seen this in reaction to short-run economic shocks in Brazil, where parental unemployment spells led children to step in to provide temporary support.[47] The "insurance" role of working children has also been documented in Guatemala, India, Mexico, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.[48] Studies of the 2008-09 financial and economic crisis found that families of migrant workers experiencing a decline in remittances were more likely to have children enter child labour.[49,50] A series of econometric analyses also indicate a direct link between increases in poverty and increases in child labour levels.[51] Evidence also shows that child labour can be an important buffer for families faced with health shocks and accompanying catastrophic out-of-pocket health costs.[52]

A growth in the worst forms of child labour is a particular concern. Already, there is anecdotal evidence of new cases of bonded child labour associated with the current crisis, as desperate families must provide their children's labour to obtain loans or to service existing ones from predatory lenders.[53] Bonded labour arrangements are in turn linked to some of the worst forms of child labour – such as domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, and hazardous work in mining and agriculture – as well as to a range of sweatshop activities.

Children are also being pushed into the worst forms of child labour through other channels. Family desperation has led to reports of children forced onto the street to search for food and money, leaving them vulnerable to an array of serious risks.[54] The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children has warned that mobility restrictions associated with the pandemic have given rise to new forms of direct child sexual exploitation and abuse, and greatly amplified the risk of online child commercial sexual exploitation.[55] Police authorities in a number of countries have also seen a worrying rise in the sexual exploitation of children on the internet since the outbreak of the crisis.[56]

Sending children to work elsewhere can be another household coping mechanism in the face of economic shocks,[57] often leaving the concerned children even more vulnerable to exploitation.[58] These children can end up in the clutches of human traffickers, who convince destitute families to send away their children with false offers of jobs or education.[59]

The crisis is likely to cause some children to take over the work roles of parents or other adult workers. Even an optimistic contagion scenario is likely to see a rise in the number of vulnerable households whose breadwinners have fallen seriously ill or lost their lives due to the virus. We know from a large body of evidence that children in such circumstances can assume the work roles of adults in a bid to compensate for lost earnings or labour.[60] Evidence suggests that school closures too can lead children, and particularly girls, to take on additional domestic responsibilities within their own homes (see discussion below). Some children are also assuming new work roles in their families because they are perceived as being more resistant to the virus than adult household members. Reports from Myanmar, for example, suggest more children are performing errands outside the home, procuring household supplies, caring for younger children and the sick, and breaking quarantines to work, in part because of families' misplaced beliefs that children are less at risk of getting sick or of infecting others.[61]

In the current crisis, the demand for children's labour is also likely to rise in contexts where restrictions on workers' freedom of movement is leading to local labour shortages. This is likely to be particularly relevant in agricultural settings that are dependent on seasonal workers for harvesting crops. More broadly, evidence from past crises suggests that a rise in informality may create new demand for child labour, as the low level of skill and unregulated nature of the informal economy is more conducive to the use of children in production.

School closures as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns are adding to the risk of child labour. At their peak, temporary school closures affected more than 1.5 billion children and youth worldwide.[62] An interruption of education on this scale is unparalleled, and the implications for child labour, and the rights of children more broadly, could be profound. There is ample evidence that when children are out of school and enter paid employment, it is difficult to persuade them to return to school.[63]

Young boys carrying bricks on their head in Antsirabe (Madagascar). They work at a brickyard that employs children. The ILO is supporting Madagascar's efforts to tackle child labour. © ILO/M. Crozet

Lessons in this context from the 2014 Ebola pandemic in West Africa, when 5 million children were affected by school closures, are stark. Many children did not return to the classroom when school reopened. Children were more likely to work, and unplanned teenage pregnancies rose sharply.[64] Cases of child marriage also went up.[65] The home learning of girls in particular was limited by increased domestic and care responsibilities, as well as increased economic activity.[66] In heavily disrupted villages in Sierra Leone, the school enrolment rate for girls aged 12–17 fell by 16 percentage points after schools reopened, while their engagement in income generation rose by 19 percentage points.[67] Another study from a meningitis epidemic in Niger found lasting effects of lockdowns on girls' education in particular, with the primary driver in this case being unplanned pregnancies.[68] In both these instances, the school closures were only temporary, but the impacts for many concerned children are lifelong.

Schools also play an important role in providing social protection to children.[69] An interruption in schooling in many disadvantaged contexts also means an interruption in school feeding programmes, which can be vital to vulnerable families in meeting the needs of their dependent members. The United Nations estimates that at the peak of school closures, 370 million students worldwide were missing school meals.[70] Child labour can be a survival tactic in circumstances of food insecurity.[71] Interruptions in school feeding could also increase child malnutrition, in turn compromising children's development and ability to learn.[72]

Even temporary interruptions in education can have long-term consequences in terms of human capital accumulation and future earnings potential.[73] This is even truer for children where no distance learning measures have been put in place, and for disadvantaged children elsewhere without access to remote learning platforms available to their better-off peers. Lower human capital translates into a greater risk of hazardous child labour among young people who have reached the minimum working age. It can compromise decent work prospects throughout a working life.

5. Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

The COVID-19 crisis is amplifying the effects of pervasive discrimination in the world of work, whether on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or other.

Syrian and Jordanian women employed at a plastics factory in Sahab (Jordan). The ILO is working with national stakeholders to support Jordanian manufacturing firms to take advantage of their access to European markets, while helping Syrian and Jordanian workers' find decent work in these firms. © ILO/ A. H. Al Nasier

The virus itself does not discriminate. Yet pervasive discrimination is having a profound effect on who is most exposed to it, and who is shouldering the greatest burden of its socio-economic cost. Evidence from the crisis thus far tells a clear and consistent story. Groups faced with discrimination, including women;[74] migrants, in particular irregular migrants;[75] indigenous and tribal peoples;[76] people living with HIV[77] and the LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, plus) community are particularly affected.[78] These groups are by no means mutually exclusive, and some of the worst-off are those subjected to discrimination on multiple grounds. The patterns emerging from the current crisis are consistent with evidence from past financial crises and disease outbreaks, which also saw groups facing discrimination as among the first and most severely affected.[79]

None of this is surprising, as discrimination in employment means that affected groups are more concentrated in insecure jobs in the informal economy, without social protection or representation, where they are more vulnerable to being laid off in conditions of declining demand and to subsequently falling into worse forms of exploitation as they seek to survive. In the current crisis, affected groups who lack other survival options are also more likely to face the unenviable choice between a job and their health – unable to leave, or obliged to return prematurely to, jobs where the risk of infection is high.[80] The danger of contagion can also arise from, or be compounded by, unsafe transport to the workplace. The dramatically higher rates of COVID-19 infection and death among racial and ethnic minority groups in a number of countries[81] are one tragic manifestation of the broader structural discrimination faced by these groups, including, critically, in employment and occupation. Discrimination in employment and occupation also contributes to violations of other human rights in the world of work, including child labour[82] and forced labour.

