

Decent work for all

More and better jobs

Quality employment should be at the heart of the agenda to cut global poverty. Extreme poverty is usually linked to a shortage of jobs and low wages. It is made worse by poor working conditions, abuses of workers' rights, exploitation of women workers, and a lack of social protection.

More than a **billion men and women are unemployed**, underemployed or working poor. Global unemployment has reached a record high of over 185 million people, nearly half of whom are under 24 years old. In many countries, people who do find work are in jobs where wages are low, the hours exhausting and the conditions unsafe.

Millions work in the informal economy, often with more than one job to make ends meet. They work as street vendors, in sweatshops, as casual labourers or doing piecework in their own homes. These workers have no rights or social protection.

Women carry the burden of the insecure labour market. They face widespread discrimination in education and jobs, and make up the majority of the millions who work in the harsh conditions of the world's export processing zones.

One in six children in the world works instead of going to school. 245 million children work as rag dealers, street vendors, agricultural labourers and textile workers. If children don't go to school, countries will never break out of the poverty trap.

"Trade unions have a dual role in helping governments achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Working at the grassroots in factories and workplaces, they have the potential to mobilise massive public support for action on poverty. They also have the benefit of first hand experience of the contribution productive employment can make to poverty reduction."

ICFTU General Secretary Guy Ryder

Fighting poverty

- > **Unions fighting poverty** is at the core of trade unions' work. They are lobbying for more and better jobs, and are trying to ensure that working people have rights and the protection of trade unions at work.
- > **Trade unions** are playing an important role in helping the world to meet the Millennium Development Goals, through action on universal education, HIV/AIDS, decent jobs for young people and quality public services.
- > These attempts to combat poverty are often undermined by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank**. Their loan conditions often encourage poor countries to pursue labour market flexibility and pro-market liberalisation, regardless of the social cost.
- > In many countries, **employment protection** has been weakened and **public services**, like health, communication, education and water, have been privatised as a direct result of IMF or World Bank policies. By raising costs and reducing access, this has increased the poverty and suffering of the world's poor.

Put job creation and decent work at the heart of the global poverty agenda. Join the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and make poverty history!

"Seen through the eyes of the vast majority of men and women, globalization has not met their simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for their children."

Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004.



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Global unions is backing the Global Call to Action Against Poverty along with a broad alliance of civil society organisations. For more information, see www.whiteband.org.