

Forum:	Special Conference on Redefining Modern Solidarity (SPECON)
Issue:	Safeguarding Worker Rights and improving working conditions
Student Officer:	Ismael Minuesa
Position:	Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Ismael Minuesa, and I will be serving as the Deputy President of the Special Conference on Redefining Modern Solidarity (SPECON). It is my utmost honor to participate in the 11th session of PSMUN conference, which is hosting chairs and delegates from different countries all around the world.

This guide will extensively discuss the topic of “Safeguarding Worker Rights and improving working conditions.” To have a better understand of the topic, it is necessary to clarify the aims of this committee. Throughout the course of this conference, the Special Conference on Redefining Modern Solidarity (SPECON) will aim towards redefining the concept of modern solidarity and how modern solidarity can be explored through different topics. The issue of worker rights has become even more relevant with the COVID-19 pandemic, which transformed the working conditions all around the globe; therefore, it is crucial to discuss this topic. Since labor investigations on working conditions have been harder to make with the arrival of the pandemic, this issue has not received the attention that it should have received.

Before further introducing the topic, I would like to remind you that this study guide is for introductory purposes only and should not be used as your only source of information. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the topic, do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address: ismaelminuesa@studentasvalencia.org

I am eagerly looking forward to meeting you.

Kind regards,

Ismael Minuesa

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Labor conditions play a crucial role in redefining modern solidarity as they determine the physical and economic well-being of employees, such as reducing the chances of workplace injuries along with resulting financial liabilities. Labor conditions are at the center of paid work and employment relationships. Generally speaking, working situations include a vast variety of subjects and issues, from working time (hours of work, rest periods, and schedules) to remuneration, in addition to the bodily situations and intellectual needs that exist within the workplace. To introduce the topic at hand, workers' rights are currently being protected through the creation and reformation of legislations at a national and international level, which seek to improve working conditions mainly in first and second world countries. After mentioning and redefining the fundamental principles and rights at working places, it is important to highlight two of the most significant worker's rights: the freedom of association and collective bargaining. These are key towards recognizing the fundamental labor rights that are yet not granted in certain areas around the globe. For instance, the lack of regulations in many third world countries has caused the implementation of a "work black market", where criminals are able to use humans for child and forced labor, so their purposes are committed. As a response to any possible threats to workers' rights, governments and organizations have a series of legislations, such as the "EU employment laws", which draw up programs for employment and reports on the implementation of these strategies that are based on employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities.

As a matter of fact, nowadays, with the arrival of the pandemic, some of the issues that were affecting many workers have been aggravated, due to the lack of regulation from governments. Not only workers, but large and small-scale companies have been subjected to a devastating sanitary, economic and social crisis that has hugely impacted the labor market, causing a huge economic recession that has brought severe consequences for workers. In fact, governmental organizations have had issues monitoring the transparency companies had in communicating their personnel's conditions, due to the increasing influence of online platforms. Furthermore, the rise of teleworking has augmented the challenges faced by employees and employers, due to long working hours, isolation, and lack of inadequate equipment (not all people having access to technology). Finally, the legal, social, political and any other challenges related to addressing the issue are also key, because workers' rights are under a greater serious threat than ever due to the COVID-19 crisis, since this pandemic is out of control in many places where measures related to labor conditions are necessary.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Workers' rights

The rights that an employee has to be treated in a fair, morally acceptable, or legal way. Both legal and human rights relating to labor relations between workers and employers. These rights are codified in national and international labor and employment law. In general, these rights influence working conditions in relations of employment. One of the most prominent is the right to freedom of association, otherwise known as the right, to organize. Workers organized in trade unions exercise the right to collective bargaining to improve working conditions.¹

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was formed in 1919 as part of the League of Nations to protect worker's rights. The ILO later became incorporated into the United Nations. The UN itself backed workers' rights by incorporating several into two articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is the basis of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²

