

#COVID19: ITF GLOBAL DEMANDS FOR GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYERS

Covid-19 is issuing the world an unprecedented collective challenge. Across the world – workers, employers and governments - must work together to minimise the damage done.

Transport workers are the lifeblood of a global economy linking supply chains and keeping the world moving, and vital to successfully responding to the challenge of Covid-19.

Today, more than ever, transport workers will ensure that essential supplies reach those who need them, whether they are seafarers, dockers, truck drivers, warehouse workers or delivery drivers. Cabin crew,

pilots and aviation workers will continue to repatriate people to their home countries. Public transport workers will make sure those who need to can still get to work, or access hospitals for treatment.

The ITF believes that existing international labour standards and the protection of labour rights are crucial to the success of our efforts to contain Covid-19.

Transport unions globally will play their part connecting global supply chains and keeping the world moving.

The ITF is calling on both governments and employers for immediate action in five key areas.

1. Protecting workers vital to the Covid-19 response

Supply chains are crucial to the movement of goods around the world, including medicines, food, equipment, and supplies critical to dealing with Covid-19. Transport workers should be recognised as providing a vital service in the struggle against Covid-19.

Key points:

- Transport workers in all sectors should be considered vital to the success of the global struggle against Covid-19 for the duration of the pandemic and to resettling supply chains post the virus.
- Transport and other vital workers required to work in contact with people outside the home should receive enhanced income protection and have guaranteed compensation paid to their dependents in the case of COVID-19 infection leading to fatality or critical illness.
- Workers in all industries, including those providing a vital service to the struggle with Covid-19, should be provided with regular free testing for the virus, as part of having their core labour rights respected.

2. Putting health and safety first

Government and employers must work with trade unions to pinpoint threats to workers' rights and welfare. They should plan and take action to help stop the spread of Covid-19.

Key points:

- Recognise that worker participation should be the core principle of COVID-19 health and safety management systems. International research proves this is the best way to ensure safety. Workforce representatives must have an equal role in drawing up and checking Covid-19 health and safety measures.
- Work with unions to pinpoint both the new pressures Covid-19 puts on workers, and the measures needed to lessen the impact of these pressures (such as reduced working hours, increased rest times without loss of pay, counselling etc).
- Set up Covid-19 inspectorates charged with going into operating services and checking they are using the right methods to reduce worker exposure and the further spread of the virus.

Additional points:

- Work with unions and workers to identify Covid-19 risk levels for all operations and tasks.
- Provide free testing for workers in services vital to success (including transport, delivery and logistics).
- Work out what personal protective equipment and supplies are needed to best protect workers in at risk areas/tasks and provide them.
- Pay special attention to low-wage workers, for example sub-contracted or migrant workers, as well as women and workers with health conditions. These workers are at a higher risk of contagion because poverty and ill-health reduce people's immunity. Poverty is also linked to overcrowded and unhealthy housing.
- Workers' medical and personal information is safeguarded, especially that of migrant workers. Information sharing should be needs-based and anonymised if possible.

3. Providing income protection for all workers

The income of workers and their families will aid the stabilisation of the global economy. Income support for all workers, including for part-time, migrant, non-resident, precarious, 'gig' and informal workers, is essential to cover the cost of housing, electricity, food and other essential items.

Key points:

- Workers laid off, or otherwise stood down (stand-down workers), due to COVID-19 should have their incomes protected by measures for all stand-down workers whether through collective bargaining (e.g. Denmark) or government payments (e.g. New Zealand).
- All workers in non-standard, precarious jobs should be paid above, or at the rate of their average income over 12 months so they do not suffer any real loss in pay.
- Across our societies, women bear the brunt of caring for others. The extra burden on women workers must be compensated by additional steps to protect their income and jobs.
- Workers who become infected by Covid-19 must be guaranteed paid sick leave from the first day. Workers in non-standard, precarious jobs should be paid above or at the level of their average income over the last 12 months.

ALL GOVERNMENT SPENDING MEASURES MUST PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT. ALL CORPORATE AID PACKAGES MUST PUT WORKERS' WELFARE AND INCOME FIRST. GOVERNMENTS SHOULD TAKE OWNERSHIP OF KEY TRANSPORT COMPANIES WHERE NECESSARY.

4. Government-led stimulus to keep the economy going

Governments should spend money to protect jobs and the economy, including small- and medium-sized businesses, and by doing so protect workers' wages and welfare.

Key points:

- All government spending measures must put people before profit. All corporate aid packages must put workers' welfare and income first. Governments should take ownership of key transport companies where necessary.
- Work with unions to identify chances to redeploy stand-down workers into vital services during the crisis
- Ensure fast transfers of knowledge and technology to contain COVID-19. Collaboration and teamwork should guide the international response, not profiteering.
- Intellectual property, trade regulations, and trade sanctions must not be allowed to slow down the transfer of treatment and containment measures.
- To make sure poor countries can focus their attention and spending on vital actions - like containment measures, healthcare and the movement of goods- their existing debts must be forgiven. The crisis cannot be used to create more debt.

Additional points:

- Multilateral institutions must ensure that all countries have the necessary resources to contain the Covid-19 virus.
- Identify skills needed in the post Covid-19 economy and set up training for workers currently unable to work (stand-down workers).



5. Maintaining sustainable supply chains

All employers have a duty of care for workers in their supply chains, especially those who are dependent self-employed or working for dependent contractors. Evidence shows that today's supply chains are rife with health and safety problems. Without action to ensure the same Covid-19 health and safety steps are taken across the supply chain, its safety as a whole can't be ensured.

Key points:

- Contracts must ensure that every employer in the chain takes action to protect workers from Covid-19 and other safety risks. Only in this way can employers fulfil their duty of care.
- Employers at every stage of the supply chain must abide by existing Labour standards.
- Health and safety management systems based on worker participation must be maintained within and between companies in the supply chain.

Additional points:

- Necessary training and personal protective equipment and disinfectants should be provided to small-scale contractors (such as delivery drivers) in delivery networks.
- Employers should work with trade unions to assess the risk level of their direct employees' living conditions. If found to be high risk (overcrowded, insanitary conditions), employers should help establish temporary accommodation where WHO healthcare guidelines can be followed.
- Employers should share information about the procedures they have adopted with companies, or self-employed workers (such as delivery drivers) in their supply chain.
- Employers should work with unions to allow those workers whose jobs can be done remotely to work from home, providing them with the necessary equipment.
- Employers should check that suppliers, contractors and others in their supply chain are following these guidelines.