Existing evidence underscores that discrimination imposes a heavy economic as well as social cost. A study in Australia, for example, estimated that racial discrimination cost the economy 44.9 billion Australian dollars for every year from 2001–11.[83] Studies in France[84] and the United States of America[85] also highlight the enormous economic cost of workplace discrimination in terms of lost productive potential. The implication for the current crisis is clear. Without aggressive measures to combat racism and xenophobia and other forms of discrimination in the workplace, further costs will be imposed on economies already struggling to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

Public panic and fear around COVID-19 contagion has generated its own wave of stigma, xenophobia, racism and intolerance, which is finding expression in the world of work. There are growing reports of workplace violence and harassment on racial or other grounds linked directly to fears of the virus.[86] In some cases, this has even involved the harassment of doctors and nurses risking their lives on a daily basis to battle the spread of the virus.[87] The United Nations Secretary-General has spoken of the crisis unleashing "a tsunami of hate and xenophobia, scapegoating and scare-mongering".[88] These negative reactions of course are not a separate phenomenon, but are closely linked to, and reinforce, pre-existing broader patterns of discrimination in the workplace and society.

The COVID-19 crisis is threatening already slow progress in reducing gender gaps in labour force participation and wages, and in promoting gender equality more broadly.[89] In economies where mass layoffs have occurred, statistics indicate that women have been disproportionately affected, as female-dominated sectors – above all service industries such as food, hospitality, tourism and domestic work – have been among the hardest hit.[90] Furthermore, as more businesses close, temporary workers, the majority of whom are again women, are bearing the heaviest brunt of job losses.[91] At the same time, women's unpaid work is increasing, at least in the short term, as confinement measures create additional burdens, including in caring for the sick, the elderly and children no longer attending school.[92] Female entrepreneurs are already often disadvantaged in terms of access to credit, and the credit squeeze accompanying the crisis is likely to hit them particularly hard.[93] There are concerns of de-prioritization or reversal of efforts towards equal pay and pay transparency as policy attention is focused on the crisis response.[94]

Again, these patterns have parallels in past crises. The 2008–09 financial and economic crisis showed that when jobs were scarce, women encountered greater difficulty in accessing them, partly as a result of traditional gender stereotypes around men's role as principal breadwinners and women as caregivers within the home.[95] Increased competition for casual and domestic work placed downward pressure on women's wages as many women had little choice but to enter into informal employment following economic contraction.[96] Evidence from the 1997–98 Asian financial and economic crisis also underscores the disproportionate effects of crises on women workers.[97]

A garment worker with disabilities smiles during his shift in a clothing plant (Jordan). The ILO-IFC Better Work Programme assist companies to accommodate disabled employees in accordance with the type and extent of their disabilities, including adjusting workplace access, tools and/or personal protective equipment if necessary. ©ILO-IFC Better Work Programme

The world's migrant workers are being adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis on multiple levels.[98] They are among those most affected by the stigmatization and scapegoating associated with the virus.[99] In some countries, the virus has been tagged as the "foreigner's disease"[100] or other descriptions specifically designed to assign responsibility for it to those coming from the outside. More broadly, migrant workers are among those disproportionately rendered unemployed or affected by worsening working conditions.[101] They were similarly affected by the 2008–09 financial and economic crisis.[102]

These adverse effects are manifestations of, or reinforced by, the multiple forms of discrimination to which migrants are often subjected. They lead to the disproportionate presence of migrant workers in sectors of the economy with high levels of temporary, informal or unprotected work, characterized by low wages, lack of social protection, and limited or no opportunities to organize and exercise their collective voice. Migrant workers are more vulnerable to the effects of the crisis, but at the same time, in many countries, they are denied protections under labour law that are enjoyed by local workers, and are excluded from policy measures designed to help workers cope with the pandemic, such as wage subsidies, unemployment benefits, or social security and social protection measures. This is especially the case for irregular migrants, even if it is a well-established principle that irregular migrant workers and their families too must be accorded equality of treatment. Migrants can also face barriers in accessing information on protective measures related to COVID-19, due to the lack of communication on the part of employers, language barriers, illiteracy or limited access to the internet. Where access to COVID-19 testing or medical treatment is available, they may not come forward due to fear of detention or deportation, especially those in an irregular status.[103]

6. The road forward: fundamental principles and rights at work and the COVID-19 response

The realization of fundamental principles and rights at work – in law and in practice – is critical to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 crisis among the most vulnerable people, and to building back more resilient, just, equitable and productive societies in the aftermath.

Child cleaning fish (Indonesia). Homeworkers and their families, including children, are engaged in informal employment practices and not receive regular or minimum wages, written contracts, social security and other benefits. The ILO is working with national stakeholders to improve homeworkers' working conditions. © ILO/F. Latief

The crisis underscores the urgent need to safeguard fundamental human rights at work, and to extend these rights to groups of workers for whom protections in law and practice are lacking or inadequate. These groups include workers in the informal economy, and workers who are migrants, subjected to discrimination, and living in contexts of fragility, conflict and recurrent natural disasters. It is not a coincidence that these groups are also among those most affected by the crisis.

In this section, we address some key priorities for protecting and promoting fundamental principles and rights at work within the broader COVID-19 response. We start with freedom of association and collective bargaining, which is itself a fundamental labour right, and also an essential precondition for social dialogue and the achievement of the other fundamental labour rights. We next look at non-discrimination in employment and occupation, as, again, both a fundamental labour right itself and a prerequisite for the other fundamental labour rights. We then turn to some of the other key priorities for mitigating the risk of fundamental labour violations during the crisis and for building back better in its wake.