International Labor Standards

Legal instruments drawn up by the ILO's constituents (governments, employers and workers) and setting out basic principles and rights at work. They are either Conventions (or Protocols), which are legally binding international treaties that may be ratified by Member States, or Recommendations, which serve as non-binding guidelines. Series of legislations that help to define working conditions in all labor sectors.³

Goal 8 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 8 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is “Decent Work and Economic Growth,” aimed at “promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The ILO has highlighted how decent work is central to sustainable development, therefore, all Member States seek to accomplish this issue with their labor policies.⁴

¹ “Employee Rights.” *Significado De EMPLOYEE RIGHTS En El Diccionario Cambridge Inglés*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/amp/ingles/employee-rights>.

² “What Are Workers' Rights?” *United States Department of Labor*, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/our-work/workers-rights>.

³ “Conventions and Recommendations.” *Conventions and Recommendations*, ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁴ “Conventions and Recommendations.” *Conventions and Recommendations*, ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>.

Solidarity

Support by one person or group of people for another because they share feelings, opinions, aims, etc.... ⁵

Child labor

Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Child labor is currently a major issue in the labor market, especially in the Least Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), where the lack of regulations, labor unions or government intervention allows these practices to take place. ⁶

Forced labor

Work that is performed involuntarily and under the menace of any penalty. It refers to situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as manipulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities. Forced labor is currently a major issue in any working environment, especially in those located in LEDCs, since the lack of regulations, government intervention and access to labor unions has increased this issue. ⁷

Labor union or trade union

Organization formed by workers in a particular trade, industry, or company for the purpose of improving pay, benefits, and working conditions. Officially known as a “labor organization,” and also called a “trade union” or a “workers union,” a labor union selects representatives to negotiate with employers in a process known as collective bargaining. When successful, the bargaining results in an agreement that stipulates working conditions for a period of time. Trade unions are the “voice” of workers and are a major part of the workers’ rights, therefore, it is crucial for delegates to come up with new measures relating to labor unions, such as facilitating the creation of new ones in LEDCs or nations where the right of association is not fully accepted. ⁸

⁵ “Solidarity Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes: Oxford Advanced American Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com.” *Solidarity Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced American Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com*, Oxford Dictionary, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/solidarity.

⁶ *What Is Child Labour (IPEC)*, ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁷ “What Is Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking).” *What Is Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking)*, ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm>.

⁸ Team, The Investopedia. “Labor Union.” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 30 Dec. 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/labor-union.asp>.

European labor laws

Measures taken by the European governments to apply their multiannual programs over the previous twelve months. These programs assess, in certain cases, the impact of those measures on employment, and announce major changes or new initiatives in this field. The European Employment Strategy is built around priority themes under the four pillars of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities; and serves as an example to follow by nations that both do and do not pertain to the European Union.⁹

Wage regulation

Government attempts to regulate wages that citizens receive. The National Minimum Wage Regulations set the minimum amount of pay a worker is entitled to per hour, therefore it is a legal requirement that has always been a controversial topic. Since many people argue that the minimum wage should be increased or decreased, governments have trouble in determining the quantity that people should be paid monthly.¹⁰

Collective bargaining

The negotiation of employment terms between an employer and a group of workers. Employees are normally represented by a labor union during collective bargaining. The terms negotiated during collective bargaining can include working conditions, salaries and compensation, working hours, benefits, etc... The goal is to come up together with a collective bargaining agreement through a written contract. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), collective bargaining is a fundamental right for all employees, as it is the key towards defining the working conditions that an employee is wishing to accomplish in exchange for their salary.¹¹

Teleworking

Working from home or remotely using modern technology and telecommunications to remain in touch with your employer or business.¹²

⁹ "Rights at Work." *Rights at Work - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission*, European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=82&langId=en>.

¹⁰ "National Wage Regulations - Legislation - Higher Business Management Revision - BBC Bitesize." *BBC News*, BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdnjhbkc/revision/4>.

¹¹ Kenton, Will. "What Is Collective Bargaining?" *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 7 Oct. 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/collective-bargaining.asp>.

