



25 November 2020

O/R.: 337/2020/SG/AK

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

ITUC-Africa calls on the Government of India to respect human and trade union rights

I am writing behalf of the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), representing more than 17 million workers in Africa to express deep concern over the labour law reform and gross violations of worker's rights under the Covid-19 pandemic in India.

Many states in India are using the coronavirus crisis as an excuse to suspend labour laws and attack workers' rights. Extensive amendments have been proposed by the central and local governments to lower labour standards. These include extending the number of working hours from eight to twelve a day, normalising fixed-term employment, exempting companies from labour inspections, and suspending the labour laws in order to attract investments. These labour amendments and administrative orders seriously undermine the fundamental principles and rights at work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and have grave implications on the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. They were made without genuine engagement and consultation with trade unions in further violation of ILO Convention No.144 on Tripartite Consultation which the Indian government has ratified.

We support the demands and stand in solidarity with the trade union movement in India on the national strike on 26 November. The government of India should hold the long overdue Indian Labour Conference without any delay to address the Twelve Point Charter of Demands and bring the labour law amendments in compliance with the international labour standards. Trade union social partners should be meaningfully consulted for effective policy solutions on job loss and insecurity, wage depreciation, safe migration and repatriation of stranded migrant workers within India and abroad who have been impacted by the travel restrictions. We further urge the Government of India to intervene with the host countries and take necessary actions to ensure that the overseas Indian workers enjoy the same rights and protection in line with international labour standards.

We expect your swift response and actions to ensure that the fundamental human and trade union rights of the working class in India are respected.

Kwasi Adu Amankwah
General Secretary

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