These priorities both underpin and fit within the four-pillar policy framework for fighting COVID-19 based on international labour standards (Figure 1). Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are critical enabling conditions across all four pillars. Ending discrimination is of specific relevance to protecting workers in the workplace (Pillar 3) and is of overarching relevance to supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes (Pillar 2) and social dialogue (Pillar 4). Other measures to protect and promote fundamental labour rights as part of the COVID-19 response relate mainly to Pillars 2 and 3. The policy priorities also link directly to, and form part of, broader efforts to transition from the informal to formal economy, and prevent informalization.[104]

Figure 1. Policy framework: Four key pillars to fight COVID-19 based on international labour standards

Pillar 1

Stimulating the economy and employment

- Adopt an active fiscal policy
- Institute an accommodative monetary policy
- Provide lending and financial support to specific sectors, including the health sector

Pillar 2

Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes

- Extend social protection for all
- Implement employment retention measures
- Provide financial/tax and other relief for enterprises

Pillar 3

Protecting workers in the workplace

- Strengthen occupational safety and health measures
- Adapt work arrangements (e.g. teleworking)
- Prevent discrimination and exclusion
- Provide healthcare access for all

Pillar 4

Relying on social dialogue for solutions

- Strengthen the capacity and resilience of employers' and workers' organizations
- Strengthen the capacity of governments
- Strengthen social dialogue, collective bargaining, and institutions and processes for labour relations

Safeguarding and promoting freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. As described briefly earlier in this Issue Paper and discussed in more detail elsewhere,[105] employers' and workers' organizations – operating at the national, sectoral and enterprise levels – have in many contexts successfully negotiated measures to mitigate or limit the consequences of the crisis on health, jobs and incomes; to prepare for a safe return to the workplace; and to support recovery from the crisis. These examples illustrate the broader importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining as enabling rights that can facilitate equitable, consensus-based responses to a crisis such as COVID-19. It is critical that the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are extended, and are accompanied by appropriate institutional frameworks for ensuring and safeguarding effective realization.

The crisis has also spotlighted the need to redress the lack of access to representation among many workers in situations of vulnerability – above all, those in the informal economy. Indeed, the crisis has hit hardest in the informal economy, where workers have little or no access to representation, and are thus unable to exercise a collective and representative voice, even in contexts where there are no legal restrictions to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. There is an urgent need to accelerate progress in developing collective representation structures for these workers as part of broader efforts to facilitate their transition to the formal economy. There is no single or simple formula for achieving this, given the extreme heterogeneity of the informal economy, and the production modalities and work arrangements within it. Numerous complementary approaches to organizing informal economy workers are required, building on successful organizing efforts involving some specific categories of informal workers undertaken to date.[106]

In the current crisis, where member-based organizations are in place for certain categories of informal economy workers, they are playing important roles in helping to reduce workers' risks of infection through awareness-raising and other preventive measures. These organizations have also been active in a number of countries and regions (for example, India, South Africa, the United States and Eastern Europe) in calling for income support measures and other protections for informal workers during the crisis.[107]

Addressing discrimination in employment and occupation. The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the effects of pervasive discrimination in society. Leaving no one behind and building back better require integrating the principles of non-discrimination and inclusiveness in all stages of the pandemic response. In the immediate term, this means ensuring that all workers, including those in discriminated groups, have equal access to preventive safety and health measures and health services, and to programmes to secure their livelihoods, such as in-kind and income support. For vulnerable families affected by school closures, inclusiveness also means ensuring access to low- or no-tech distance learning solutions to mitigate the risk of increased child labour and help guarantee children's school re-entry when the closures are lifted.

These immediate measures should be implemented with an eye towards building legal, institutional and policy frameworks that address the structural roots of discrimination in employment and occupation. The crisis must not be a pretext for rolling back or delaying progress on equality and non-discrimination in employment, but rather become an opportunity for accelerating progress on issues linked to workplace discrimination. As economies reopen and demand picks up, laws and policy measures to ensure non-discriminatory hiring practices will be one important priority.

Discrimination and informality go hand in hand, and it will be critical to extend the reach of labour law and social protection to workers in the informal economy, as part of broader efforts to foster their transition to formality. Groups facing discrimination are also more prone to violence and harassment in the workplace, a pattern accentuated by the crisis. This calls for measures to prevent and address the many forms of work-related violence and harassment reported by concerned groups in the context of COVID-19, in line with the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206), 2019.[108]

Gender inequalities and domestic violence have risen to the fore during the crisis, underscoring the urgency of continued progress in ensuring women's equal access to employment and occupations. In this context, improving working conditions, including through equal pay for work of equal value and the realization of representation rights, in essential care services, where women predominate, is one pressing priority emerging from the pandemic.

The wave of stigma, xenophobia, misinformation and fear accompanying the crisis has highlighted the need for accurate, clear, evidence-based public information and awareness-raising campaigns. These have proven to be effective tools to counter such phenomena.

Extending income support for workers and their families in situations of vulnerability. Income support is needed on a massive scale for workers and their families in situations of vulnerability, to prevent recourse to child labour, and limit susceptibility to debt bondage and other forms of forced labour. Building on existing initiatives and on what we know works is imperative. Universal child grants are one simple and proven means of cushioning children and families from the effects of extreme poverty.[109] More broadly, a large body of evidence points to cash transfer schemes as effective in reducing child labour and promoting schooling, even in situations of conflict and disaster.[110] The significant multiplier effects of cash transfers and their stimulation of local economic activity are also well documented. Other cash and in-kind programmes, including food relief, which takes on added importance amid school closures and the need to replace school meals, also help to shield those in extreme poverty from socio-economic shocks, maintain food and nutrition security, and diminish reliance on child labour. Many countries are already introducing or expanding measures targeting populations hard hit by the crisis in these and other areas,[111] but efforts to date fall far short of total need, particularly among workers in the informal economy where the risks of child labour and forced labour are most pronounced.

The pandemic has served as a broader wake-up call to strengthen social protection systems. Cash transfer schemes and other income support measures put in place in response to the crisis must serve this larger goal. Efforts to temporarily extend social protection to uncovered groups need to be transformed into sustainable social protection mechanisms for all. This will enhance social justice, and make economies and societies more resilient to future shocks and crisis.[112]

Extending access to social finance schemes, although not technically part of social protection systems, will also mitigate risks faced by poor families. Such schemes can be especially important in helping vulnerable people and families to avoid falling victim to debt bondage, as access to the financial market through social finance helps reduce their dependence on employers, recruiters and moneylenders for loans. Access to credit also enables families to hedge against some of the heightened risks they face in the current crisis.

