

Resolution No. 7

SRI LANKA - DECENT WORK AT THE CENTRE OF RECOVERY

The 22nd ITUC-Asia Pacific Regional General Council Meeting, Singapore, 13-14 October 2022

NOTES WITH CONCERN

Sri Lanka has been undergoing its worst economic crisis in default on its sovereign debt. Hyperinflation, in particular, among daily necessities for living, such as foods, fuel and medicines, with a sharp declining purchasing power of workers, has destroyed the livelihoods of people in Sri Lanka with millions of people having been pushed into poverty.

ATTRIBUTES

the current suffering of people in Sri Lanka is clearly too serious and persistent decent work deficits, further exacerbated by external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and significant negative spillovers of escalating geo-graphical tensions.

NOTES WITH URGENCY

the Sri Lankan government should discuss its economic reform for a human-centred recovery with social partners and other stakeholders to set a high ambition for decent work under a new social contract to ensure decent jobs, rights, social protection, inclusion and equality. Social dialogue is the most effective institution for problem-solving towards sustainable and inclusive development for all;

FURTHER REALISES

Improving and upgrading working conditions and industries with necessary economic and social infrastructures should have a priority in the reform plan to guarantee the long-term sustainability and resilience of the Sri Lankan economy with the middle-income group being built. This path is also vital in broadening the tax base with progressive taxation not only to stabilise its economy but also to implement social protection for all;

STRONGLY DEMANDS

the Sri Lankan government to have a series of genuine and constructive dialogues with its social partners, if possible, together with international and regional financial institutions, to take an adequate and immediate relief action, as well as to ensure the structural reform for the decent work centred recovery towards sustainable, inclusive and resilient Sri Lanka;

URGES

international and regional financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF and the ADB, to ramp up their activities without delay to relieve millions of people in poverty and hunger. Furthermore, the ADB and the World Bank, working together with the Sri Lankan

government, should introduce necessary social safety nets for workers, in particular, in under-invested and vulnerable industries;

CALLS ON

the IMF to make its bail-out and restructuring plan promote the decent work-centred recovery towards the long-term stability and prosperity of Sri Lanka for all. The immediate replenishment of the foreign reserve is necessary. In addition, corrupt systems should be tackled with more sound public policy capacity building being pursued. However, the ITUC-AP strongly opposes any conditionality to dismantle essential public services, privatise public properties, to make the livelihoods of workers and their family members suffering more, such as by lowering social expenditure and suppressing wages including the national minimum wage under the pretext of fiscal consolidation.

URGES STRONGLY

public as well as private creditors of Sri Lanka's sovereign debt to provide Sri Lanka with immediate and decisive debt relief and renegotiation for the country to emerge from the crisis and move towards a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Sri Lanka. Any additional loan is not an option; and

CALLS

the ITUC-Asia Pacific affiliates stand in solidarity with all workers of Sri Lanka in their struggles for the livelihoods of all in the economic crisis by upholding justice, equality and rights.