

International – The World We Want

1. Congress affirms that the Australian Trade Union movement is proudly internationalist. The ACTU aims to win rights, equality, social justice, peace, and decent work for workers everywhere. In order to achieve these aims, we support the building of stronger democratic, independent trade unions around the world; build solidarity with workers facing repression; and work to hold multinational corporations and governments to account. We work closely with our sister trade unions in the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) globally and in the Asia Pacific region, the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD, and Global Union Federations (GUFs) to advance workers' rights. We represent Australian workers at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and support and promote international labour standards, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
2. Authoritarianism is on the rise around the world, and peace is increasingly fragile. Democracy is under attack worldwide, and nationalism, populism, xenophobia and racism are on the rise including new forms of fascism. Conflict is on the rise, with thousands of lives lost as a result of wars since last ACTU Congress, including with Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and conflict in Gaza. Peace is at the heart of the union movement's values, and as the largest organised democratic force, the global trade union movement has an important role to play in creating a more fair and humane world.
3. Three decades of neoliberalism has created unparalleled economic inequality, which the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare. The pandemic saw the inequality gap within countries widen, including wealth inequality and gender inequality, and the inequality gap between rich and poor nations widened, with intellectual property rights on vaccines and treatments delaying access to developing countries and further prolonging the crisis.
4. Rich countries' procurement deals with pharmaceutical companies and Intellectual property rights on vaccines and treatments delay access to developing countries. Congress calls on governments of the world to learn the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis and put into action the ILO Global Call to Action for a Human Centred Recovery and support a strong WHO Treaty on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. Workers around the world are now dealing with the cost-of-living crisis, which is leading to housing and food insecurity, while the profits of multinationals continue to increase. The effects of climate change continue to intensify, with workers dealing with the impacts including extreme heat and natural disasters.
5. It is clear that these problems facing workers around the world require a collective, united response. Congress echoes the ITUC's call for a new social contract that must include:
 - a. Jobs: The creation of climate-friendly jobs with a just transition. Job-creating industrial transformation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions, along with jobs in health, education and other quality public services.
 - b. Rights for all workers, regardless of their employment arrangements, to fulfill the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration with its labour protection floor including rights to maximum working hours, living minimum wages, and health and safety at work.
 - c. Wages: minimum living wages for all workers, including informal workers, domestic workers, self-employed and home-based workers; and stopping the use of disguised employment relationships and the abusive use of precarious employment arrangements to suppress wages and undermine collective bargaining.

- d. Universal social protection: with the establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
- e. Equality: ending all discrimination to ensure that all people can share in prosperity and that the appalling concentration of wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the many is undone.
- f. Inclusion: to combat the growing power of monopolies and oligarchs, ensure that developing countries can actually develop their economies and guarantee tax systems that provide the income vital for governments to meet the needs of people and the planet. An inclusive approach to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic is paramount, both in terms of economic support as well as universal access to testing, treatment and vaccines.

Workers' rights

- 6. Congress asserts the need for strong, independent, representative and democratic unions in all nations. We salute the courage of workers facing conflict, struggles for liberation and democracy, the fight against starvation, discrimination and exploitation in every quarter of the globe.
- 7. Congress maintains that unions, workers' organisations and social justice movements are essential to protecting the rights of all the world's working people and lifting people out of poverty. We stand in solidarity with the global labour movement for decent work, against exploitation and precarious work. Forced and slave labour in global supply chains is a scourge that must be eliminated everywhere.
- 8. Key to this should be the recognition that freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain play an important role in lifting wages and conditions, improving the safety of workplaces and increasing productivity. Evidence from a large sample of countries indicates that labour market regulations (such as minimum wages, unionisation, and social security contributions), on average, tend to improve the income distribution.
- 9. Today, more than 60 percent of the world's workers labour in the informal economy, where employment relationships are not legally regulated. In some developing countries, informal jobs comprise up to 90 per cent of available work. Millions of informal workers labour in global supply chains, where some of the worst abuses of freedoms of association and peaceful assembly are found and where migrant workers are often concentrated.
- 10. Moreover, the emergence of new business models such as 'platform' or 'gig' companies completely deny employment responsibilities, further eroding the rights of workers around the world to secure work with decent pay and conditions. The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, adopted at the 2019 International Labour Conference, provides the basis for a Labour Protection Floor, which would guarantee a floor of rights and protections for all workers – regardless of their employment arrangements. The Centenary Declaration outlines that all workers should enjoy adequate protection with respect for their fundamental rights, an adequate minimum wage, maximum limits on working time, and safety and health at work.
- 11. Both trade unions and the right to strike are fundamental tools for achieving workers' rights, as they provide mechanisms through which workers can stand up for their interests collectively and engage with big business and government on a more equal footing. The State is obligated to protect these rights for all workers. The right to strike, and other forms of industrial action, is an intrinsic corollary of the right to freedom of association protected by ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise, and is enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the constitutions of at least 90 countries and has become customary international law.
- 12. However, workers' ability to exercise these rights is in dangerous decline. Many countries restrict workers' rights or fail to enforce laws protecting those rights. The ITUC found that 90 percent of

