



ILO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC A:

PROTECTING LABOUR WORKERS' RIGHTS IN A WORLD OF AUTOMATION

In an effort towards greater efficiency and improved costs, industries have turned to automation as the key means through which such improvements in productivity can be found. Modern industrial advancements have fostered the implementation of numerous new technologies and have allowed for incredible results. Automated storage and retrieval systems, floor systems, and work cells are some of the technologies that industries such as manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing are using to eliminate time spent on tasks that could be automated (which accounts for an estimated 57-60 percent of production time in those industries). In addition, it is estimated that a third of all jobs worldwide will be automated by the 2030s, with labor occupations being impacted to the greatest degree. Some counter that automation has actually led to an increase in jobs, citing that roughly a third of all new jobs created since 1930 are a result of automation. Others note that automation favors high-skilled economic opportunities such as machinists, advanced welders and other technicians, eliminating blue-collar work in its wake. In addition, jobs losses as a result of automation will no longer be offset by their job creation by the 2030s. As industries march towards an increasingly automated workforce, it is important to consider those laborers who face a shrinking set of economic opportunities and to ensure their right to work.

It is imperative that as technology evolves, so too does legislation. In regards to automation, its associated legislation—at both the national and international level—are just now coming to terms with the impact such industries will have on laborers' opportunities in the near future. As such, the topic was chosen to address the infancy of international parameters surrounding industrial automation. Without a proper international understanding and consensus surround-

ing the topic, many labor opportunities will be lost without concern for those that are impacted. The goal of automation (efficiency and cost) must be balanced with the individual's right to work.

When researching, delegates should come to conclusions on how their nation views labor automation, what role such workers play in their projected economy, and what restrictions, if any, are necessary to further cement labor workers' right to work. It is, of course, important to then consider the role one's nation has had in the adoption of associated industrial technologies. In addition, delegates should identify any legislation their nation has crafted that concerns itself with automation, or what legislation they have allowed to be their guide on the matter (even if indirect to the topic). For example, the United States has made replacing labor with industrial robotics the affordable course of action as the nation taxes labor to a much greater extent than they do capital, which has led to massive American conglomerates, such as Amazon, to pursue fully autonomous warehouses and eliminate the need for human involvement. Different economies will face different scenarios when facing a world of automation, and delegates should study what long-term impacts their nation may face. In that sense, developed economies implementing automation in warehouses, factories, etc. are projected to potentially move such facilities back within their own borders, threatening up to 85 percent of jobs within developing nations. Automation may provide great advances in efficiency and cost, but such technologies threaten labor workers' economic opportunities. It is up to delegates to decide upon automation's role in modern industry while protecting laborer's right to work.



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TOPIC B:

ENABLING THE USE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Collective bargaining is the concept of a centralized organization representing and negotiating for a group of workers in a company, trade, or industry that occurs at either the local, regional, or national level. The modern notion of collective bargaining stems from the advancements of the industrial revolution, and how the stresses that it had placed on workers—long hours, unfair wages, child labor, etc.—necessitated an organized voice for the workers who faced such mounting oppression. Today, unions are the most common means of representation for the worker and are defined by many forms: trade unions represent those in a given occupation, industry unions represent those in a given industry, and general unions represent all those at a given level (local, regional, national). Collective bargaining has been the catalyst for better working conditions, wages and employee-employer relations in modern industry and its implementation allows for the rights of the worker to be maintained. In developing economies, it can be observed that nations have trended towards limiting the use of collective bargaining. A study conducted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) noted that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Asia-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa have all worsened in their preservation of the right to collective bargaining, the right to strike, and the right to organize and join a trade union, with many nations in those regions directly and systematically violating those rights. While the motivation varies by nation, it is important to consider how a lack of centralized negotiations for workers can inhibit their ability to quality and just work environments.

Ensuring the right to work is only half the battle, and the right to safe, fair, and

quality work is just as important. This topic was chosen to tackle the degrading state of working opportunities within developing economies and to ensure the success of the individual alongside the success of the economy as a whole. Some nations are prioritizing economic growth at the cost of the worker, and it is critical that the rights that the ILO and other international organizations have fought for, are fully preserved. As such, enabling the use of collective bargaining in developing countries is enabling a pathway where every worker is represented and allowed favorable conditions. Every worker has that inherent right.

As stated, motivation varies by country regarding the reduction of the range of collective bargaining within their borders. Delegates should study such motivations to understand the reasoning behind their choices and the varying means through which they provide such limitations. For example, in the MENA region, historic systematic abuses of workers' rights (such as those in the Kafka system) have inhibited the development of collective bargaining in the region's nations as they maintain traditions which place low priority on individual success. Many nations have a large general union operating at the national level which represents, for the most part, the interests of that nation's workers. Delegates should come to understand those that are present within their nation and study the motivations and desires of the workers being represented. In addition, it is important for a delegation to look at how they have either enabled or limited the growth of collective bargaining and unionization and the impact it has had on their economic growth. In all, delegates need to come to a conclusion on where their nation stands regarding collective bargaining, understand the motivations of developing economies, understand what benefits and drawbacks the practice has, and develop a perspective on how the practice can be promoted in developing economies.



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