¹² "What Is Teleworking? Definition and Meaning." *Market Business News*, Market Business News, 7 May 2021, <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/teleworking-definition-meaning/>.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Origins of Workers Rights

The origins of the labor lay within the youth of America, once a free wage-labor market emerged in the artificer trades late in the colonial period. In 1768, journeymen tailors protested a wage reduction that was trying to be established. In 1794, the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers was formed in Philadelphia, marking the start of sustained union organization among workers.

From that point on, native craft unions proliferated in the cities, businesses listed “prices” for specific kinds of work, defensive trades diluted, and low-cost labor led to a shorter workday within the face of the Industrial Revolution. Consequently, a job-conscious orientation and the key structural parts characterizing American trade unionism emerged. First, with the formation of the Mechanics’ Union of Trade Associations in Philadelphia in 1827, central labor bodies began uniting craft unions at intervals one city, and then, with the creation of the International Trade Union in 1852, National Unions began transferal along native unions of a similar trade from across the US and Canada. Though the manufacturing plant system was coming up throughout these years, industrial employees contend very little half within the early union development. In the nineteenth century, unionism was barely a small movement of skillful workers.

The first labor movement was, however, impressed by quite the immediate job interest of its craft members. It harbored a conception of the simple society, etymologizing from the Ricardian labor theory and from the Republican ideals of the Industrial Revolution that fostered social equality, celebrated “honest labor, and relied on an independent, virtuous citizenship, while the remodeling economic changes of the business capitalist economy ran counter to labor’s vision.” The result, as early labor leaders saw it, was to lift up “two distinct classes, the made and therefore the poor.” Starting with the workingmen’s parties of the 1830s, the advocates of labor rights made a series of reforms that appeared in the nineteenth century. These were the National Labor Union, launched in 1866, and the Knights of Labor, which reached its highest point within the mid-1880s.

On the other hand, these reform movements appeared at odds with trade unionism, aiming at the cooperative commonwealth instead of a better wage, appealing loosely to all or any “producers” rather than strictly to wageworkers, and eschewing the union reliance on the strike and boycott. However, contemporaries agreed on something: unionism cared for the employees’ immediate needs, while labor reform for their higher hopes. The two were commanded to be strands of one movement, nonmoving during a common working-class body and to some extent sharing a standard leadership. Equally important were strands that had to be “unbroken,” be operationally separate and functionally distinct.

Throughout the 1880s, that division fatally eroded. Despite its labor reform rhetoric, the Knights of Labor attracted giant numbers of workers hoping to boost their

immediate conditions. Because the Knights carried on strikes and arranged on industrial lines, the vulnerable national unions demanded that the cluster confine itself to its professed labor reform purposes. Once it refused, they joined in December 1886 to create the Yank Federation of Labor (AFL). The new federation marked an opening with the past, for it denied labor reform any more role within the struggles of Yankee workers. In part, the assertion of trade union ascendancy stemmed from a plain reality. As economic systems matured, labor reform lost its meaning—hence the confusion and supreme failure of the Knights of Labor, for example.¹³

Modern history of workers' rights

Even though worker rights and trade unions were already formed before the 20th century, one of the most important events regarding the implementation of better labor conditions in each of the working sectors occurred during this century. This is referencing the creation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), formed in 1919 as part of the League of Nations to protect worker's rights. After WWII, the ILO was incorporated in the United Nations, with the same objective it had when being part of the League of Nations. Along with the incorporation of the ILO in the UN, the Member States wrote down the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that collected the rights and freedoms of all human beings. Since this declaration referenced workers' rights, it was a huge advance towards achieving more rights for workers all around the world. For instance, articles 23 and 24 in the UDHR included some of the basis for actual workers' rights, such as "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his/her interests." During the other half of the century and the beginning of the 21st century, the ILO and several other groups, such as trade unions or the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) were constantly redefining international labor standards to create legal rights for workers across the world, especially with the pandemic outbreak, which will be referenced later on this paper. In fact, if we are able to focus on the ILRF, workers' rights during the second half of the 20th century were heavily influenced by this organization's mission, since the ILRF seemed to "develop practical and effective tools to assist workers in winning enforcements that are able to protect their basic rights, influencing governments and companies to change working conditions."

