

# **NATIONAL CONVENTION OF WORKERS**

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi**

## **Draft Declaration**

The Central Trade Unions, independent federations and associations are holding the National Convention of Workers today in continuation of the chain of their consistent agitation programmes. They had carried forward successfully the decisions adopted in the last National Convention of Workers on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at Talkatora Stadium. The successful holding of three day mahapadav on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2017 after about more than three months extensive countrywide campaign was a land mark in the ongoing struggle to fight back the onslaught of the government against working people and their trade unions, against hard won labour rights, anti-labour and pro-employer codifications and violations of existing labour laws and violation of ILO Conventions. We had demanded concrete measures for curbing rising prices of essential commodities, creation of new Decent jobs, minimum wages Rs.18000/- p.m. and minimum Rs.6000/- p.m. pension to all, stoppage of all moves to sell PSU shares and outright privatization through various routes like outsourcing, PPP etc., universal social security coverage to all among other demands. This Mahapadav was followed by the Nationwide strike by Scheme Workers on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and then Satyagraha and protests in almost all the states on varying dates, beginning from 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018.

The Central Government not only refused to respond to the just and genuine demands of the organized agitation of the working class, but has been increasing its aggression against the rights of workers, employees and trade unions. The Bipartism and tripartism is being undermined. The Govt. is dragging its feet on wage negotiations of public sector in Bipartite settlements and 7<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission anomalies of Central Government employees. Four Sub Committees were formed by the Government to address several issues raised by Central Government employees (NCJCA) such as scraping of New Pension scheme, review the Minimum Wage and fitment formula, restoration of allowances and allowing option No.1 as one of the Pension Fitment Formula. But nothing has been done.

The Central Government Employees' Organizations, including the defence and railways, have been planning united action against the betrayal by the Government and asserting their genuine demands including scrapping of the New Pension Scheme. This National Convention extends full support to their struggles and upholds all their demands.

The last Indian Labour Conference was held in July 2015 and since then no ILC has been held, rather the circulated dates for ILC were cancelled. There has been no dialogue by the Government or its Group of Ministers with the trade unions.

The National Convention of Workers being held today, the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2018, in Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi jointly called by the ten Central Trade Unions, in association with all independent National Federations of Workers and Employees, of both Industrial and Service sectors viz., Banks, Insurance, Central Government and State Government employees, Defence Production employees etc., expresses serious concern over the deteriorating situation in the national economy due to the pro- corporate, anti-national and anti-people policies pursued by the Central Government, grievously impacting the livelihood of the working people across the country.

This National Convention unanimously condemns in strongest terms the conspiratorial and authoritarian attack of the present Government to deprive the biggest Central Trade Union in the country, the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) from all representations in the tripartite and bipartite fora and committees, including the international forum. This is nothing but a severe and heinous onslaught on the rights of the entire trade union movement. It will be unitedly fought back and this National Convention pledges for that.

The Convention notes with utter dismay that the Government has been continuing to arrogantly ignore the 12 point Charter of Demands on minimum wage, universal social security, workers' status and including pay and facilities for the scheme workers, against privatization of public and government sector including financial sectors and mass scale contractorisation, ratification of ILO Convention 87, 98 etc. being jointly pursued by the entire trade union movement of the country. The ILO Convention 177 on Home Work and 189 on Domestic Work are also yet not ratified. Despite numerous nationwide joint strike actions, the most prominent being those of 2nd September 2015 and 2nd September 2016, participated by crores of workers against the policies of the Governments, the ruling regime at the centre has been increasing its onslaught on the rights and livelihood of the working people of the country. Both the organized as well as unorganized sectors are victims alike.

Unemployment situation is getting aggravated with employment generation practically turned negative even in the most labour intensive sectors. The phenomenon of closure and shut-down of industries and the



forecast of huge job-loss in the IT sector is adding fuel to the fire. Price-rise of petroleum products, essential commodities including public transport, electricity, medicines etc is mounting pressure on daily life of the people in general, leading to widening as well as deepening of impoverishment. The implementation of GST has further compounded the hardships. Even essential and lifesaving medicines have been subjected to hefty GST. Drastic cut in Government expenditure in social sector and various welfare schemes has made the condition of workers, particularly those in unorganized sector more precarious. For the establishment of modern labour slavery system, it has introduced Fixed Term Employment through backdoor, has permitted putting children below 14 years age to work in a family establishment, has brought in pro-employer changes in Apprenticeship Act.