Safeguarding children's education. Among the more than 1.5 billion children affected by school closures, preventing the most vulnerable from falling out of educational systems and into child labour is imperative. Short-term school closures must not have lifelong consequences. While schooling systems around the world have responded to closures with a range of innovative online and other distance learning measures, these have by no means benefited all children in all places.

Where schools remain closed, measures to keep children learning must be continued and expanded to those hitherto unreached, including disadvantaged children. Without access to the remote learning platforms available to their better-off peers, they are at a particular risk of child labour.

Where conditions permit safe school re-entry, back-to-school campaigns and active outreach will be necessary to encourage children to return to the classroom – particularly those already working and those who were not able to continue their studies during the closure. Outreach will require close collaboration between teachers and the broader social service workforce.

Cash transfers or other income support (see above) will be essential to compensate vulnerable families for children's lost earnings or production. For disadvantaged children whose education was most disrupted, "second chance" and remedial "catch-up" learning will be vital in enabling them to persist and succeed in their education. Active consultation with teachers and their representative organizations will be critical in planning all dimensions of the return to school.

Measures to safeguard children's education should link to and reinforce broader efforts to extend and improve public schooling, so that schools are seen by families as a worthwhile and viable alternative to child labour. Worldwide, some 258 million children and youth were already out of school when the crisis struck. This group too must not be forgotten during and after the crisis.

Strengthening labour administration and labour inspection. Public labour administration and inspection enforcement capacity have come under further pressure as financial and human resources are diverted to meet urgent needs linked to the pandemic. Some jurisdictions have passed laws in the aftermath of the crisis restricting the mandates of labour inspectorates, for example, by setting a higher threshold on the size of firms that can be subjected to inspections. Research from past financial crises suggests that reduced enforcement capacity can in turn be a principal channel through which crises curtail labour rights.[113]

As lockdowns ease and economies reopen, labour inspectorates must have the resources and mandates to proactively and strategically monitor sectors at high risk of child labour, forced labour and other human rights violations, within broader efforts to re-establish or reinforce labour administrations.

Non-state actors have an important supporting role to play. Local community-based child labour monitoring systems, for example, have proven effective in a number of contexts in backing public labour inspectorates to identify and follow up on child labour cases. Similarly, there are numerous examples of non-state front-line actors mobilizing to detect and refer suspected cases of forced labour. There are also important opportunities to leverage new technologies, public-private partnerships and workplace auditing schemes to assist enterprises in complying with the law. These vehicles complement the regulatory role of public labour administrations, and help extend their reach and effectiveness. Emerging strategic inspection approaches like the ILO's strategic compliance intervention model – consisting of proactive, targeted, and tailored and combined interventions engaging multiple stakeholders – provide a broader framework for these efforts.[114]

Mitigating human rights risks in the labour market. The pandemic is likely to increase the risk of human rights violations in the labour market, as businesses at all levels struggle to cope with the crisis and the severe demand shocks associated with it. This heightened risk underscores the continuing importance of companies undertaking human rights due diligence throughout their supply chains. Effective due diligence means assessing actual and potential risks of human rights violations within the supply chain, and integrating and acting promptly upon the findings. Identifying and prioritizing "hotspots"

Construction sector worker showing his membership card to the National Pension Scheme Authority (Zambia). Only 27 per cent of the world's population has adequate social security coverage and more than half lack any coverage at all. The ILO actively promotes policies and provides assistance to countries to help extend adequate levels of social protection to all. ©ILO

where risks are highest – in terms of the severity of the risk and/or likelihood of occurrence – will be critical. Particularly important in this context are the informal micro- and small enterprises operating at the lower levels of supply chains, where research indicates that human rights risks are often most pronounced,[115] and where the effects of the crisis have in many instances been devastating.

Instituting well-established good purchasing practices – long-term supplier contracts, fair payment schedules, and pricing that reflects the production costs and market value of products and services – will help both ensure the economic survival of suppliers at this critical juncture and reduce the risk of human rights abuses. As economies reopen and demand picks up, there may be pressure for some suppliers to relax checks on recruitment in order to quickly ramp up production, opening the door to forced labour and discrimination in the labour market. Fair recruitment procedures, grounded in the principle that no recruitment or related costs are borne by the worker,[116] will therefore also be essential.[117]

These measures should not be viewed by companies as one-off crisis responses, but rather as part of wider efforts to establish supply chains that are sustainable, respect ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, and are in line with the United Nations "protect, respect and remedy" framework and guiding principles. The ILO and its partners have developed a number of practical tools, resources and platforms to assist business in addressing human rights risks and other concerns within the specific context of the COVID-19 crisis[118] and in their operations more broadly.[119]

The compliance capacity of informal micro- and small enterprises will also depend on assistance to these entities to weather the COVID-19 crisis. Many have hitherto fallen outside the purview of fiscal and monetary policies to support enterprises during the pandemic.[120] At the same time, these enterprises typically lack the savings or access to credit to survive shocks of this magnitude on their own. Bespoke public payments supporting the business solvency of informal enterprises are crucial. If combined with incentives for enterprise registration, such payments could also encourage the transition to formality.[121]

Reducing human rights risks in conflict and disaster settings. The COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating the already high risk of human rights abuses at work in situations of protracted conflict, recurrent natural disasters or forced displacement. These situations are characterized by disruptions in social protection systems and family support networks, limited access to basic services, weak rule of law, and impaired or absent social dialogue, which together are likely to worsen the effects of the pandemic on workers and their families in situations of vulnerability.

Rapid assessments and ongoing monitoring are needed to track how the pandemic is affecting the risk of child labour and forced labour in these complex contexts. The COVID-19 response should build on, strengthen, and adapt the coordination mechanisms, partnerships and plans of humanitarian and development actors already in place in humanitarian settings, rather than build new ones.[122] The revived Alliance 8.7 Action Group on Conflicts and Humanitarian Settings could play an essential role in this context.[123] Formed in 2017, the group brings together concerned governments, United Nations organizations, employers' and workers' organizations, and non-governmental organizations. It offers a valuable platform for exchanging information, undertaking research, and coordinating actions relating to child labour and forced labour in crisis settings.