¹³ History.com Editors. "Labor Movement." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 29 Oct. 2009, <https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/labor>.

ISSUES ARISING IN REGARD TO LABOR RIGHTS

Hour limitation

Many work development campaigns advocate for restricting hours in the workplace. The nineteenth century work developments lobbied for an eight-hour day. Specialist promotion bunches have likewise looked to restrict work hours, making a functioning seven day stretch of 40 hours or less norm in numerous nations. A 35-hour week's worth of work was set up in France in 2000, albeit this standard has been extensively debilitated from that point forward. Laborers might concur with bosses to work for longer, however the additional hours are payable extra time. In the European Union the functioning week is restricted to a limit of 48 hours including additional time.

Child labor

Work freedoms advocates have additionally attempted to battle child labor. They see youngster work as shady, and regularly monetarily harming. Kid work adversaries contend that kids involved in the labor industry are denied schooling. In 1948 and afterward again in 1989, the United Nations announced that youngsters reserve an option to social insurance.

It is difficult for kids to battle for their rights, particularly at the work environment. People of young age are regularly being under-treated, since employers take advantage of their ability to work overtime and- many times- fear to speak up. An illustration of an industry wherein cases of youngster work prompting serious injury or demise that have been noted are cobalt mining in the DRC just as copper mining in Zambia, where kids were accounted for to be taking an interest in all types of mining to the detriment of their schooling. There is a developing worry that the rising interest for assets that include youngster work for enterprises, for example, the creation of electric vehicle batteries, will just expand work privileges infringement. In India and Pakistan, kids work extended periods of time in different enterprises due to the obligation their folks brought about. Helpless families in some cases depend on their children's pay to pay bills. In Egypt, around 1.5 million children under 14 years of age are working despite the fact that there are youngster protective work laws.¹⁴

Workplace conditions

The latest advancements in the field of sustainability and achieving better workplace conditions incorporate a series of measures, such as advancing specialists' privileges and safe working conditions, anticipation of illegal exploitation, and disposal of illicit youngster work from the economically obtained items and administrations. Associations like the U.S. Division of Labor and Department of State have delivered investigations on items that have been distinguished as utilizing youngster work and businesses utilizing or supported by illegal exploitation. Work freedoms are

¹⁴ “What Is Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking).” *What Is Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking)*, ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm>.

characterized universally by sources like the Norwegian Agency for Public Management and Government and the International Finance Corporation execution principles.

Minimum wage

The minimum wage permitted by law influences laborers in most low-paid fields of business and has ordinarily been decided against the basis of decreasing destitution. The lowest pay permitted by law gets less help from financial specialists than from the overall population. In spite of many years of involvement and monetary examination, banter about the expenses and advantages of least wages proceed with today.

Migrant workers

Different gatherings have incredible philosophical, political, monetary, and passionate interests in issues encompassing the lowest pay permitted by law. For instance, offices that regulate the laws have a personal stake in showing that "their" laws don't create unemployment, as do workers' organizations whose individuals' funds are secured by the lowest pay permitted by law. On the other hand, low-wage businesses, for example, finance the Employment Policies Institute, which has delivered various examinations contradicting the lowest pay permitted by law.

Legitimate traveler laborers are sometimes mishandled. For example, many individuals have confronted various asserted maltreatments in the United Arab Emirates (counting Dubai). Basic liberties have some issues including "delinquency of wages, expanded working hours without extra time remuneration, perilous workplaces bringing about death and injury, terrible day to day environments in labor camps, and keeping of identifications and travel reports by bosses. Regardless of laws against the training, bosses take transient specialists' travel papers. Without their visas, laborers can't switch occupations or get back. These specialists have little response for work manhandles, however conditions have been improving. UAE's labor and social governance assistance minister Ali Abdullah al-Kaabi has embraced various changes to assist with the development of working conditions.

