



ETUC Statement in view of the Second World Summit for Social Development

The ETUC welcomes the convening of the Second World Summit for Social Development. At a moment of profound and interconnected crises, a cost of living crisis and rising inequality, attacks on democracy, and the accelerating climate emergency, the world must choose a different path: a worker-centred development model that delivers justice and dignity for all.

The ITUC 2025 Global Rights Index stated that workers in Qatar and other countries “faced outright bans or severe restrictions on freedom of association and the right to organise – particularly affecting migrant workers, who make up a significant proportion of the labour force in these countries”. The decision to hold the Summit in Qatar must be used by the UN to press for genuine steps to ensure full respect of workers and trade union rights in the country, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Qatar, like many others, must urgently prove that reforms are real and fully implemented and that the rights of working people and their trade unions genuinely respected.

For working people, the promises of the first World Summit remain largely unfulfilled. Poverty, insecurity and the erosion of rights persist, while wealth and power concentrate in the hands of a few. The Second Summit must therefore mark a decisive turning point - away from failed austerity and market-driven policies, towards a future based on social justice, equality, sustainability, and democracy.

The European Union has a special responsibility to lead by example. The EU Quality Jobs Roadmap and the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights must reinforce the ambition of the ILO Decent Work Agenda and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Europe must ensure quality, safe jobs in all sectors and regions – underpinned by collective bargaining, fair wages, strong social protection, universal training, and equality for all.

In full support of the ITUC and wider global trade union movement, the ETUC calls on governments and multilateral institutions to commit to:

1. Guarantee Decent Work and Universal Labour Rights

- Fully implement and enforce all ILO conventions, including freedom of association, collective bargaining, protection against forced and child labour, and non-discrimination.
- All jobs should be quality jobs. Address precarious, informal and platform work by guaranteeing proper regulation, stable employment relationships, and universal social protection, and end bogus self-employment. Reform public procurement rules to end the race to the bottom and promote collective bargaining and quality jobs, and limit subcontracting chains and end abusive labour intermediation.
- Commit to living wages, including through effective transposition of the Minimum Wage Directive in the EU, safe workplaces, well-funded public services, decent pensions and adequate social protection as foundations of social progress.



2. Ensure a Just Transition and Climate Justice

- Integrate Just Transition measures into all climate and energy policies, including a strong Just Transition Directive in Europe, so that no worker or region is left behind. Transitions must reduce inequality - not deepen it.
- Mobilise financing for sustainable industrial policies that foster innovation, create quality jobs, and strengthen resilience against future crises.

3. Advance Gender Equality and Inclusion

- Eliminate gender pay and pension gaps, and fully implement ILO Convention 190 to end violence and harassment at work. The EU must also deliver on all elements of the Pay Transparency Directive, importantly guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value.
- Guarantee equal opportunities for women, young people, migrants and persons with disabilities in labour markets and public life.
- Adopt ambitious care policies that recognise, value and fairly remunerate care work as a cornerstone of inclusive societies.

4. Reform Global Economic Governance

- Establish a fair global tax system that ends corporate tax avoidance and evasion, ensures progressive taxation of wealth, and raises revenues for social investment and public services.
- Reform international financial institutions so they prioritise decent work, social protection and development, and replace harmful austerity conditionalities with social conditionalities for the use of public funds.
- Strengthen international cooperation to guarantee universal access to health, education, and social services. Recognise the importance of public services.
- The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDD) must not be watered down but instead must guarantee binding obligations on businesses to ensure respect for workers' rights, trade union rights, and collective bargaining in their activities and throughout their global value chains.

5. Strengthen Democracy and Social Dialogue

- Defend trade union rights against authoritarianism and repression, trade unionism is not a crime.
- Guarantee meaningful trade union participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of all social and development policies.
- Promote strong, inclusive social dialogue at national, European and global levels as a driver of sustainable development. In Europe, the Social Dialogue Pact must be implemented with political, financial and legal backing to ensure real impact.
- The governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) must be rooted in the human-in-control principle. Workers and citizens must never be reduced to passive objects of algorithmic decision-making or surveillance. AI must serve society, democracy, and decent work - not replace human judgment, responsibility, and accountability.

The Second World Summit for Social Development must deliver more than words. It must commit to transformative action: people before profit, rights before exploitation, solidarity before inequality.

The ETUC's support for the ILO and the UN system is unwavering. At a time when multilateralism is under attack, their authority is vital to defend labour rights, peace and



sustainable development. The EU, in particular, must uphold both the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, making the full realisation a threshold of decency benchmark for all its internal and external policies.

Together with the global trade union movement, the ETUC will continue to fight for a development agenda that secures dignity, equality, peace and justice for all workers - in Europe and across the world.