



Inequality is tearing the fabric of society apart *The trade union movement for a just future*

People, communities, and workers around the world are facing historic levels of inequality. Mass unemployment as well as underemployment, precarious contracts and jobs in the informal economy are the result of an unjust and unsustainable global economic model designed to benefit the owners of capital. The neoliberal revolution decoupled the relationship between work and reward, and results in the richest one per cent of people now controlling over half of the wealth globally. The global economic structure is a model of inequality by design, where multinational corporations dominate supply chains, control governments and people and threaten democracy itself. Our politics and politicians have stepped away from their democratic mandate and left governance to the free market. Instead of trying to build successful societies, they have focused on bringing the market to more and more aspects of life. Trade unions have been attacked across the world, and the decline in our power has been matched by labour's declining share of wealth.

We are now seeing the fabric of our societies torn apart, with increasing casualization of work and attacks on unions. The failure of globalization to bring widespread prosperity has led to the revival of populist nationalism, threatening us with division and war. In order to retain wealth in the hands of the few, discrimination is used as a tool to divide people using gender, race, religion, sexual preference and other characteristics.

The Covid pandemic was the final trigger that has tipped the world into spiralling inequality. If we do not take action, the march of progress will end and we will move backwards, to inequality on a scale we last saw in the 19th century. We now face a perfect storm of crises:

- Workers' rights violations, attacks on unions and on democracy;
- The cost of living crisis, as inflation erodes purchasing power. This particularly affects people who already live in poverty or workers in precarious jobs with wages that are far too low;
- Income inequality, increasing precarious jobs and poverty;
- The gap between productivity gains and wage growth;
- An unfair distribution of wealth, as the assets of billionaires balloon while essential services are underfunded and workers get below-inflation pay settlements;
- Jobs threatened by Industry 4.0 and climate change;
- The food and energy security crisis caused by the war in Ukraine and climate change;
- Supply chain disruption affecting production in many countries;
- Waves of migration and refugees caused by economic collapse, climate change and war;

- The consolidation of new models of precarious work in many more sectors, through the widespread use of platform labour and management by algorithm.

However, the world's unions have a plan for a just future. We need to articulate it, build coalitions and fight for it together.

The building blocks include:

- **Fundamental workers' rights**, with full implementation of ILO Convention 87 and Convention 98, and labour laws at national level that allow workers to defend themselves;
- **Enhanced collective bargaining** coverage, with better conditions delivered by strong unions;
- **Union density**: we need to organize more workers in more sectors and bring them under the umbrella of collective agreements;
- **Decent wages**. Workers everywhere need a pay rise that reflects the inflation rate and the sacrifices made during the Covid pandemic; they need wages that reflect their essential part in value creation;
- **Social protection**, including unemployment, sick pay, maternity and paternity leave, funds for retraining and properly funded pensions;
- **Human rights due diligence** that allows us to hold companies to account using accessible legal mechanisms;
- **Gender equality** that ensures women have their share of well-paying jobs, and receive equal pay for work of equal value;
- **Global solidarity** against the scourge of racism, with support for migrants and refugees;
- **The redistribution of wealth** through tax justice, including a windfall tax on those who made a fortune from Covid, and investment in society;
- **Just transition**. We need a funded plan, developed through social dialogue, to manage the transition to net zero and replace carbon-intensive work with quality, green, unionized jobs;
- **Food and energy security** to provide sustainable access to basic needs at an affordable cost, especially in relation to the growing number of low-income households;
- **Social dialogue** that enables all stakeholders, including workers, to engage in national policy formulations to improve their living standards.

As the representative of manufacturing workers globally, IndustriALL continues to fight against inequality and develop a trade union movement for a just future.

IndustriALL demands a fair distribution of the benefits of global economic activity. We call upon all governments and multinationals to ensure that globalization benefits all people everywhere.

It is time to pay up! Let us come together on 7 October and demand our fair share for a just future!