The United Arab Emirates was denounced in a report given in April 2021 by the Democracy Center for Transparency getting down on the country for its maltreatment and segregation of outsiders and ostracizes against Emirati residents. As indicated by DCT, outsiders and ostracizes in the UAE are frequently exposed to discrimination due to sexual orientation and pay separation, racialization, dealing, and constrained work. According to the exploration led by the DCT, these issues stay unreported because of the danger and terrorizing from their bosses, accusing them of employment cutback or manufactured criminal allegations. The segregation and misuse have supposedly proceeded regardless of the facilitating of the Kafala framework in the Emirate.

Undocumented workers

The National Labor Relations Act perceives undocumented workers as representatives. Notwithstanding, the high legal dispute Hoffman Plastic Compounds,

Inc. v. NLRB set up that backpay couldn't be granted to unlawfully terminated undocumented representatives because of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In this court choice, it was additionally expressed that the U.S. would uphold FLSA and MSPA, regardless of whether or not somebody is recorded. Undocumented laborers additionally still have lawful assurance against segregation dependent on public beginning. The choice of the Hoffman high legal dispute essentially has impacted undocumented workers by keeping them from getting backpay as well as reestablishment.

While no undocumented individual is in fact ready to work in the United States lawfully, undocumented specialists make up 5% of the labor force.¹⁵ In the U.S., individuals who were brought into the world outside of the nation will quite often work in more dangerous positions and have a higher shot at experiencing demise at work. The low compensation areas, which numerous undocumented individuals work in, have the most elevated paces of pay and hour infringement. Gauges guarantee that 31% of undocumented individuals work in assistance occupations. Café work specifically has a 12% pace of undocumented specialists.¹⁶

Undocumented individuals can and have joined worker's guilds and are even credited by a 2008 paper for "reviving" the work development. Since the NLRA secures undocumented laborers, it ensures their entitlement to arrange. The NLRA rejects laborers that are horticultural, homegrown, self-employed entities, administrative, or connected with their employers. The right to oppose work mishandles was ensured further by a movement change bill in 2013 with the POWER act, which planned to secure representatives who took a stand in opposition to work rehearses from confronting confinement or extradition.¹⁷

Nonetheless, trade guilds are not really inviting outsider specialists. There have also been conflicts under the surface, within associations. Being a member of the association doesn't really address every one of the necessities of foreigner specialists, and in this way, winning power inside the association is the initial step for settler laborers to address their requirements.

Settler laborers regularly activate past associations, by battling in their networks on multifaceted issues of movement, segregation, and police unfortunate behavior.

¹⁵ DeSilver, D. (2020, May 30). No U.S. industry employs mostly immigrant workers. Pew Research Center. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/16/immigrants-dont-make-up-a-majority-of-workers-in-any-u-s-industry/>.

¹⁶ Montecinos, C. (n.d.). Release: TPS is critical to tackling the root causes of ... Press Release. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://cissar.com/2022/01/18/release-tps-is-critical-to-tackling-the-root-causes-of-migration-in-the-americas-argues-new-cap-issue-brief/>

¹⁷ Guide on Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/guide_art_6_criminal_eng.pdf.

THE EFFECT OF GLOBALIZATION ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

Changing globalization will require participation within the country as well as at the worldwide level. It proposes political specialists to "reestablish their thoughtfulness regarding worldwide fortitude".

Advocates for Labor Privileges have been worried about what globalization can mean for work freedoms in various nations. A few worldwide offices and worldwide partnerships see solid implementation will restrict a country's financial development. As organizations re-appropriate their work to laborers from lower-wage nations, state run administrations will loosen up their guidelines in organizations. Thus, Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) execute a lower work rights standard to rival different nations.

