***“Information technology: an advanced area***

***of ​​the new technological revolution”***

The Ufa Trade Union Forum Declaration of 2015 emphasizes that “…*Rapid technological changes currently make it possible to reach new levels in automation, robotics, nanotechnology, new materials, energy consumption standards and organization of production processes. It is certain, therefore, that this will boost production changes, concentration and centralization of capital, competition in the sphere of monopolies and oligopolies, inevitably affecting employment and workers´ incomes everywhere”.*

The timeliness of bringing these issues up for discussion is reflected in the fact that the 2016 International Labour Conference in Geneva devoted considerable attention to the impact of new technological revolution on the future of labour relations.

The ILO Report ***Advancing Social Justice*** points out that the world of work is changing as a result of rapid technological progress. The spread of information and communications technology, as well as global interconnection of networks, offers great potential to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital gap, create knowledge-based societies, as well as to develop scientific-technical and innovative activity in such dissimilar areas as medicine and energy.

These innovations have strengthened linkages between manufacturing, agriculture and the service sectors, and are inevitably affecting the organisation of labour.

Among positive factors in the realm of a new organisation of labour, the ILO Report points out that new methods of production have facilitated the development of deeper and more widespread global supply chains, which are now a common means of organising investments and production in the global economy.

This process offers new opportunities for economic and social development and creation of new jobs, providing many workers with a toehold in the formal labour market and a pathway out of poverty in many countries. It has also increased productivity gains for the firms engaged in global supply chains. However, there is also evidence that global supply chains can affect such aspects of the workplace quality as wages or the nature of labour contracts.

 The ILO notes that with the disappearance of standard forms of labour new jobs are emerging in the knowledge, “green” and care economies both in the developing and industrialised countries.

At the same time, although mobile and independent types and forms of work offered through the Internet facilitate matching of skills and provide flexibility, they also pose challenges to ensure decent work conditions. Without formal contracts, such arrangements can lead to excessive working hours and weak social protection.

The decentralised nature of these jobs is currently making it more difficult for workers to organise and exercise their right to collective bargaining. For example, such relatively new phenomenon as *crowd work*, which offers global opportunities through the Internet/online platforms, raises challenges related to regulation and protection of labour.

Recent ILO analyses reveal notable shifts in non-standard forms of work. There is a marked trend towards decrease in the number of waged and salaried workers in the majority of advanced economies, whereas their numbers are still growing in emerging and developing economies, though at a reduced rate.

Specifically, in developing countries waged and salaried work offers opportunities to expand employment options and bring into the labour market women, youth and other groups of workers who are likely to suffer decent work deficits.

Nevertheless, the global data show that about half of waged and salaried workers around the world have no permanent employment contracts which impacts on their labour rights, income security, wage and income inequality, social protection coverage and broader social and economic progress. Workers without permanent contracts also tend to be more vulnerable than those in traditional employment relationships and more exposed to workplace safety and health hazards, as well as to lower pay.

As highlighted by the United Nations, billions of men and women continue to live in poverty and are denied a life of dignity: over 327 million working people live in extreme poverty and another 967 million in moderate or near poverty.

Inequalities are rising within and between countries, with enormous disparities in opportunities, wealth and power. Gender inequality remains a key challenge, as reflected, for instance, in the gender pay gap which remains at around 20%.

Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflicts, violent extremism, terrorism and the related humanitarian crises, forced displacement of people, are threatening to reverse much of the development progress achieved in recent decades.

Depletion of natural resources and adverse impacts of environmental degradation are adding to and exacerbating the challenges faced by humanity. Climate change is one of the greatest problems and its adverse impacts are undermining the ability of all countries to ensure sustainable rate of development.

One of the priorities for BRICS Trade Union Forum should be to address various aspects of the technological revolution’s impact in the world of work. Trade unions should identify common objectives to enhance their influence on these processes and to attract to their ranks new activists who are now at the forefront of technological progress.

Technical progress has to be accompanied by the social one, and it will largely depend on how effective the trade unions’ efforts are to combine these two dimensions of human activity.

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