



ONLINE

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

5 – 23 OCTOBER 2026

 3 WEEKS

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW) are universal and inalienable human rights that all workers should enjoy, regardless of their employment status. They are at the core of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022 to include a safe and healthy working environment as a fifth category of fundamental rights.

Recent global developments are putting these rights at a critical crossroads. The [International Labour Conference \(112th Session, 2024\)](#) highlighted widening implementation gaps across all five categories amid overlapping crises, persistent informality, climate change impacts, structural changes in production and work, and shrinking democratic space. In addition, the disruption of artificial intelligence, digital labour platforms and new forms of non-standard employment poses new challenges for realizing these fundamental rights at work.

The scale of the challenge remains stark: global estimates indicate that 138 million children were in child labour in 2024 (54 million in hazardous work); 27.6 million people were in forced labour in 2021; almost 3 million workers died from occupational accidents and diseases in 2019; and more than 40 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with no protection for freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. In this context, the Second World Summit for Social Development, Qatar 2025) represented a reinvigorated opportunity to integrate evidence-based action and partnerships to advance fundamental rights in rapidly changing labour markets. The [Political Declaration](#) adopted as an outcome of this summit states that "...social development and social justice cannot be attained in the absence of peace and security or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms." Likewise, it reaffirms the international community commitment to "*Upholding the fundamental principles and rights at work ... including through encouraging the ratification and implementation of the International Labour Organization fundamental conventions.*"

KEY THEMES AND ILO REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The course is anchored in the ILO's core normative framework and responds to a set of converging global challenges that are reshaping the realization of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Four interconnected thematic pillars structure the course content, each grounded in authoritative ILO standards, resolutions and research:

1. Climate change and climate-related events

Climate change poses direct and escalating threats to workers' rights across all five categories of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Extreme heat, flooding, droughts and other climate-related events are disproportionately affecting workers in agriculture, construction, fishing and informal sectors intensifying risks of forced labour, child labour and unsafe working conditions. The inclusion of a **safe and healthy working environment** as the fifth category of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (ILC, 2022) carries direct implications for how climate risks are addressed as a matter of fundamental rights. The Paris Agreement affirms "the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs," a commitment the ILO has operationalized through its *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all* (ILO, 2015). Key ILO sources for this theme include:

- Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate (ILO, 2024) – flagship report documenting the occupational safety and health implications of climate change, including heat stress, UV radiation, extreme weather events and vector-borne diseases.

- *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal social protection for climate action and a just transition* (ILO, 2024) – examining the links between climate vulnerability, social protection gaps and fundamental rights.
- *ILO ILC high level discussion on climate change and the world of work* (ILC, 112th Session, 2024) – reaffirming the centrality of fundamental rights in climate responses and just transition frameworks.

2. New and non-standard forms of employment, including platform work

The rapid expansion of digital labour platforms, gig work, dependent self-employment and other non-standard employment arrangements has created a structural gap between formal labour protections and the realities of millions of workers. Platform workers are frequently denied recognition as employees, foreclosing access to social protection, freedom of association and collective bargaining. Algorithmic management systems raise unprecedented challenges for privacy, non-discrimination and workers' voice. In a landmark development, on **12 June 2026**, the International Labour Conference adopted **ILO Convention No. 193 on Decent Work in the Platform Economy** – the first international labour standard specifically designed for platform and gig economy work. The Convention establishes that core protections including the FPRW, minimum wage, social protection and occupational safety and health rights apply to all platform workers. Additional key ILO sources include:

- *Realizing Decent Work in the Platform Economy* (ILO, 2025) – the ILO's second report on decent work in the platform economy, providing the evidence base and draft provisions that informed Convention No. 193.
- *ILO Resolution on Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy* (ILC, 113th Session, 2025) – addressing the overlap between informality and non-standard employment as structural barriers to fundamental rights.
- *Non-Standard Employment Around the World* (ILO, 2016, updated analyses 2023) – foundational ILO reference on the scale, diversity and rights implications of non-standard work arrangements globally.
- *ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations* (2020 General Survey) – confirming that workers in new and emerging contractual arrangements, are entitled to the same protection as comparable full-time workers with open-ended employment contracts in respect of the five categories of FPRW.

