

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

NEWS: Recently, the **113th Plenary Session of the International Labour Conference** was held in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About the International Labour Conference (ILC)

- The **International Labour Conference (ILC)** is the **supreme decision-making body** of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and serves as its **general assembly**.
- Often referred to as the “**Parliament of Labour**,” the ILC is convened **annually in Geneva, Switzerland**, and brings together **tripartite delegations** from all ILO member countries.
- The **first session of the ILC** was held in **Washington, D.C., in 1919**. From India, **Narayan Malhar Joshi**, a prominent trade unionist and follower of **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, attended as a labour representative.
- Each member country of the ILO sends a **four-member delegation** comprising:
 - **Two government representatives**
 - **One employer representative**
 - **One worker representative**
- Each delegate enjoys **independent voting rights**, allowing balanced and inclusive decision-making.

India's Historical Participation and Leadership in ILC

- **India is a founding member of the ILO**, which was established in **1919** as part of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **Four Indian leaders** have served as Presidents of the ILC in different years:
 - **Sir Atul Chatterjee** (1927)
 - **Shri Jagjivan Ram**, then Minister for Labour (1950)
 - **Dr. Nagendra Singh**, later President of the International Court of Justice (1970)
 - **Shri Ravindra Verma**, then Minister of Labour and Parliamentary Affairs (1979)

3. Key Highlights from the 113th Plenary Session of ILC (2025)

a) Adoption of Convention No. 192 on Biological Hazards

- A **landmark international standard** (Convention No. 192) was adopted to **specifically address biological hazards** in the workplace.
- This is the **first such international instrument** focused solely on **biological risks in occupational environments**.

b) Amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006

- The ILC **approved key amendments** to the MLC, 2006, to:

- Guarantee **shore leave and repatriation rights** to seafarers.
- Reaffirm the **status of seafarers as “key workers”**, especially after lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

c) **Standard-Setting for the Platform Economy**

- For the **first time**, the ILC initiated discussions for developing **international standards** on work in the **platform/gig economy**.
- A process was launched to **formulate a Convention and Recommendation by 2026**, aiming to ensure:
 - **Fair wages**
 - **Health and safety protections**
 - **Data protection**
 - **Social security coverage**
 - **Freedom of association** for platform workers.
- The **platform economy** includes app-based work (e.g., Uber, Swiggy, Amazon gig workers), which is **characterized by flexibility but lacks formal labour protections**.

d) **Labour Rights as Human Rights**

- **Palestine was granted observer status** at the ILO, reinforcing its participation in global labour discussions.
- The ILC invoked **Article 33 of the ILO Constitution** against **Myanmar**, calling for its military regime to comply with **ILO recommendations on forced labour**.
- It also reviewed **labour rights violations** in multiple countries including **Belarus, Hungary, Georgia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Malaysia**.

e) **Social Development Agenda**

- The ILC approved ILO’s **tripartite participation** in the **Second World Summit for Social Development**, scheduled for **November 2025 in Doha**.
- This endorsement reflects ILO’s pivotal role in shaping **global labour-related social policies**.

India’s Achievements Presented at the 113th ILC Session

- **Unemployment Rate Decline:** India reported a significant drop in unemployment—from **6% in 2017 to 3.2% by 2024**.
- **Formal Job Creation:** Over **7.5 crore formal sector jobs** were generated in the past seven years, indicating positive employment growth.
- **Labour Mobility Support:** The **National Career Service (NCS) portal** is being used to **map international job demand and facilitate global labour mobility**.
- **e-Shram Portal Coverage:** More than **300 million unorganised workers** have registered on the **e-Shram portal**, aiding targeted welfare delivery.

- **Social Protection Expansion:** According to the ILO's World Social Protection Report:
 - India's coverage expanded from **24.4% in 2019** to **64.3% in 2025**.
 - This means over **940 million Indians** now enjoy some form of **social protection**.
- **Recognition of Platform Workers:** The **Code on Social Security, 2020** legally recognizes **platform and gig workers** as a distinct category for welfare benefits.

India's Recommendations at the 113th ILC Session

a) On Biological Hazards Convention (No. 192)

- India welcomed the convention but cautioned against **overly broad definitions** that might extend regulatory reach **beyond workplace settings**.
- Emphasized the need to **balance safety standards** with **operational practicality**.

b) Risk-Tiered Approach

- Recommended a **graded, risk-tiered strategy** to categorize biological hazards based on exposure intensity and context.
- This approach would ensure **resource-efficient implementation** while safeguarding workers.

c) Respect for National Diversities

- Urged global standard-setting bodies to **recognize diversity across countries**, including **legal, economic, and sectoral variations**.
- Stressed that **global labour norms** should allow **flexibility in domestic implementation** to respect **national contexts**.

Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-ae/news/other/113th-international-labour-conference-opens-in-geneva-with-participation-of-morocco/ar-AA1FYnQH?apiversion=v2&noservercache=1&domshim=1&renderwebcomponents=1&wcseo=1&batchservertelemetry=1&noservertelemetry=1>