countries surveyed for the 2023 Global Rights Index violated the right to strike, and 770 percent of countries violated the right to freedom of association and 88% violated the right to collective bargaining. Some States ban all legitimate unions, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

13. Countries such as China which own or operate industry do not permit the formation of independent unions, thus violating association and assembly rights both as a government and employer. The ITUC's 2023 Global Rights Index found that the right to free speech and assembly was restricted in 42% of countries, and there were 69 countries where the arrests and detentions of trade unionists were recorded. This is being used as a method to control the activism of trade unionists, particularly in repressive regimes. In several, trade union leaders were targeted, suggesting that governments (often in collaboration with employers) are attempting to undermine the organising capacity of trade unions.
14. In addition, states that allow the use of precarious and informal labour to avoid legal employment obligations, such as minimum wage rates, benefits and unionisation, are failing to respect workers' assembly and association rights. These violations of basic labour rights are on the rise.
15. The rapid and pervasive impact of digital technology on the world of work poses challenges for protecting workers' rights, and there is a need to regulate at the global level to ensure corporate algorithmic transparency and accountability. Congress calls on ILO constituents to negotiate and adopt a strong Convention on the platform economy at the standard setting discussions at the ILO in 2025-6.
16. According to the ILO, less than half of the world's population have access to any form of social protection, and more than two-thirds of the world's population are unable to count on a comprehensive set of protections which are set out in international labour standards. Challenges in financing social protection, particularly in low-income countries, are a major reason for this. The ITUC is leading the call for a Global Social Protection Fund - to be financed through a combination of higher-income countries increasing their Official Development Assistance (ODA), increased international cooperation on taxation, and contributions from international financial institutions - to establish social protection systems in low-income countries.
17. To ensure that people are able to work their way out of poverty, insecurity and inequality, Congress calls on the Australian Government through domestic and international institutions, and in its bilateral relationships, to genuinely support, promote and enforce:
 - a. Freedom of association and collective bargaining as key to raising wages and dealing with the race to the bottom;
 - b. The creation of a labour protection floor for all workers, including respect for fundamental rights, maximum working hours, a living minimum wage, and health and safety at work, as outlined in the ILO Centenary Declaration;
 - c. Regulations to deal with insecure work due to casualisation, the so-called gig-economy and other forms of non-standard work;
 - d. The provision of social protection to all, including those in the informal economy, through the creation of a Global Social Protection Fund;
 - e. The ratification of all 10 core ILO Labour Conventions:
 - Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (Convention No. 87 & No. 98);
 - The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour (Convention No. 29 & No. 105).

- The effective abolition of child labour (Convention No. 138 & No. 182);
 - The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (Convention No. 100 & No. 111);
 - The right to a healthy and safe working environment (Convention No. 155 & Convention No. 187).
- f. Ratification and subsequent promotion of other International Labour Standards and UN Conventions, including:
- UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 2003;
 - ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183);
 - ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal People (No. 169);
 - ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189);
 - ILO Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177);
 - ILO Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176);
 - IMO Convention on Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships 2009;
 - ILO Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151);
 - ILO Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154); and
 - ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190).