Efforts should fit within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, meaning they should contribute to social cohesion, resilience and peace over the longer term. The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205) calls for the adoption of a variety of inclusive measures to promote decent work and income-generation opportunities, including through employment-intensive investment strategies and programmes, such as public employment programmes, and through incentivizing multinational enterprises to cooperate with national enterprises in creating decent work and undertaking human rights due diligence.[124] Recommendation No. 205 also underscores the vital role of employers' and workers' organizations in crisis response, taking into account the relevant international labour standards concerning freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.[125]

It is imperative to do no harm in the midst of fast-moving crisis responses. This demands extra care, for example, to ensure that procurement contracts do not open new doors to forced labour, livelihood measures do not create new demand for children's labour, and job and income support programmes do not reinforce pre-existing discrimination or widen social fissures.

Building the evidence base. While the temporary lockdowns and fears of contagion present unique challenges to traditional face-to-face means of information collection, telephone and other remote surveys are providing valuable information on the impact of the crisis on workers in locations including Jordan,[126] Lebanon[127] and Uzbekistan[128]. Forecasting models are also providing critical insights into the impact and evolution of the crisis in the world of work. Other tools permitting more in-depth data collection on affected populations are also being developed,[129] and can incorporate questions or modules on fundamental principles and rights. Collecting information on how the crisis affects the rights of vulnerable groups, including ethnic or religious minorities, indigenous peoples and the LGBTIQ+ community, will be especially important in this context. These efforts should be continued and expanded to detect new and emerging patterns of child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, and help guide and adjust responses accordingly, as the crisis evolves. Short-term information collection should fit within and support ongoing longer-term efforts to build national systems of information collection relating to human rights in the world of work.

The road ahead. Leaving no one behind – the overarching call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – means putting the rights of the most vulnerable at the centre of the COVID-19 response. With the right policy choices and measures at this critical juncture, we have the opportunity to refocus on the root causes of human rights violations in the world of work, and achieve lasting improvements in the lives and livelihoods of workers and their families. We can in this way build back better for everyone.

End notes

1 ILO, *Promoting Employment and Decent Work in a Changing Landscape*, ILC.109/III(B) (2020).

2 ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, fifth edition (30 June 2020).

3 ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, third edition (20 April 2020).

4 ILO, *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work*, fourth edition (27 May 2020).

5 ILO, *COVID-19 impact on child labour and forced labour: The response of the IPEC+ Flagship Programme* (May 2020).

6 United Nations, *Policy Brief: The World of Work and COVID-19* (June 2020).

7 ETUC, *COVID-19 WATCH: ETUC Briefing Notes, Trade Union Rights and COVID-19* (June 2020).

8 ITUC, as cited in "Workers' rights seen crumbling as coronavirus threatens further setbacks", *Reuters* (18 June 2020).

9 See ILO, "In Times of Crisis, Solidarity Between Government, Workers and Employers Is Paramount" (13 May 2020), press release from the ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and India about the evolving COVID-19 response mechanisms in India.

10 The 1970 "Resolution Concerning Trade Union Rights and Their Relation to Civil Liberties" places special emphasis on freedom of opinion and expression, which are essential for the normal exercise of trade union rights.

11 ILO, *ILO Standards and COVID-19 (Coronavirus) FAQ: Key Provisions of International Labour Standards Relevant to the Evolving COVID-19 Outbreak*, NORMES, version 2.1 (May 2020).

12 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "COVID-19 Restrictions Should Not Stop Freedom of Assembly and Association Says UN Expert" (14 April 2020).

13 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Coronavirus: Human Rights Need to Be Front and Centre in Response, Says Bachelet" (6 March 2020).

14 For a more detailed discussion of current practice, see: ILO, *Employers and Workers Negotiating Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Protect Livelihoods and Support Recovery: A Review of Practice*, INWORK, FUNDAMENTALS, LIBSYND (July 2020).

15 ILO, *Employers and workers negotiating measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect livelihoods and support recovery: A review of practice*, ILO Brief (July 2020).

16 IG Metall, *Sicherheiten für die Beschäftigten in der Metall- und Elektroindustrie* (2020).

17 ILO, *COVID-19: Action in the Global Garment Industry* (April 2020).

18 See, for example: "Que establece el acuerdo entre el gobierno, el Sunca y los empresarios de la construcción", *El Observador* (12 April 2020).

19 Association Nationale des Industries Alimentaires; Comité National des Abattoirs et Ateliers de Découpe de Volailles, Lapins et Chevreaux; La Coopération Agricole; Fédération des Industries Avicoles, *Guide d'aide à la mise en place d'un plan de reprise d'activité* (30 April 2020).

20 See, for example: ILO, *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour* (2014); Human Rights Council, "Current and Emerging Forms of Slavery, Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences", 42nd session, (9–27 September 2019); P. Diego-Rosell and J. Joudo Larsen, *Modelling the Risk of Modern Slavery*, SSRN (17 July 2018).

21 See, C. Z. Worsnop, "The Disease Outbreak–Trafficking Connection: A Missed Opportunity", *Health Security* 17, No. 3 (2019).

22 ILO, *Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour* (2014); R. S. Srivastava, *Bonded Labour in India: Its Incidence and Pattern*, ILO Special Action Programme to Combat Forced Labour Working Paper, DECLARATION/WP/43/2005 (2005).

23 UNCTAD, "Securing Access to Financial Services for Vulnerable People During COVID-19" (1 May 2020).

24 See, for example, "For Microfinance Lenders, COVID-19 Is an Existential Threat", *The Economist* (5 May 2020); "How Coronavirus Affects Microfinance Sector", *Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation* (20 March 2020).

25 Cambodia Microfinance Association, as cited in "Cambodian Workers Owe $10 Billion in Microfinance Debt as COVID-19 Wipes Out Incomes", *Asean Today* (30 April 2020).

26 Jan Sahas organisation, *Voices of the Invisible Citizens, A Rapid Assessment on the Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Internal Migrant Workers* (April 2020), as cited in Council on Foreign Relations, "COVID-19 and Modern Slavery: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future of the Fight" (28 April 2020).

27 See, for example: Interpol, "COVID-19 Impact on Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking", (11 June 2020); UN News, "COVID-19 Crisis Putting Human Trafficking Victims at Risk of Further Exploitation, Experts Warn" (6 May 2020); UNODC, "COVID-19 Measures Likely to Lead to an Increase in Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in Longer Term, UNODC Report Finds" (14 May 2020).

