GIG ECONOMY:

Response to the challenges of the Future of Work

1. There are **two main types of digital platform** – companies that pay workers to provide a service and companies that connect workers to potential employers. These digital platforms form the basis of the platform, or gig economy. In transport and logistics these are companies that pay workers to provide a service, whether it is taxi driving, last mile delivery or long distance freight.

2. **We do not believe that this part of the economy merits being called the 'sharing economy'** unless the companies involved do not operate for profit, or seek to harvest data for profit.

3. For workers the main characteristic of the gig economy is that these **companies use data to control the worker, through 'algorithmic management'**. The worker is managed by an algorithm that determines where the work takes place, what they are paid, and which defines how they carry out the work. These algorithms embed racial and gender biases that disadvantage women and non-white workers.

4. The **lack of transparency of the algorithms** creates a **power imbalance** between the worker and the platform, an imbalance that is exploited to the companies' profit.

5. Since the gig-economy is largely unregulated and work in it is poorly paid, the gig economy should be considered **part of the low pay, informal economy**. As in that broader sector, some workers are supplementing their incomes, but many are earning their living from their work for the gig economy platforms.

6. **Gig economy platforms shift the burden of risk onto the workers they employ**. The Platforms argue that they are not employers. They therefore exploit a regulatory grey area that allows them to pay low or no taxes, and which allows them to avoid paying the costs associated with being a decent employer.

7. **Gig economy platforms** have no need of middle management, since this function is carried out by the algorithm. In combination with **paying no taxes or labour benefits**, it allows them **to provide labour at the cheapest possible cost**, driving down labour conditions across the sectors they are used in.

8. The gig economy platforms of today are **a 21st century manifestation of informalised labour** arrangements that are, in effect, little different to the conditions suffered by workers in the 19th century, or in countries with few or no labour protections.

9. ITF believes that **companies that pay workers to provide a service are employers** and should behave like employers, paying social security, insurance, and providing sick pay and paid holidays.

10. **Workers in the gig economy face many hidden costs**. Assets like cars, bicycles or phones are provided by the workers themselves. Workers have to pay the maintenance costs of their equipment.

11. Gig economy workers are exposed to algorithmic, or digital management. There is often no human line-management and call centres are often abroad. This makes it extremely difficult to communicate issues

9. Unions must campaign for governments to recognise that public transport is a service and that the public prefers human contact to interaction with machines. These facts should be recognised in bargaining over pay and conditions.

10. The gig economy must be **regulated and taxed effectively.** Unions should campaign for platforms to be regulated nationally and at international level. These regulations should **enshrine platforms as direct employers of workers.** They should also have their **algorithms tested for gender biases.**

11. Unions should campaign for governments to ensure that gig economy employers, such as Uber or Deliveroo, **use monitoring technology to improve safety for women** workers by connecting them to emergency response teams and in such a way that women have access to and can control their data. This should be done in consultation and negotiation with trade unions. This technology must not be used in disciplinary proceedings.

12. Companies that refuse to abide by these regulations should be fined and have their sites blocked within a national territory.

13. Unions must campaign for governments to include support for women's taxi platforms as a way of supporting decent employment by and for women, as well as making urban transport safer for women workers and passengers.

14. Unions should campaign to ensure that **international regulations** on gig economy employers **enshrine the agreed testing of algorithms on gender criteria,** sex and race discrimination as well as free worker and regulator access to data and the algorithms.

15. Unions should campaign for **national regulations that limit and control the use of monitoring, surveillance, rating and benchmarking systems** based on data. These should enshrine the right of trade union access to the data being used, and to the criteria used to measure and rate work.

16. **National regulations** need to be developed limiting and controlling the use of algorithmic management, these should enshrine the notion of **ultimate human responsibility** and require companies to provide a named official responsible for the impact algorithms have on people and the environment. They should also develop a **national certification for workplace algorithms** which must include health and safety and address sex and race discrimination.

17. Women's unequal position in the economy requires gendered public policies which target the root causes of sex (any form of) discrimination and ensure women's right to paid work, safety dignity, and respect. For example, laws and collective bargaining to ensure that women transport workers earn equal pay for equal work, are protected from pregnancy discrimination, have access to paid leave for childcare and caring, to appropriate uniforms and decent toilet and sanitary facilities.

18. Unions should also campaign for public policy to enable a more **equal distribution of caring responsibilities within families and working time.** Recognition and pay for the economic contribution caring makes to society, alongside shorter working time without pay cuts, agreed through negotiation and tri-partite working, are part of a constructive response to the changes we face in transport and the future of work