Corporate power and workers' rights

18. The proliferation of global supply chains has profoundly transformed the nature of cross-border production, investment, trade and employment. Trade in today's global economy is typically coordinated by lead firms through their global supply chains. The lead firm controls the global supply chain and sets the parameters with which other firms in the chain must comply. The intense price competition has led to larger profits for lead companies and ongoing exploitation of workers at the end of the supply chain.
19. While it is difficult to estimate the exact number of workers engaged in global supply chains (GSCs), considering the overwhelming number of workers in the informal economy who may be linked to GSCs, there is consensus that the number of jobs linked to GSCs is growing. A report by the ITUC¹ shows that 50 of the world's largest companies directly employ just 6% of the workers in their supply chains – the remaining 94% are part of the hidden workforce of global production. UNCTAD estimates that around 80% of global trade is linked to the international production networks of multinational corporations (MNCs). Whilst they have contributed to economic growth, job creation, and, in some cases, poverty reduction, modern supply chains are riddled with problems and are yet another factor behind growing inequality. The majority of supply chain

¹ https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/pdffrontlines_scandal_en-2.pdf

workers are trapped in insecure and unsafe work, with low wages and long working hours. Modern slavery, including forced labour and child labour, is rife.

20. At the end of the chain, small suppliers and workers are paying the price of this unequal distribution. Only a small share of the ultimate retail price is received by these lower layers. Global competitive pressures (just in time/lean production models and prices) are also at the basis of the downward pressures on wages, working conditions and respect of labour rights in supply chains. Collective bargaining is almost absent, and health and safety laws are often flouted. Supply chains are also associated with significant levels of migrant employment recruited through third party labour contractors and intermediaries/labour hire agencies, where migrant workers are subjected to exploitation and modern slavery, including through practices such as debt bondage, excessive recruitment fees, violence and harassment, and wage theft. Recent cases in Australia clearly show that whilst abuses in supply chains are a global problem, they are also very much a domestic problem.

Supply chain regulation.

21. Whilst governance over labour markets is a State issue, companies have been able to get around local laws, particularly in weak States that do not have strong unions or labour inspectorates. In many cases, victims of labour and human rights abuse are unable to investigate and pursue legal claims due to lack of access to information or jurisdiction. Supply chains have, in effect, created governance gaps which can only be rectified through more regulation. Strong regulation is needed domestically and globally to ensure companies are held to account for their actions.
22. To uphold workers' rights in global supply chains, Congress will campaign for:
 - a. Public procurement legislation which commits companies in tendering processes to include compliance with ILO Core Conventions, UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises at home and abroad;
 - b. Uphold its commitments under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the commitment to decent work;
 - c. Amend the Commonwealth procurement rules to develop mandatory minimum criteria prioritising access to Commonwealth procurement contracts for those businesses with identifiable human rights due diligence, reporting frameworks, and positive human rights records;
 - d. Stop the practice of Australia's export credit agency, Export Finance Australia, providing loans to Australian companies that abuse human rights.
 - e. Reform the Modern Slavery Act 2018;
 - f. Introduce mandatory human rights due diligence legislation;
 - g. Strengthen the implementation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the Australian National Contact Point.
23. Congress calls on States and Territories to:
 - a. Start prosecuting breaches of their health and safety legislation in overseas supply chains, where the person controlling the business or undertaking is based within Australia, and extend the inspection powers of Work Health and Safety Act Regulators to match the overseas reach of the duties in sections 19 to 27 of the relevant Work Health and Safety Act.

- b. Introduce their own supply chain regulation and amend procurement rules develop mandatory minimum criteria prioritising access to government procurement contracts for those businesses with identifiable human rights due diligence, reporting frameworks, and positive human rights records.
24. Congress commits to working with the ITUC and Global Union Federations (GUFs) to:
- a. support rights at work and secure fair labour laws around the world;
 - b. organise workers in global corporations and their supply chains through international collective bargaining and the use of our leverage with Australian companies;
 - c. support organising in economic processing zones (EPZs).