28 See, for example, IOM, "IOM Assists Thousands of Migrants Stranded in Djibouti due to COVID-19", (19 June 2020); IOM, "Migration Flows Across West and Central Africa Nearly Halved by COVID-19" (16 June 2020).

29 See Interpol, "COVID-19 Impact on Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking" (11 June 2020).

30 See UN News, "Migrants Stranded 'All Over the World' and at Risk from Coronavirus" (7 May 2020).

31 ILO, *Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief* (April 2020).

32 ILO, *Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief* (April 2020).

33 ILO, *Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Loss of Jobs and Hours Among Domestic Workers*, ILO Factsheet (15 June 2020).

34 See, for example, Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Migrant Domestic Workers Must Be Protected During COVID-19 Pandemic" (14 April 2020); La Strada International, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Protection of Rights of Trafficked and Exploited Persons" (March 2020); Human Rights Watch, "Domestic Workers in Middle East Risk Abuse Amid COVID-19 Crisis" (6 April 2020); and "No tenemos comida ni dinero y nadie se preocupa por nosotros", *Diario Libre* (14 April 2020).

35 See, for example: "Across the World, Construction Workers Are Caught Between Coronavirus Risk and Joblessness", *Equal Times* (28 April 2020); "Coronavirus: 'Modern Slavery' at the Heart of German Slaughterhouse Outbreak", *Deutsche Welle* (11 May 2020).

36 See, for example, Anti-Slavery International, *Leaving No-one Behind* (April 2020).

37 See, for example, "Vulnerable Prisoners 'Exploited' to Make Coronavirus Masks and Hand Gel", *The Guardian* (12 March 2020).

38 ILO and Walk Free Foundation, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage* (2017).

39 For a more detailed discussion of fair recruitment and COVID-19, see ILO, *Ensuring Fair Recruitment During the COVID-19 Pandemic, ILO Brief* (June 2020).

40 See Council on Foreign Relations, "COVID-19 and Modern Slavery: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future of the Fight" (28 April 2020).

41 A. Trautrims et al., "Survival at the Expense of the Weakest? Managing Modern Slavery Risks in Supply Chains During COVID-19", *Journal of Risk Research* (11 June 2020).

42 See World Economic Forum, "This Is the Impact of COVID-19 on Modern Slavery" (7 April 2020).

43 Institute for Human Rights and Business, *Respecting Human Rights in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Examining Companies' Responsibilities for Workers and Affected Communities* (April 2020).

44 For further discussion on child labour and COVID-19, see: ILO and UNICEF, *COVID-19 and Child Labour: A Time of Crisis, A Time to Act*, (2020).

45 United Nations, *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children* (April 2020).

46 See, for example, World Food Programme, *Targeting and Prioritization of Impoverished and Food-Insecure Populations Affected by COVID-19: Safeguarding and Scaling Up Assistance for People Most at Risk* (May 2020).

47 S. Duryea, D. Lam and D. Levison, "Effects of Economic Shocks on Children's Employment and Schooling in Brazil", *Journal of Development Economics* 84, No. 1 (2007), 188–214.

48 Guatemala: L. Guarcello, F. Mealli and F. C. Rosati, "Household Vulnerability and Child Labor: The Effect of Shocks, Credit Rationing, and Insurance", *Journal of Population Economics* 23, No. 1 (2010), 169–198. India: H. G. Jacoby and E. Skoufias, "Risk, Financial Markets, and Human Capital in a Developing Country", *The Review of Economic Studies* 64, No. 3 (1997), 311–335. Mexico: A. De Janvry et al., "Can Conditional Cash Transfer Programs Serve as Safety Nets in Keeping Children at School and from Working When Exposed to Shocks?", *Journal of Development Economics* 79, No. 2 (2006), 349–373. United Republic of Tanzania: K. Beegle, R. H. Dehejia and R. Gatti, "Child Labor and Agricultural Shocks", *Journal of Development Economics* 81, No. 1 (2006), 80–96.

49 C. Alcaraz, D. Chiquiar and A. Salcedo, "Remittances, Schooling, and Child Labor in Mexico", *Journal of Development Economics* 97, No. 1 (2012), 156–165.

50 ILO, *The Financial and Economic Crises: A Decent Work Response* (2009).

51 Some examples: -0.28 for economic activity in South Africa (E. V. Edmonds, "Child Labor and Schooling Responses to Anticipated Income in South Africa", *Journal of Development Economics* 81, No. 2 (2006), 386–414); -0.72 for economic activity in selected countries (E. V. Edmonds, "Trade, Child Labor, and Schooling in Poor Countries", *Trade Adjustment Costs in Developing Countries: Impacts, Determinants and Policy Determinants*, ed. G. Porto and B. M. Hoekman, 179–196 (Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2010); -0.83 for economic activity in Viet Nam (E. V. Edmonds, "Does Child Labor Decline with Improving Economic Status?", *Journal of Human Resources* 40, No. 1 (2005), 77–99); and -5.9 for paid employment in Ecuador (E. V. Edmonds and N. Schady, "Poverty Alleviation and Child Labor", *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 4, No. 4 (2012), 100–124).

52 O. O'Donnell, E. Van Doorslaer and F. C. Rosati, *Child Labour and Health: Evidence and Research Issues*, Understanding Children's Work Project Working Paper Series, The World Bank (2002).

53 See, for example, "Fighting India's Bonded Labour During the COVID-19 Pandemic – Part 1", *International Press Service News Agency* (September 2020).

54 See "COVID-19 Crisis Putting Human Trafficking Victims at Risk of Further Exploitation, Experts Warn", *UN News* (6 May 2020).

55 See Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "COVID-19: Urgent Need for Child Protection Services to Mitigate the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Worldwide" (6 May 2020).

56 Interpol, *Threats and trends child sexual exploitation and abuse: COVID-19 impact* (September 2020).

57 Food: R. Akresh, "Flexibility of Household Structure Child Fostering Decisions in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Human Resources* 44, No. 4 (2006), 976–997. Wages: S. Punch, "Negotiating Migrant Identities: Young People in Bolivia and Argentina", *Children's Geographies* 5, No. 1–2 (2007), 95–112; A. S. Erulkar et al., "Migration and Vulnerability Among Adolescents in Slum Areas of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", *Journal of Youth Studies* 9, No. 3 (2006), 361–374.

