

Your Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Adopted in 1998, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is an expression of commitment by governments, employers' and workers' organizations to uphold basic human values – values that are vital to our social and economic lives.

The Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work are derived from the ILO Constitution and are expressed in policy decisions of the Organization, such as its Conventions and Recommendations.

Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

The most basic of all principles underlying the work of ILO, freedom of association guarantees workers' and employers' rights to join together freely and take action to protect their interests in the labour market and at the workplace. It extends to voluntarily negotiating terms and conditions of employment.

The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour

This basic right embodies the simple idea that no one shall be forced to work, that is, to perform work on a non-voluntary basis or under threat of being penalized. It calls for the suppression of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms.

The effective abolition of child labour.

Childhood is a period of life that should be consecrated not to work but to education and development. This right states that every child should have the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and morally to their full potential before entering working life at a minimum age fixed by the Government. The abolition of the worst forms of child labour is a top priority.

The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

This right reflects the notion of equity. This right requires equal opportunity and treatment in all aspects of work, from training, to recruitment and pay to working conditions, conditions. This paves the way for individuals and societies to maximize their human potential and receive a fair return for their work.

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Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Economic growth is essential, however, it is not sufficient to ensure equity, social progress and poverty alleviation.

In recent years the process of globalisation has not provided its promised benefits to a significant number of people. Higher job insecurity and greater income disparities are pushing an increasing number of people to seek survival in a sprawling informal sector, engendering social and, at times, political instability.

In order to address these challenges, members of the international community have reaffirmed their commitment to provide assistance in strengthening institutions and policies for social justice. In 1998, this commitment was confirmed with the adoption of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) **Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work** by Governments as well as employers' and worker' organisations.

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is a concrete expression of and commitment to the universal values on which the ILO was founded. Its purpose is to stimulate efforts that ensure social progress goes hand in hand with economic progress and development. The Declaration highlights four essential elements for social justice, namely:

Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;

The effective abolition of child labour;

The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



Exercise your right to influence matters that directly concern you at work



Work should be freely chosen and free from threats and penalties

Applying to all ILO Member States (175 countries as well as workers' and employers' associations), regardless of their levels of economic development, cultural values and history, the Declaration embodies the essential work-related aspirations of all people. It operates by establishing an **enabling framework** so that individuals have the freedom to choose work and employment options, and have a fair share in the wealth they have helped generate.

The Declaration and its Follow-up provides three ways to help countries, employers and workers achieve the full realisation of the Declaration's objective. Firstly, there is an Annual Review composed of reports from countries that have not yet ratified one or more of the ILO Conventions that directly relate to the specific principles and rights stated in the Declaration. This reporting process provides Governments with an opportunity to state what measures they have taken towards achieving respect for the Declaration, to identify persistent problems and obstacles as well as highlight areas that require technical assistance. It also gives organizations of employers and workers a chance to voice their views on progress made and actions taken.

Next, the Global Report each year provides a dynamic global picture of the current situation of the principles and rights expressed in the Declaration. The Global Report is a view of the global and regional trends on the issues relevant to the Declaration and serves to highlight those areas that require greater attention. It serves as a basis for determining priorities for **technical cooperation**. Technical cooperation projects, the third way to give effect to the Declaration, are designed to address identifiable needs in relation to the Declaration and to strengthen local capacities thereby translating principles into practice.

The Declaration's principles and rights are gaining wider recognition among organizations, communities, and enterprises. It has been recognised that these fundamental principles and rights can help **increase productivity** by raising staff morale and loyalty as well as provide benchmarks for responsible business conduct. The ILO's own Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises emphasize the principles and rights found in the ILO Declaration, while the UN Global Compact promotes them as universal values to be achieved in business dealings around the world. A growing number of private sector codes of conduct and similar initiatives have also highlighted the importance of these fundamental principles and rights at work.

Overall, the Declaration provides people who work with a minimum of social equity as well as providing a framework that can help businesses enhance productivity. These principles and rights, when adhered to fully, can also positively impact upon businesses' reputation in the various countries where their supply and service chains operate.

Increasingly, there is a need for effective support and concerted action at the local, national, regional and international level to respond to the social dimensions of globalisation. The process of globalisation, combined with the increasing speed of information, will ensure that we will become ever more integrated and dependant upon each others well-being.

The Declaration provides a unique framework by which the international community can realise sustainable and **equitable development** for all people.



Ensure children have the opportunity to learn and develop



Equal access to opportunities, treatment and choices to fully develop one's capacity and contribute to society