Australia's Modern Slavery Act 2018

25. Modern slavery is rife in global supply chains. Modern slavery practices include forced labour, human trafficking, forced marriage, child labour, and other slavery-like practices. More than 40 million people globally are living and working in slave-like conditions, according to the ILO. Modern slavery occurs on a continuum of abuses of workers' rights that can begin with violations such as wage theft and excessive recruitment fees paid to labour hire companies. High-risk sectors for modern slavery include apparel and textiles, financial services, mining, construction, food and agriculture, and healthcare.
26. Some of the drivers of modern slavery include a lack of workers' rights, complex global supply chains, opaque employment relationships, such as outsourcing and labour hire, and migration – including precarious and temporary migration, and visas that bond the worker to the employer.
27. Addressing labour exploitation and empowering workers is fundamental to ending modern slavery. The biggest factor that can contribute to ending labour exploitation is to recognise workers' rights to freedom of association and the right to organise and collectively bargain. The risk of modern slavery dramatically decreases in workplaces where trade unions operate. Unionised workers are best-placed to stand up collectively against modern slavery and slavery-like practices in the workplace. Congress believes that any strategy to eradicate modern slavery must have workers and the realisation of fundamental labour rights at the centre. Governments and businesses must genuinely engage with trade unions through social dialogue in any modern slavery initiatives.
28. Regulation of global supply chains is needed to promote workers' rights and eradicate modern slavery. While the previous Australian Government took a positive step in this space with the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act 2018, the Act as it currently stands is not sufficient to tackle the problem of modern slavery. The Act does not contain any measures to compel companies to take action on modern slavery: there is no requirement for companies to undertake supply chain due diligence, no penalties for companies failing to report or take action on modern slavery, and only deals with criminal offences, whilst a lot of labour exploitation is in the grey area between crime and breaches of civil law. The premise of the Act is that companies who do the right thing will be celebrated, while those who do not report or take action on modern slavery will be 'named and shamed'. This effectively outsources the compliance and enforcement to unions, civil society, consumers and shareholders to pressure companies to do the right thing, instead of the Australian Government enforcing compliance through penalties and strict oversight. Finally, as it does not contain any requirement for companies to engage with workers in their supply chains, the Act is likely to be viewed as a risk-management exercise to be carried out by auditors, rather than as a vehicle to improve the conditions of workers in their supply chains and operations.
29. Congress commends the Albanese Government for their commitments to improve the Modern Slavery Act 2018, including through the creation of an Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and their

commitment to introduce penalties. Congress notes, however, that a statutory review of the Modern Slavery Act was undertaken by Professor McMillan and a report published on 25 May 2023 – there were 30 recommendations made to strengthen the Act. Congress looks forward to the Government's timely response to the review and working with Government to strengthen the *Modern Slavery Act*.

30. The union movement notes and commends the important role that Industry Superannuation Funds play in reducing modern slavery, improving supply chain governance and mitigating risk through the practice of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment. Unions call on all institutional investors to practice responsible stewardship to contribute to the eradication of modern slavery.
31. Congress will advocate and campaign to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act 2018 by:
 - a. Introducing penalties for companies that fail to report, provide false, incomplete or insufficiently detailed reports, or fail to act on modern slavery in their supply chains;
 - b. Withholding Commonwealth procurement contracts from companies who have failed to report or act on modern slavery in their supply chains;
 - c. Strengthening the role of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner with inspection and enforcement powers to promote compliance;
 - d. Making available on a public register a list of companies required to report under the Act;
 - e. Lowering the annual turnover threshold to capture all large Australian businesses;
 - f. Covering public procurement by requiring all Government Departments and levels of Government to report under the Act;
 - g. Requiring companies to show they have genuinely engaged with unions in their operations and supply chains regarding improving workers' rights and tackling modern slavery;
 - h. Introducing due diligence requirements for companies ensuring they identify risks of modern slavery, put in place a system to prevent them, and provide an effective remedy when they occur;
 - i. Introducing provisions for the Act to apply extra-territorially so Australian companies are required to disclose the risks in their supply chains both domestically and overseas;
 - j. Introducing import bans on products made or suspected to be made using forced labour;
 - k. Amending the Criminal Code Act 1995, which is the legal source for defining forced labour in the Modern Slavery Act 2018, be amended to adequately capture and prohibit forced labour, including forced labour in shipping, fishing, textile, food production, domestic work, and other high-risk sectors;
 - l. Strengthening the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 Guidance for Reporting Entities so that reporting entities include in their Modern Slavery Statements actions taken to mitigate modern slavery risks in the shipping components of their domestic and global supply chains, and in particular that reporting entities demonstrate how the shipping components of their supply chains are:
 - Conforming with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Framework of Protocols for Ensuring Safe Ship Crew Changes and Travel During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and