The situation due to steep price-rise in petrol and diesel with cascading effect on increase in prices of all daily life utility items and specially the food items is resulting in torturous impact on common masses. The after effects of demonetisation and faulty GST continue to adversely impacting the deep crises set in the fast paced neo-liberal economic policies of the Government. Lack of job opportunities on one hand and continued job losses, retrenchments, illegal closures on the other hand, are imposing miserable conditions on the ordinary families for their food, education of children, medical care of the sick and elderly. No new jobs are being created since the last five years or so despite heavy increase in work load in general including in the Government and Public Sector Undertakings. On the contrary, 3% compulsory annual surrender of regular posts in Government establishments is continuing. In this Government regime recruitment exam scams like SSB and other competitive exams have rubbed salt on the wounds of the educated unemployed. In private sector also, massive downsizing has become a regular phenomenon.

The estimates by independent surveys and those sponsored by employers' organizations revealed loss of 70 lakh jobs with closure of 2.34 lakh small factory units in the first few months of demonetization. The livelihood-loss of another 6 crore people in informal economy and about 17 lakh job losses in organized sector speaks about the grim ground reality. Faced with such pathetic records, the Government is busy in concoction of statistics with twists to make fraudulent claims on employment generation. Regular Employment Survey which was conducted by Labour Ministry has been discontinued.

The anti-labour authoritarian character of the Government is all the more evident in their refusal to implement even the consensus recommendations (in which the Government was also a party) of the successive Indian Labour Conferences (ILC) in respect of equal pay and benefits for equal work for the contract workers, formulation of minimum wage on the norms agreed by 15th ILC/Supreme Court Judgment and workers' status for the scheme workers viz., Anganwadi, Mid-Day-Meal, ASHA, MGNREGA and Domestic workers etc. Shockingly, the present Government is even refusing to implement the recent Judgments of the Supreme Court of the country on the most genuine issue of "equal wage and benefits for equal work" and on EPS, 1995 on contribution and calculation of pension on actual pay and dearness allowance.

In the vast construction sector, which has a huge unorganized workforce, the Government is not taking proper action on the ruling of the Supreme Court regarding construction workers cess fund and its utilization in the interest of the construction workers and benefits and ignoring the Central and State Trade Unions in the decision-making mechanism. Nearly 2.5% of the population of every city are the Street Vendors. "The Street Vending (Protection of Livelihood and regulating Street Vending) 2014 has been enacted to protect them, but it is being scuttled systematically. Bidi workers' employment and welfare is also in danger with imposition of GST, where as the Bidi barons refusing to acknowledge employer-employee relationship are in precarious condition.

Despite opposition of all the trade unions in the country irrespective of affiliations, the Government has been aggressively pushing through its programme of pro-employer and utterly anti-worker labour law reforms. Government has decided to amalgamate 44 hard earned Central Labour Laws to enact 4 anti-worker, pro-employer Labour Codes to facilitate the employers to hire and fire in the name of 'Ease of doing Business', 'Make in India', 'Start Up' etc. which is aimed at imposing the conditions of slavery on the working people. The latest onslaught is the move to evolve a 'Social Security Code' by dismantling and demolishing the existing statutory Social Security infrastructure under Employees Provident Fund Organization, Coal Mines Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance Corporation and many other welfare statutes, abolition of welfare related cess, and usurp the huge social security fund contributed to by the workers, amounting to more than Rs.24 lakh crore and make it available for speculation in share market under the most deceptive and fraudulent camouflage of 'universalisation of social security'. The proposed code on Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) is very dangerous move on the Occupational Safety and Health including the welfare of the factory and service sector working class.