By having numerous nations consent to arrangements and deals, work freedoms can be ensured across the globe. Nonetheless, a few nations have signed some resolutions despite the fact that they are not intending to maintain labor rights. In any case, some contend that globalization and future resolutions can further develop the implementation of worker's rights.

THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

Digitalisation and advanced instruments have brought numerous valuable open doors, both in our own lives and work. Throughout the last two years, people have had the option of working online, having more adaptable working time, increasing their efficiency and decreasing crucial time spent on transportation.

During the pandemic, advanced instruments for work purposes have saved incalculable lives and organizations and aided huge numbers of laborers telecommuting. One out of three laborers began telecommuting over the most recent two years. Many organizations, for example, Twitter, Facebook and Spotify have openly reported a drawn-out shift to super durable telecommuting while at the same time asserting that office centrality is important for the past; reviews show that 80% of European bosses require or are thinking about more representatives to work remotely once the pandemic is finished.¹⁸

The eventual fate of work is still uncertain, and post-pandemic more crossover working examples are probably going to arise, with higher levels of remote working than before the COVID-19 emergency. The pandemic has in a general sense changed the manner in which we work and sped up another computerized pattern that will challenge the current working models and examples, including the crucial freedoms of laborers.

For that reason, we should focus on any potential dangers, disadvantages and destructive incidental effects, like escalated work and broadened working hours. This

¹⁸ "What Is Teleworking? Definition and Meaning." *Market Business News*, Market Business News, 7 May 2021, <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/teleworking-definition-meaning/>.

new "advanced stoutness" has made the new peculiarities of being "over-associated" and "consistently on culture". Inconvenient impacts should be visible on laborers' crucial privileges, reasonable working conditions, reasonable compensation, working time and balance between serious and fun activities, wellbeing and security at work, and sex uniformity.

One major issue is that specialists are called to react to work messages, calls and messages long after their day or week has finished. The steady tension on laborers to be accessible whenever can frequently be additionally exasperated, assuming the hierarchical culture at work boosts representatives to acknowledge weighty responsibilities and put in extra time, regularly neglected. This influences the balance between serious and fun activities, prompting clashes among work and home life, lacking rest and medical issues like business related pressure and rest issues.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

Apart from the new series of changes that arrived with the pandemic, another problem has appeared with the new digital technologies is employee monitoring and surveillance.

The fact that technology is present in a majority of workplaces has made this issue become quite controversial with the implementation of video cameras to monitor the employees' and businesses' activity. If businesses and organizations adhere to the legislations and measures- that have already been introduced in this study guide- then they can legally monitor their workers given that these recordings are work related and all employees are aware of being monitored. There is, however, a fine line between monitoring employees in hopes of advancing productivity and violating both their human and labor rights. Many workers believe that their rights are being infringed with these modern technologies and that they need the approval of a UN legislation.

To provide some efficient solutions, it is essential that there is a worldwide definition of surveillance and the different types of surveillance, so as to be able to differentiate the crucial limits of respecting the workers' rights.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Austria

The minimum wage depends on the working sector, therefore it is specified and agreed after collective bargaining between employers and employees. Some measures in relation to the inclusion of disabled workers and the high amount of paid holidays have made Austria have some of the best employment laws.

Belgium

Belgium has implemented many legislations that aid to protect its workers. For instance, there is no set minimum wage, so different sectors decide what the

minimum wage should be per worker and compared to other European countries, Belgium has the highest wages.

Denmark

There is no cross-sector minimum wage, thus, the wages and salaries of workers are decided via collective agreements, to improve the workers' conditions. Laws in Denmark do not allow any kind of discrimination in terms of hiring specific workers or terminating contracts because workers are a part of trade unions, therefore this aspect is much more regulated.

Finland

Finland is a country known for its employee-friendly employment laws, such as the number of parental leave days offered to workers, 164 days. Finland also allows freedom for workers to create and join trade unions by promoting a healthy environment at work. Even though there is no minimum wage system, workers are encouraged to come up with fair collective agreements with each of the sectors, like it is done in Denmark.