- Conforming with The Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change.
 - Using the UN Global Compact's Seafarer Human Rights Due Diligence Checklist in company human rights due diligence processes.
32. Ensuring that franchisees provide all relevant information to the franchisor to enable the franchisor to meeting its reporting obligations including by changes made to Guidance for Reporting Entities, amending the Franchising Code and making it a term of a Franchise Agreement
 33. Introducing reforms in other areas to tackle modern slavery in Australia and abroad, such as reforming industrial laws and the migration system to protect workers' rights, and our trade policy to ensure Australia does not ratify trade agreements without enforceable workers' rights protections.

Mandatory human rights due diligence.

34. Australian businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights – including workers' rights – and should be held accountable for human rights violations in their operations and supply chains, regardless of where they are located. Currently there is no binding obligation for Australian companies to identify, mitigate and remediate violations of human rights in their business activities, relationships and supply chains. Workers and communities whose rights are abused by Australian business activity are often left without any legal means to seek a remedy against the company through the Australian courts.
35. Congress will advocate and campaign to mandatory human rights due diligence legislation. The law should require Australian businesses to take meaningful steps to prevent and address adverse human rights impacts in their operations and supply chains wherever they operate and provide access to remedy for people who have suffered adverse human rights impacts caused or contributed by an Australian company. Human rights should include workers' and trade union rights as main components and ensure the full involvement of trade unions and workers in the due diligence process. The law should provide effective remedies and access to justice for victims, including trade unions. Liability should be introduced where companies fail to respect due diligence obligations.
36. Congress calls on the Australian Government to engage in negotiations and support the proposed UN Binding Treaty on business and human rights that would hold business accountable for human rights violations they commit and provide victims with access to effective legal remedy.

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

37. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are a global standard on responsible business conduct and have additional weight as the Guidelines are endorsed by the developed nations of the world including Australia. The Guidelines are consistent with the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation and the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights.
38. The Guidelines create expectations of company performance that are in many cases over and above that which is required by law. This is the case in Australia, where our workplace laws fall short of international minimum human rights standards. The Guidelines also create expectations about the performance of Australian companies in other nations where our laws generally do not apply.
39. One problem with the OECD Guidelines in Australia is that they are almost invisible – very few have heard of them, they are not promoted enough by Government and in most cases attempts to use the Guidelines' tools for making complaints about companies do not result in effective redress, the biggest issue being the lack of penalties for a company refusing to engage in the complaints process.
40. Congress will advocate and campaign to strengthen the AusNCP in line with the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD's (TUAC) best practice guidance for National Contact Points, calling on Governments to:

- a. Sufficiently resource NCPs with the capacity to promote and protect the Guidelines;
 - b. Establish fair processes that incentivise good faith participation for companies in NCP proceedings, including penalties for companies that do not engage, such as exclusion from public procurement;
 - c. Regularly incorporate trade unions and workers in promotional activities;
 - d. Help level the playing field by addressing leverage imbalances between parties to a specific instance;
 - e. Observe a narrow set of criteria for initial assessments that determine whether the issue raised is bona fide and relevant to the implementation of the Guidelines;
 - f. Pursue outcomes in the most expeditious timeline;
 - g. Incorporate the Guidelines in policymaking activities related to trade and investment agreements, public procurement and private development.
41. Congress commits to monitor and provide feedback on the performance of the AusNCP in order to strengthen the mechanism; raise awareness of the AusNCP complaints mechanism within the Australian and international union movement; and work with the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) to improve the OECD guidelines and NCP system.