The fixed term employment adopted as a Government policy through adoption of finance bill would be death knell for job security. The latest attack has come on the Trade Union Act 1926, where the Govt. intends to change the definition of the Central level and state level trade unions by invoking proposed amendments in Section 28A and 29. The malafide intention is also to have Government interference in the functioning of trade unions and



usurping rights to dictate on its whims in the internal matters of unions. It is all done to facilitate "hire and fire" under different names i.e. "Ease of Doing Business", "Start Up" etc. It seems like a move to derecognize the status of Central and State level pro-worker trade unions. The Labour Ministry, in the name of tri-partite consultation on Labour Law Amendments, is only putting up a show and to create a record of consultation, which the Central Trade Unions have consistently boycotted.

Privatization of all strategic PSUs, including Defence Production, Public Sector Banks and Insurance and also Railways, public road transport, oil, power, steel, coal etc through disinvestment, strategic sale, outsourcing in favour of private sector, promoting 100 per cent FDI in many vital and strategic sectors are increasing day by day. Moreover stripping all the cash rich PSUs of the investible cash reserves are added assaults. In fact Defence Sector privatization move is actually designed to destroy manufacturing capability and Research initiatives developed by the country over last six and half decades. The worst and most dubious is the game plan to outsource more than 50 per cent products including weapons and critical equipments, so long being produced by the Ordnance establishments. More than 250 items manufactured by Ordnance Factories have been notified as non-core. Orders are placed to private players for supply of some of these items. Government is determined to close down 5 Ordnance Factories manufacturing items used by our soldiers and Officers and it would render thousands of workers jobless, including 1600 female Tailors. Defence PSUs and Shipyards are also being subjected to discrimination in respect of work orders while private corporates are being patronized by the Government in defence procurement deals.

Complete privatization of the Railways, step by step, is going on. Operating private trains on the existing tracks built by Railways is being permitted. Moreover free access to railway yards, sheds and workshops for maintenance of private coaches, wagons and engines etc. is being offered to private operators. Already 23 railway stations, all in metro cities, have been shortlisted for privatisation. More than 600 Railway Stations along with land around them have been identified for development through private players in the name of "redevelopment of Railway Stations and land around them". It was part of Budget speech of the Finance Minister. Workers not only in Railways but in all Government and Public Sector Undertakings shall be worst victims of privatization in terms of job security, democratic trade union rights and protection of achievements in the areas of pay, perks, social security etc. Like Central Electricity Regulatory Authority (CERC), a Railway Development Authority (RDA) has been created. Given the sky-rocketing increase in electricity tariff by CERC, under RDA, railway fare and goods freight is poised to be hiked, hurting the common people and benefiting the private profiteers.

The exposures of various corruptions by the BJP led NDA Govt. in the centre shows the real face of the ruling clique and Rafael deal is biggest scam yet being unearthed step by step.

Public Sector Banks are under attack through various legislative and executive measures. The ultimate target of the Government is privatization and to extend undue favour to the same private corporate crooks, whose default of paying back the loan has put the banking sector in severe difficulties. Instead of addressing the problems of NPA and fixing the corporate defaulters, the Government is going ahead with its scheme of merger of banks, which in reality leads to closure of numerous branches, resulting in job-losses and narrowing of the outreach of the PSU Banks. NPAs have crossed Rs. 13 lakh crores. After Vijay Mallya, now Neerav Modi and Mehul Choksi have also dodged the Indian system and run away with the loot of Indian people's money. The Government brought FRDI Bill which was opposed tooth and nail by the unions forcing Government to withdraw it. But now the Government has come out with Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, which is aimed to facilitate the corporate defaulters to go away with major part of the debt default under the camouflage of so-called "resolution process of insolvency". Banks will get back hardly 30 per cent of their due loan amount. This is another big scam in the making which would further damage the crises ridden economy.

