

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



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IUF Statement to the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting, March 4 & 5, 2021

The International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is the global trade union federation representing workers throughout the hotel and tourism sectors. The IUF is composed of 423 affiliated trade unions in 127 countries representing over 10 million workers.

COVID-19 continues decimating the tourism sector. In most countries, hotels are closed or open with very low occupancy. In several countries, restaurants are still closed or operate under severe restrictions. The IATA predicts that global pre-COVID-19 passenger traffic will not return before 2024¹ and tourism, which depends largely on air traffic, will suffer the same impact.

In our statement to the 2020 G20 Tourism Ministers meetings²³, we highlighted the danger that rebuilding the sector without strong trade union voices guiding policy development would guarantee a tourism sector that left millions of workers behind.

The three themes of the Italian G20 Presidency are People, Planet, Prosperity. We welcome, in particular, the recognition that:

- *“policy actions must be centered around people, both at national and multilateral level”;*
- *“building a more inclusive global society implies protecting the most vulnerable, above all young people, precarious workers”;*

And the commitments to:

- *“providing responses to key issues such as climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss”;*
- *“exploiting the full potential of the technological revolution to concretely improve the living conditions of citizens all over the world, in every aspect of their lives”;*
- *“better redistribute unpaid care work between genders”;*
- *“promote a better work-life balance for both men and women”.*

¹ <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/pr/2020-07-28-02/>

² <https://www.iuf.org/news/iuf-warns-g20-tourism-ministers-that-covid-19-is-being-used-as-cover-to-suppress-workers-rights/>

³ <https://www.iuf.org/news/iuf-calls-on-g20-tourism-ministers-to-take-immediate-measures-to-protect-workers-in-the-covid-19-crisis/>

In order for the tourism sector to achieve the priority objectives established by the Italian G20 Presidency, we call on G20 members to:

- To convene an Emergency Summit on *Tourism recovery and building back better*. Such a Summit could establish guidance on the conditions required for the safe re-opening and recovery of the tourism sector. Its agenda should include ensuring decent work for the millions of people employed in the sector, and protecting the environment/combating climate change both of which are essential for sustainable tourism;
- Continue to develop and implement protocols--negotiated with trade unions--to protect hotel workers. These must include employer-paid personal protective equipment, transportation and occupational health and safety training. These protocols must apply to all workers, including those with non-standard forms of employment;
- Improve worker protection by supporting proposals in the ILO to make occupational health and safety a fundamental right at work, by recognizing COVID-19 as an occupational disease, by ensuring paid sick leave while ill and under quarantine, and by providing testing and mass vaccination for all workers in the tourism sector, starting with frontline workers;
- Ensure that bail-out policies for the tourism sector enable a shift to sustainable tourism built on decent working conditions and an end to precarious work in tourism; bail-out funds should be linked to tourism companies' efforts to retain and support employees;
- Refuse to bail out companies registered in offshore tax havens and prohibit the use of government bail-out funds for shareholder dividends and share buybacks;
- Regularise all undocumented migrant workers to guarantee access to health care;
- Insist that hotels suspend optional housekeeping programmes where guests can voluntarily forego housekeeping services;
- Ensure that gender inequalities are not exacerbated in the context of this pandemic. In addition to their employment, women often also have to take care of their families, elderly and sick relatives. Recent studies have also highlighted that quarantine and physical isolation have led to an increase in domestic violence. Governments must do everything possible to implement and strengthen a comprehensive warning and protection system. We call on Governments to ratify and fully implement ILO Convention 190 and to legislate, monitor and enforce the implementation of the ILO principle of "equal pay for work of equal value between women and men";
- Work with trade unions and employers, where necessary, to extend short-time work schemes so that workers are not let go during COVID-19 lockdowns or in the course of recovery to full activity but continue to receive their wages or a percentage of their wages. Where short-time work is not possible and lay-offs are unavoidable, there must be targeted measures to provide income support and health care coverage for tourism workers. These workers must be guaranteed priority recall rights with the same economic and employment conditions at the time of dismissal;
- Request the UN World Tourism Organisation to include the global trade union federations representing tourism workers in its [Global Tourism Crisis Committee](#).

The rebuilding of tourism cannot happen without the active participation of the trade unions representing workers in the tourism sector. It is crucial that governments,

employers and trade unions work together for a sustainable tourism which protects local communities and the environment, and which guarantees quality work and living wages. We are ready and willing to work for sustainable tourism. We welcome further discussion on our action points.

References:

[IUF Safe Return to Work during COVID-19 Demands: HRCT](#)

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