3. Contraction of democratic space and civil liberties

The meaningful exercise of labour rights is inseparable from the broader democratic environment. Globally, shrinking civic space, manifested through restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, expression and the right to protest, directly undermines workers' ability to organize, collectively bargain and defend their rights. The ILC's 1970 Resolution on Trade Union Rights and their Relation to Civil Liberties (54th Session, Geneva, 1970) established a foundational principle that remains fully relevant today: *"the rights conferred upon workers' and employers' organizations must be based on respect for those civil liberties which have been enunciated in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and that the absence of these civil liberties removes all meaning from the concept of trade union rights."* This principle has been consistently reaffirmed by the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA), established in 1951, which processes complaints of violations of organizing rights regardless of whether a member State has ratified the relevant Conventions.

Key ILO sources include:

- *ILO Social Dialogue Report 2024: Peak-level Social Dialogue* (ILO, 2024) – documenting how shrinking civic space and declining public trust in institutions undermine tripartism and workers' ability to participate in governance of work.

- *70 Years of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association* (ILO, 2022) – a retrospective on the CFA's pioneering role in linking freedom of association with respect for basic civil liberties across decades of casework.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

This course seeks to strengthen participants' understanding of the **Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work** and to equip them with the analytical capacity to assess how these universal rights are being challenged, reshaped and reaffirmed in a rapidly changing world of work. In light of widening implementation gaps and emerging global drivers the course aims to support participants in critically examining current trends, identifying risks and opportunities for the realization of all five categories of fundamental rights, and translating international commitments into coherent, evidence-based policy and practice that advance social justice, decent work and sustainable development.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Update participants' understanding of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and their relevance in a changing world of work.
- Examine how key drivers of change affect the realization of fundamental rights.
- Strengthen the ability to identify risks, interpret evidence, and assess impacts on different groups of workers, with particular attention to vulnerability and inequality.
- Explore integrated entry points for action aligned with recent ILO policy directions and standards.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The course is designed for professionals involved in labour rights, labour governance and the world of work, including:

- Officials and practitioners from ministries of labour and social development, labour administrations.
- Representatives of workers' and employers' organizations.
- Staff from national human rights institutions, equality bodies and public agencies working on labour rights and inclusion.
- Researchers, trainers and practitioners from international organizations, development partners, academia, and civil society.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The course is delivered online through the eCampus, the ITCILO learning platform. Each week follows a structured learning pathway combining:

- Self-paced learning materials (short readings, interactive modules and guided activities).
- Two interactive live webinars per week (expert inputs, guided discussion and case clinics).
- A weekly quiz to consolidate key concepts.

- A final assignment to apply learning to participants' contexts.
- Discussion forums and peer exchange.

Live webinars are scheduled in Central European Time (Rome/Turin).

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The course runs over three weeks (one module per week). Each module focuses on a set of drivers reshaping the world of work and their implications for fundamental principles and rights at work.

WEEK 1: 5–9 OCTOBER

Module 1 – Foundations: FPRW at a critical crossroads in a changing world of work

WEEK 2: 12–16 OCTOBER

Module 2 – Climate change, informality and democratic space: protecting rights under pressure

WEEK 3: 19–23 OCTOBER

Module 3 – New non-standard forms of employment and the irruption of new technologies

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Successful completion is based on:

- Completion of the weekly quizzes and self-guided modules.
- Submission of final assignment.
- Active participation in live webinars and/or discussion forums (recommended).

COURSE AT A GLANCE

FORMAT

Online

DATES

5 to 23 October 2026

STRUCTURE

3 weeks – one learning module per week

LIVE WEBINARS

Two webinars per week (6 webinars in total)

LANGUAGE

English

WORKLOAD

Estimated 24 hours of learning

CERTIFICATE

Certificate of participation upon successful completion of mandatory activities

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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