The retrenchment of contractual employees has been resorted to already in some banks and telecom sector. Insurance sector is also under such attack. Legislative measures to pave the way of privatization of our major ports are also in the advanced stage. CPSUs even including the core and strategic sectors like Energy, Petroleum, Telecom, Metal, Mining, Machine Building, Electronic and Digital, Road, Air and Water Transport, Port & Dock and more are under the privatization onslaught of the Government. In J & K, the entire land and building of the production unit of the sole PSU, ITI Ltd., is being taken over in the name of building an NSG Hub there. The Convention notes that workers of these industries are fighting sectoral battles unitedly. United struggles have been launched by the workers and employees of Government Services Sector including the Scheme Workers, Domestic workers, Migrant workers and unorganized sector workers. The Convention extends full support to these struggles. It also demands that one rank one pension sanctioned to some should be uniformly implemented for all Defence employees.

Attempts are being made by many state governments to dismantle Public sector road transport by issuing route-permits to private parties. The central government intends to get the new Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill 2017 hastily passed in the parliament which will allow wholesale privatisation of road transport on the one hand



and impose draconian measures on the road transport workers including those in private sector. The Rajasthan Road Transport Workers Union is spearheading militant struggle against even the precursor of this bill (Road Transport & Safety Bill, 2014) by forging alliance with other trade unions in the sector, since its inception in 2014. Even now, they are on indefinite strike since 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 against Rajasthan Transport Minister's volte-face on his assurances and attempts to privatise the depots. The Convention while taking note of the protest action by transport workers, salutes the Road Transport Workers of Maharashtra who demonstrated excellent communication skill, rock hard determination, commitment and unity while observing 4 days State wide general strike to press for their genuine demands despite use of all repressive measures by Government and also disruption by some black sheep., The Convention also notes the widely participated countrywide strike by Road Transport workers on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018 against the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill. The Convention condemns the state Governments, including the state governments of Haryana and Rajasthan and central Government's anti people and anti worker moves in the transport sector.

The National Convention of Workers extends full solidarity to the fighting farmers in various states as well as under the Joint National Forums of Peasants' Organizations, including the struggle of STs for implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006. It is the same set of pro-corporate, pro-landlord policies which have created a severe crisis in agriculture, biggest livelihood provider in the economy, leading to continuing increase in spate of suicides. The promised Minimum Support Prices, one and half times the cost of production, to farmers was not accomplished, rather further fraud was committed on the farming community with the kind of announcements made on MSP for their crops.

This National Convention of Workers records its strong denunciation against the communal and divisive machinations on the society being carried on with the active patronage of the Government machinery. The BJP Governments are using draconian UAPA, NSA as well as the agencies of CBI, NIA, IT to harass and suppress any dissenting opinions. The peace loving secular people in the country are facing a stark situation of terror and insecurity all around. Communal forces are cultivating an atmosphere of conflicts within the society on non-issues. It is disrupting the unity of the workers and the toiling people in general, so vital to carry forward the ongoing struggles based on our 12-point Charter of Demands as detailed above. Working Class must raise its strong voice of protest.

This anti-people, anti-workers and anti-national policy regime has not only been imposing increasing miseries on the toiling people at large, it is also severely damaging the national economy and destroying its indigenous productive and manufacturing capabilities to serve the interests of the multinational companies with Indian corporates as their junior partner. This anti-people and anti-national policy regime must be defeated squarely to force the pro-people changes in policies on all fronts. And for that, the united platform of the working class must heighten its struggle further.

The task before the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and independent national federations is to further intensify the surging struggles in various sectors through a concerted united agitation and mobilization at national level to be followed by countrywide general strike action as a culmination and consolidation of all sectoral struggles. The National Convention of workers therefore adopts the following programmes:

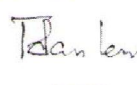
- ▶ **State level, district level and industry/sector level joint conventions to be held during October/November 2018**
- ▶ **Joint Industry-level gate meetings, rallies etc. during November and December, 2018**
- ▶ **Submission of strike notice jointly with demonstrations during 17-22 December, 2018**
- ▶ **Two days countrywide General Strike on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**


The National Convention calls upon working people across the sectors and throughout the country irrespective of affiliations to make the above programmes a total success.

  
INTUC

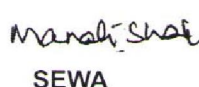
  
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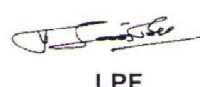
  
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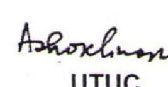
  
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