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The only tripartite U.N. agency. Since 1919, "the ILO brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 Member States, to set labor standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. ILO is the unique tripartite structure of the UN that gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of the social partners are closely reflected in labor standards and in shaping policies and programmes."

United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) and UNGP to Gender Guidance

United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011 as amended from time to time. World's first comprehensive guidance for companies to report on how they respect human rights.

Special branch of the UNGP focused on gender inequality. Moreover, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which were unanimously endorsed by the Human Rights Council in June 2011. They are the global authoritative standards to "prevent, mitigate and remediate business-related adverse human rights impacts."¹⁹

Agenda 2030 and SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. "The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda

¹⁹ "UNGP Definition." *Law Insider*, Law Insider, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/ungp>.

for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals.” These goals include improving working conditions worldwide.²⁰

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF)

Since 1986, the ILRF has been seeking solutions to the issues of worker rights and labor standards around the world. The ILRF has monitored through these years the enforcement of the labor laws that have been put into practice by governments. In addition, it has developed other means to protect workers’ rights by participating with NGOs all around the world²¹. Basically, the ILRF is a nonprofit organization that works on labor rights. Tries to achieve dignity and justice for workers around the world. Fights for workers' rights and tries to defend workers around the world. This organization will be further explained in the next sections of the paper.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of Event	Description of event
August 3, 1981	President Reagan fires striking air traffic controllers
May 22, 1988	US Congress passes the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act
July 26, 1990	Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act
February 5, 1993	Clinton signs the Family and Medical Leave Act
October 2, 1997	European Employment Strategy (EES)
November 1, 2006	Creation of the International Trade Union Confederation
January 29, 2009	Obama signs the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
November 28, 2009	The Fair Work Act 2009 (FW Act) and the Fair Work Regulations 2009
July 16, 2014	UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA)
January 1, 2015	Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 8)
April 26, 2017	Brazilian legislators substantially reformed the 1943 Consolidation of Labor Laws with the passing of Law No. 13,467/2017.
August 30, 2018	Rwanda’s New Labor Code 2018
June, 2019	International Labor Conference adopts a new Convention and Recommendation on workers’ rights
January 21, 2021	Resolution on the Right to Disconnect
December, 2021	European Union Regulation of Labor Rights

²⁰ “The Sustainable Development Agenda - United Nations Sustainable Development.” *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>.

²¹ “History.” *Global Labor Justice-International Labor Rights Forum*, Labor Rights, 29 Oct. 2018, <https://laborrights.org/about/history>.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

European Employment Strategy

The European Employment Strategy is built around priority themes under the four pillars of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities, and serves as an example to follow by nations that both do and do not pertain to the European Union. It has been constantly redefined since its application in 1997 in the Treaty of Amsterdam and follows the integrated strategy for employment launched at the Essen European Council in December 1994.²²

Fair Work Act 2009

Main legislation governing the employee/employer relationship in Australia. Provides a safety net of minimum entitlements, enable flexible working arrangements and fairness at work and prevent discrimination against employees. The Fair Work Act is one of the key Commonwealth statutes governing the employment of all workers. It provides for terms and conditions of employment and sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees, employers and employee organisations in relation to that employment. It regulates “national system” employers and employees. Employment that is not covered under the national industrial relations system remains regulated by the relevant state industrial relations systems. However, some entitlements under the Fair Work Act extend to non-national system employees.²³

UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA)

Established three criminal offences: “Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, human trafficking and committing any offence with the intent to commit human trafficking”. The UK Modern Slavery Act provides company employees and managers with direct responsibility for supply chain management, training on human trafficking and slavery, particularly with respect to mitigating risks within the supply chains of products.²⁴

Brazilian Labor Reform

In 2017, Brazilian legislators substantially reformed the 1943 Consolidation of Labor Laws with the passing of Law No. 13,467/2017. It was a significant change in the country's Consolidation of Labor Laws. According to the government, the goal of the

²² European Employment Strategy. European employment strategy - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=101&langId=en>.

