

Trade Union
Advisory Committee
to the OECD
*Commission
syndicale consultative
auprès de l'OCDE*

STATEMENT ON THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND THE FUTURE OF THE OECD

PARIS, 10 JUNE 2020

The Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) expresses deep concerns regarding the health, economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic – a crisis that is considered the most profound and global in modern history.

The TUAC recalls that the crisis piles on yet more precarity in employment and labour market segmentation, mounting global inequalities – as evidenced by several OECD reports¹ – that hamper economic prospects and social cohesion in the short and long term, derailing economic plans for the Sustainable Development Goals and the low carbon transition.

We welcome the decision by the OECD Council to initiate an ad hoc high-level process in the coming weeks and months to address the urgency of the COVID-19 crisis.

Moving ahead, the TUAC calls upon the OECD and its Members, to make best use of this high-level process and involve TUAC and Business at OECD. It needs to deliver a policy roadmap that creates trust in recovery plans that:

- Protect workers, including those at the frontlines, through the highest safety and support measures and personal protective equipment, involving trade unions and social dialogue to set protocols and legal foundations;
- Support developing countries and avoid increasing poverty through debt relief and suspension, the issuance of Special Drawing Rights, the creation of a global social protection fund and stepping up Official Development Assistance (ODA);
- Channel massive, sustained support to the economy, including fiscal packages and support to businesses, conditional on: the protection of jobs; fair wages (established through bargaining); work site representation of workers (through either works councils, unions or elected health and safety committees); the transition to low-carbon economies; the Sustainable Development Goals; and strict corporate governance and tax standards that aim for a sustainable recovery;

¹ Including "Divided we stand" (2011), "In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All" (2015), "A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility" (2018), "Under Pressure: The Squeezed Middle Class" (2019)

- Uphold and extend measures to preserve existing employment and wage/ income compensation schemes, provide adequate income replacement and extend paid sick- and pay-leave entitlements to all workers, students and apprentices irrespective of their employment status in the formal and informal economy via universal coverage;
- Scale-up all necessary provisions for mass testing, funding for epidemiological research as well as for vaccination and relief medicine;
- Support global coordination of supply chains in production and delivery for health and medical products, food and other essential goods;
- Scale up investment in public health systems and public services massively and ensure that public services are based on the premise of social justice and universal access; and
- Ensure that new measures are in line with international and national data privacy and protection standards, that they are based on consent, are proportional and restricted in time.

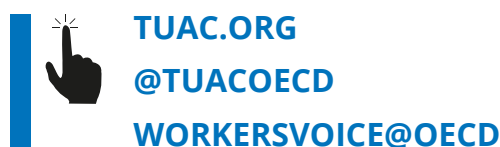
In view of preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Council Meeting 2020 and the 60th Anniversary of the OECD, the TUAC further calls for the following policy objectives to be implemented without delay:

- Support the very principle of multilateralism and people-centred policy-making;
- Tackle inequalities ex-ante with the goal of achieving fair labour market outcomes, including by strengthening labour market institutions and other collective protection schemes related to health and pensions;
- Support Just Transitions towards climate- and digital-proof economies, through investment in skills development and education, social dialogue and collective agreements, and through public investment via transition funds and industrial policies;
- Regulate digital processes and data-driven business models in line with data privacy standards, human-centred principles and ambitious legal and regulatory frameworks and protocols on transparency, accountability and proportionality;

- Embed economic justice in the fiscal and monetary recovery measures, including via progressivity of tax reforms;
- Deepen the OECD Responsible Business Conduct agenda, including by strengthening the National Contact Points of the OECD Guidelines for MNEs, supporting mandated due diligence and tackling excessive corporate power ; and
- Rethink the trade and investment agenda for more sustainable and labour-friendly global value chains.

In the longer term, the TUAC calls upon the OECD vision to be guided by the following principles:

- Be uncompromising on democracy, rule of law, including human rights and labour rights as defined by the ILO, including mechanisms for member states to be held to account for OECD norms and values²;
- Ensure policy coherence across the Organisation, the value of which is more than the sum of its committees and working groups and lies in its capacity to address policy challenges horizontally from diverse fields of expertise;
- Consolidate the recent “acquis” on inclusive labour market reforms and social dialogue, including the revised Jobs Strategy and recent Employment Outlook reports.



² Having regard to past OECD Ministerial Council Meeting Statements including: of 1990, stating that “the basic values which are common to the OECD countries” are “pluralistic democracy, respect for human rights, and a competitive market economy”; of 2007, stating that the Organisation’s mission is “promoting peace, stability, prosperity and democratic values through sound economic policies and good governance”; and of 2011, for the 50th anniversary of the Organisation, stating that “OECD Members form a community of nations committed to the values of democracy based on the rule of law and human rights, and adherence to open and transparent market economy principles” and that the “Organisation’s essential mission is to promote stronger, cleaner, fairer economic growth and to raise employment and living standards”, relying to do so “by identifying key economic, social and environmental policy challenges and designing policies to improve the well-being of people around the world”.