



**Labour20**

**Intervention of  
Maurizio Landini  
General Secretary CGIL Italy**

**Catania 23-24 giugno 2021  
Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting**

Distinguished Ministers,

Dear Participants,

I am honoured to take the floor today on behalf of the Italian trade union confederations -- CGIL, CISL, and UIL -- which hold the Labour20 Presidency, on this occasion where debates will take place and relevant decisions should be taken.

This year's G20 is confronted with an unprecedented challenge to its capacity in providing global leadership: the pandemic. It has struck millions of victims, putting our healthcare and social protection systems under severe strain, caused an unprecedented economic and social crisis, and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities which had already increased because of the previous neoliberal economic and social policies adopted and inspired by austerity.

After more than one year since the beginning of the pandemic, as L20, we can proudly claim that workers all around the world have provided the most decisive contribution to the fight against COVID-19 and have ensured essential services and productive activities. At the same time, a huge price has been paid in terms of the loss of jobs, the worsening of working conditions, and the non-respect of workers' rights, starting with health and safety at work. Such effects would have been even worse without the role played by social partners together with public institutions.

Where social dialogue has functioned well, the effects of the pandemic and the crisis have been managed more effectively. Therefore, at such a critical moment, I can only encourage institutions to respect social partners, and trade unions in particular, to strengthen collective bargaining systems and to reinforce trade union rights. These are universal rights which cannot be subordinated or limited by any specific working or contextual condition.

The Italian experience of the Tripartite Protocol on Health and Safety, which has been ratified by legislation, is certainly a positive example, and we wish that future initiatives to ensure an economic and social recovery can be carried out in the same way.

The G20 engagement to make occupational health and safety a new fundamental right at work would be of exceptional importance, especially if prompted by the labour ministers' meeting in Catania towards becoming part of the conclusions of the Heads of States. We also demand that COVID-19 be recognised at the international level as a professional disease or injury, with the subsequent compensation mechanisms for the victims.

The pandemic has highlighted both old and new problems, which we need to tackle with new international standards, going beyond the emergency of the last months. The data, also for our country, regarding working conditions and injuries at work, including casualties, are unfortunately dramatic. The efforts to protect workers from infections need to continue, starting from the free access to vaccines all over the world -- above all in the poorest countries.

This objective, through an increase in the production capacity and distribution of vaccines, to which other, albeit legitimate, private interests should be sacrificed, concerns the world of work in all its forms. But it is particularly important for the most vulnerable workers, such as migrants, refugees and precarious workers, with a clear gender specificity.

The pandemic has reclaimed a decisive role for public policies and put the general interest back at the centre after decades of illusions that by promoting private profit, prosperity would be generated for all.

Governments are called upon to test themselves with this rediscovered role by putting people and their rights at the centre, from health as a common good -- to be guaranteed for all people -- to the quality of work, development policies and universal rights, starting with trade union freedoms and collective bargaining.

The quality and dignity of work are essential in giving the right answers to the priorities identified by the Italian presidency, which we could agree with:

- to go beyond the Brisbane targets in addressing gender disparities;
- to create the necessary fiscal and political space to guarantee everyone, regardless of the nature of the employment relationship, a floor of social protection, education and training, health, and occupational health and safety;
- to make digital technological innovations and ecological reconversion instrumental in creating more quality jobs.

In the G20 countries, as well as on a global scale and including the poorest countries, a radical change in the fiscal, budgetary and economic policies is needed. For this reason, we reiterate our longstanding demand to the G20, of the need for joint work (with the participation of the social partners) between Ministers of the Economy and Labour in order to give structural, stable and resilient foundations to social policies and quality of employment, along the lines of what was done yesterday by both Labour and Education Ministers.

Without the respect and practice of freedom of association and collective bargaining, such goals are unattainable, and a just transition to the green economy and digitalisation will not be achieved, slowing down prosperity and growth for all.

The international community should pay special and greater attention to new forms of work, including the platform economy, providing full protection of workers, including health and safety also when working remotely or from home. The algorithm itself, a product of human action, must be regulated with adequate policies, via collective bargaining, recognizing the equal dignity of all forms of employment relationships and eradicating the exploitation of the most precarious and vulnerable jobs.

It is therefore urgent to give priority to the ILO standards and to promote new ones related to technological and environmental transformations. Furthermore, a general ratification of the ILO Convention 190 would be important, following the example of Italy.

Let me conclude this short intervention today, by calling all of us -- in the present emergency context -- to a constructive spirit and dialogue among trade unions, employers and institutions to face the most serious challenges of the coming decades: the increase in inequalities and the effects interconnected with climate change, so that human and labour rights, still denied in too many parts of the world, are achieved and protected everywhere.