²³ Fair work act 2009. Fair Work Act 2009. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00323>.

²⁴ Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament. (n.d.). Modern slavery act 2015. Legislation.gov.uk. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>.

reform was to combat unemployment and the economic crisis the country was experiencing at that time.²⁵

Rwanda's New Labor Code

In August/September 2018, Rwanda's New Labor Code (law n°66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labor in Rwanda) was approved, enacting new changes in working conditions. The fundamental changes of the new Labor Law remember arrangements for business relations dependent on work contracts between a representative and a business in the private area, arrangements overseeing legally binding staff in the Public Sector. In this new law, the minimum age for admission to business stays at sixteen with the exemption where "a kid matured somewhere in the range of thirteen and fifteen years is permitted to perform just light works with regards to apprenticeship which was not in the revoked law." This New Labor Code gives additional endorsements to people or private organizations utilizing youngsters in unsafe works.²⁶

European Union regulation of labor rights

Series of measures established by the EU that indicate that every EU worker must live in a nation where a certain minimum of rights are respected. These rights include providing health and safety at work, equal opportunities for women and men, protection against discrimination and labor laws. It is being constantly redefined.

Resolution on the Right to Disconnect

In response to teleworking, on 21 January 2021, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the Right to disconnect. In the Resolution, the Parliament called on the European Commission to adopt a common legislation on the Right to Disconnect (R2D) and a separate legal framework for teleworking due to the pandemic. The Parliament considers this right to be fundamental, and which must form an integral part of new working patterns in the digital age.²⁷

The R2D can be described as "the right of citizens to switch off their digital devices after work without facing negative consequences for not responding to communications from bosses, colleagues or clients. And at the same time, employers should also not require or pressure workers to be directly or indirectly available outside their working time."

Goal 8 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 8 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is "Decent Work and Economic Growth," aimed at "promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". The ILO has highlighted how

²⁵ Brazilian labor reform. Insights | Jones Day. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.jonesday.com/en/insights/2017/12/brazilian-labor-reform-reshaping-the-employeremployee-relationship>.

²⁶ A New Labour Law has been published. MIFOTRA. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/news-detail/a-new-labour-law-has-been-published>.

²⁷ EU parliament resolution on the right to disconnect. IOE. (1970, February 1). Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://ioewec.newsletter.ioe-emp.org/industrial-relations-and-labour-law-february-2021/news/article/eu-parliament-resolution-on-the-right-to-disconnect>.

decent work is central to sustainable development, therefore, all Member States seek to accomplish this issue with their labor policies. Generally speaking, this goal tries to achieve economic growth through the improvement of working conditions and rights throughout the world.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

To sum up, the chair encourages delegates to find possible solutions for this topic, as there are many ways this issue can be tackled and approached.

Previous documents and lack of transparency

It is more than suggested that all delegates research many sources that have been provided in this report, such as the previous UN resolutions their countries have participated in, the ILRF annual reports on working conditions around the world, and all the UN bodies or NGOs that are collaborating in solving some of the issues that are present in the labor market. Some of these include the lack of transparency small and large businesses may have relating to their workers' conditions, so the inclusion of organizations and trade unions more dedicated towards investigating these failures of communication in firms will be an interesting topic to explore.

COVID-19 Safe Spaces

Due to the fact that this conference consists in redefining modern solidarity, delegates must also be able to demonstrate how working conditions have evolved through the pandemic, therefore, the resolutions should give efficient solutions that are adequate to the current circumstances, such as investigating the effect the pandemic had on large scale companies or on any of the labor sectors. For instance, coming up with solutions that are able to adapt to the current sanitary situation, such as contributing to creating COVID-19 safe workspaces or resuming all the measures or resolutions that have been paralyzed due to the pandemic, which were seeking to advance worker rights around the world through the creation of new UN funded organizations.

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