58 E. V. Edmonds and M. Shrestha, "Independent Child Labor Migrants", *International Handbook on the Economics of Migration*, ed. A. F. Constant and K. F. Zimmermann, 89–120 (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

59 M. Brulisauer, *Human Trafficking in Post-earthquake Nepal*, ETH Zurich (2015).

60 An example from Nepal: A. Nepal and M. Nepal, "Is Child Labour a Substitute for Adult Labour? The Relationship Between Child Labour and Adult Illness in Nepal", *International Labour Review* 151, No. 1-2 (2012), 109–121. This finding is not universal: S. A. Alam, "Parental Health Shocks, Child Labor and Educational Outcomes: Evidence from Tanzania", *Journal of Health Economics* 44, (2015), 161–175.

61 ILO Office in Myanmar (2020).

62 UNESCO, "COVID-19 Impact on Education, Affected Learners".

63 See, E. V. Edmonds and N. Schady, "Poverty Alleviation and Child Labor", *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 4, No. 4 (2012), 100–124.

64 See, "School Closures: Lessons from the Ebola Pandemic", *The Economist* (30 April 2020).

65 Plan International, *Ebola: Beyond the Health Emergency*, 2015; K. Kostelny et al., *Worse Than the War: An Ethnographic Study of the Impact of the Ebola Crisis on Life, Sex, Teenage Pregnancy, and a Community-Driven Intervention in Rural Sierra Leone* (Save the Children, 2016).

66 Plan International, *Ebola: Beyond the Health Emergency* (2015).

67 O. Bandiera et al., "The Economic Lives of Young Women in the Time of Ebola: Lessons from an Empowerment Program", Policy Research Working Paper 8769, World Bank Group, Africa Region, February 2019.

68 B. Archibong and F. Annan, *Schooling in Sickness and in Health: The Effects of Epidemic Disease on Gender Inequality* (Columbia University, 2020).

69 B. H. Nordtveit, "Schools as Agencies of Protection in Namibia and Swaziland: Can They Prevent Dropout and Child Labor in the Context of HIV/AIDS and Poverty?", *Comparative Education Review* 54, No. 2 (2010), 223–242.

70 UNICEF and WFP, "Futures of 370 Million Children in Jeopardy as School Closures Deprive Them of School Meals" (28 April 2020).

71 G. Genicot, 2005. "Malnutrition and Child Labor", The Scandinavian Journal of Economics 107, No. 1 (2005), pp. 83–102.

72 UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2019: Children, Food and Nutrition: Growing Well in a Changing World (2019).

73 "No More Pencils, No More Books. Closing Schools for Covid-19 Does Lifelong Harm and Widens Inequality", The Economist, 30 April 2020.

74 ILO, The COVID-19 Response: Getting Gender Equality Right for a Better Future for Women at Work, Policy Brief (May 2020).

75 ILO, Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief (April 2020).

76 ILO, COVID-19 and the World Of Work: A Focus on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, Policy Brief (May 2020).

77 ILO, COVID-19 and the World Of Work: A Focus on People Living with HIV, Policy Brief (June 2020).

78 ILO, COVID-19 and the World of Work: Ensuring No One Is Left Behind in the Response and Recovery, Policy Brief (June 2020).

79 See, for example: ILO, Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference, 100th Session, Report I(B) (2011), pp. 5–10; UN Women, Economic Crises and Women's Work: Exploring Progressive Strategies in a Rapidly Changing Global Environment, January 2013; L. K. Woo, C. Kisuk and L. S. Ju, "Causes of Gender Discrimination in Korean Labor Markets", Asian Journal of Women's Studies 7, No. 2 (2001); D. C. Giedeman, "Introduction to the Special Issue: The Effects of the 2007–2009 Financial Crisis and Great Recession Across Racial and Ethnic Groups", Journal of Economic and Race Policy 1, No. 45–46 (2018); M. O'Brien and M. X. Tolosa, "The Effect of the 2014 West Africa Ebola Virus Disease Epidemic on Multi-Level Violence Against Women", International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare 9, No. 3 (2016), 151–160.

80 See, for example: "Across the World, Construction Workers Are Caught Between Coronavirus Risk and Joblessness", Equal Times (28 April 2020); "Coronavirus: 'Modern Slavery' At The Heart Of German Slaughterhouse Outbreak", Deutsche Welle (11 May 2020).

81 See, for example: R. W. Aldridge et al., "Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups in England Are at Increased Risk of Death from COVID-19: Indirect Standardisation of NHS Mortality Data", version 1 awaiting peer review, Wellcome Open Research 5, No. 88 (2020); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups", 24 July; World Economic Forum, "COVID-19 Is More Deadly For Some Ethnic Groups" (7 May 2020).

82 See, for example, P. Bille Larsen, Indigenous and Tribal Children: Assessing child labour and education challenges, Working Paper, ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), (2003); F. Blanco Allais and P. Quinn, Marginalisation and Child Labour, Working Paper, ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), (2009); A. Kazeem, "Unpaid Work Among Children Currently Attending School in Nigeria: with Focus on Gender, Ethnicity, Urban-Rural Residence and Poverty", International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 33, No. 5 (2013), 328–346; ILO, Time for Equality at Work, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Report I (B), International Labour Conference, 91st Session (2003).

83 A. Elias, "Measuring the Economic Consequences of Racial Discrimination in Australia", PhD thesis, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deakin University (2015).

84 R. Venturi, "Workplace Discrimination in France: Billions of Euros in Lost Potential", France Stratégie (2016).

85 C. T. Hsieh et al., "The Allocation of Talent and US Economic Growth", Econometrica 87, No. 5 (September, 2019), 1439–1474.

86 See, for example: ILO, ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190): 12 Ways It Can Support the COVID-19 Response and Recovery, Issue Brief (May 2020); Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, "Incidents of Coronavirus Discrimination", (25 March 2020); Japanese Trade Union Confederation, Business and Human Rights Centre, "Japan Labour Unions Report Increasing Cases of Workplace Harassment with COVID-19 Outbreak"(April 2020); SHRM, "Xenophobia on the Rise During COVID-19: How Employers Can Combat It" (24 April 2020).

87 See, for example, "Racist Harassment of Asian Health Care Workers Won't Cure Coronavirus", Berkeley News (9 April 2020).

88 "UN Chief Says Pandemic Is Unleashing a 'Tsunami of Hate'", The Associated Press (8 May 2020).

89 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see: ILO, The COVID-19 Response: Getting Gender Equality Right for a Better Future for Women at Work, Policy Brief (May 2020).

90 United Nations, The Impact of COVID-19 on Women (9 April 2020).

91 UNCTAD, COVID-19 Requires Gender-Equal Responses to Save Economies (1 April 2020).

92 ILO, ILO Standards and COVID-19 (Coronavirus) FAQ: Key Provisions of International Labour Standards Relevant to the Evolving COVID-19 Outbreak, NORMES, version 2.1, (May 2020).

93 UNCTAD, COVID-19 Requires Gender-Equal Responses to Save Economies (1 April 2020).

94 See, for example: "Coronavirus Pauses U.K. Gender Pay Gap Reporting Ahead of April Deadline", Bloomberg, 3 April 2020; European Economic and Social Committee, "The Commission Must Not Delay Action to Address Gender Equality in the EU – The Right Time for Equal Pay Is NOW!" (20 April 2020); ETUC, "Plan to Drop Pay Transparency Over Covid-19 a Betrayal of Frontline Women Workers" (21 April 2020).

95 UN Women, Economic Crises and Women's Work: Exploring Progressive Strategies in a Rapidly Changing Global Environment (January 2013).

96 ILO, Equality at Work: The Continuing Challenge, Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, International Labour Conference, 100th Session, Report I(B) (2011).

97 UN Women, Economic Crises and Women's Work: Exploring Progressive Strategies in a Rapidly Changing Global Environment (January 2013).

98 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see: ILO, Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief (April 2020).

99 See, for example, S. Vertovec, "Covid-19 and Enduring Stigma. The Corona Pandemic Increases Xenophobia and Exclusion Worldwide", Max Planck Society, 27 Apri1 2020; "Coronavirus Triggers Xenophobia in Some African Countries", The Globe and Mail (19 March 2020).

100 United Nations, COVID-19 and Human Rights: We Are All in This Together (April 2020).

101 ILO, Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief (April 2020).

102 ILO, "The Impact of the Financial Crisis on Migrant Workers", presentation to the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, "Migration Management and Its Linkages with Economic, Social and Environmental Policies to the Benefit of Stability and Security in the OSCE region", Second Preparatory Conference, Tirana (16–17 March 2009).

103 ILO, Protecting Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents, Policy Brief (April 2020).

104 ILO, Promoting Employment and Decent Work in a Changing Landscape, International Labour Conference, 109th Session (2020).

105 ILO, Employers and Workers Negotiating Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Protect Livelihoods and Support Recovery: A Review of Practice, INWORK/FUNDAMENTALS/LIBSYND (July 2020).

106 ILO, Interactions between Workers' Organizations and Workers in the Informal Economy: A Compendium of Practice (2019).

107 Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), "Pandemic: Informal Workers Urgently Need Income Replacement — and More Protections" (23 March 2020), as cited in ILO, Employers and Workers Are Negotiating Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Protect Jobs and Incomes and Support Recovery: A Review of Practice, ILO Brief (July 2020).

108 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see: ILO, ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190): 12 Ways It Can Support the COVID-19 Response and Recovery, Issue Brief (May 2020).

109 United Nations, Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children (April 2020).

110 J. de Hoop, M. Morey and D. Seidenfeld, No Lost Generation: Supporting the School Participation of Displaced Syrian Children in Lebanon, UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti Working Paper WP-2018-06, (June 2018).

111 For up-to-date statistics, see the ILO database Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 Crisis Around the World.

112 ILO, Pillar 2: Supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes, ILO Policy Brief on COVID-19 (2020).

113 R. G. Blanton, S. L. Blanton and D. Peksen, "Financial Crises and Labor: Does Tight Money Loosen Labor Rights?", World Development 76 (December 2015).

114 ILO, ILO Approach to Strategic Compliance Planning for Labour Inspectorates (2017).

115 ILO, OECD, IOM and UNICEF, Ending Child Labour, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains (2019).

116 ILO, General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs (2019).

117 For a more detailed discussion of fair recruitment and COVID-19, see: ILO, Ensuring Fair Recruitment During the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020).

118 See ILO webpage, "Business and COVID-19".

119 See, for example, ILO and IOE, How to Do Business with Respect for Children's Right to Be Free from Child Labour: ILO-IOE Child Labour Guidance Tool for Business, ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), (2015). The Child Labour Platform,

co-chaired by the IOE and the ITUC, is a forum for exchanging good practices globally and direct action locally in addressing child labour in supply chains. The Global Business Network on Forced Labour, a platform for partnership and collaboration between the ILO, enterprises of all sizes, and employers' and business membership organizations, is designed to educate and support employers in addressing forced labour in their operations.

120 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see: ILO, COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy: Immediate Responses and Policy Challenges, ILO Brief (May 2020).

121 ILO, Employers and Workers Negotiating Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, Protect Livelihoods and Support Recovery: A Review of Practice, INWORK/FUNDAMENTALS/LIBSYND (July 2020).

122 ILO, Towards a Coordinated Humanitarian-Development Response to COVID-19 Crisis: Reflections from the Arab Region with an ILO Lens (22 April 2020).

123 See the Alliance 8.7 Action Group on Conflicts and Humanitarian Settings.

124 ILO, The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).

125 ILO, The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

126 ILO and Fafo, Facing Double Crises: Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Workers in Jordan (May 2020).

127 ILO and Fafo, Facing Multiple Crises: Rapid Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Workers and Small-scale Enterprises in Lebanon (May 2020).

128 ILO, Assessment of COVID-19 Impacts on Socio-Economic Situation in Uzbekistan (Incomes, Labour Market and Access to Social Protection): Overview of Crisis Response and Areas of Improving Public Policies (July 2020).

129 See, for example, ILO, Rapid Assessment of the Effects on the Informal Economy of Covid-19 and the Preventive Measures Associated With It. A Practical Tool (forthcoming).

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch
(FUNDAMENTALS)
Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE)

International Labour Organization
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22 - Switzerland
T: +41 (0) 22 799 61 11
E: fundamentals@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/fundamentals

ISBN 978-92-2-033105-7