Gender equality

42. Industrial and trade policies have both ignored and reinforced the structural barriers that impact women's ability to compete fairly in the labour market. Structural barriers include discrimination, the gender wage gap, occupational segregation, women's over-representation in the informal economy and often women's double burden of paid work and unpaid care work. There is a common assumption that economic growth will automatically increase women's economic and social rights, however, this carries an inherent gender blindness. Short-term jobs growth often hides gender inequality in wages further entrenching historical wage discrimination in export-manufacturing industries such as garment work and electronic assembly.
43. Globally, women tend to be concentrated in the bottom levels of the global supply chain, in sectors with lower pay, less prestige and fewer benefits, such as the garment, electronic assembly and service sectors. More women than men work in agriculture, where they comprise approximately 70 per cent of the informal workforce. Further, women usually constitute 60 to 90 per cent of the workforce in special economic zones, where worker protections and right to collective bargaining are sharply reduced or eliminated in order to attract foreign investment.
44. Only about half of women globally are in the labour force, compared to more than three-quarters of men. Three-quarters of their employment is in informal and unprotected work. Discrimination, abuse and relegation to jobs at the bottom of the global economy undermine women workers' ability to join and form organizations that defend their interests. The global gender wage gap, currently estimated at 77 per cent, is a further indicator of discrimination against women workers. At the current rate, it is estimated that it will take 257 years to close the global gender pay gap.
45. Gender inequality plays out in both the public sphere and in the private sphere as women often have a double burden of paid work and a primary caretaker role in the home. The disproportionate burden of household work and care work often falls to women across cultures, inhibiting their mobility and limiting employment opportunities that often need to be balanced with family obligations. Across developed and developing countries this forces women into part-time, on-call, at-home or underpaid and under-valued care labour.

46. Gender-based violence at work includes a spectrum of abuse from verbal abuse and threats, physical abuse; sexual violence; bullying; psychological abuse and intimidation; sexual harassment; economic and financial abuse; stalking; attempted murder and murder.
47. To achieve women's economic empowerment, we need a radical transformation of labour markets to meet the needs of women. Our domestic and international policies must be reoriented toward an explicit focus on gender equality that is focused on increasing women's economic and social rights, with a commitment to creating decent work for all women.
48. In addition to endorsing international frameworks, Australia should fully implement and monitor progress of international frameworks regarding gender and economic and social rights. Being a leader on women's empowerment includes implementing and monitoring the progress of the:
 - a. United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - b. ILO Conventions on Discrimination (No. 111), Equal Remuneration (No. 100), Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156) and Maternity Protection (No. 183); Recommendation 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy; and ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment (No. 190) and Violence and Harassment Recommendation (No. 206);
 - c. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and
 - d. The UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
49. Congress calls on the Australian Government to continue to work to address structural barriers to decent work and equal participation in the labour market by women workers around the world by:
 - a. supporting women's representation and leadership in our region as key to reducing gender equality
 - b. supporting the development of social protection systems that give access to social protections for all women, without regard to employment or migration status;
 - c. supporting the provision of full and equal access to education, skills and employment training programs, and addressing gender-specific structures and barriers to inclusion;
 - d. supporting the provision of quality health care throughout women's lifecycles, parental leave, sick leave and other measures to reduce the burden of unpaid care and household work on women and households
 - e. supporting addressing the historical under valuation of care work and domestic work traditionally done by women by including what is considered social reproductive work in a GDP measurement
 - f. increasing the support for sexual and reproductive health and rights within the aid program and in policy engagement with partner governments;
 - g. Promoting ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment (C190).

Multilateral institutions and Australia's human rights obligations

50. Congress notes that multilateralism is in crisis – International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have imposed austerity and undermined the conditions of working people, trade rules have paved the way for the

concentration of wealth into the hands of a few, global tax reform has failed to deliver, and the UN system has been weakened. A reformed multilateralism must put people at the centre, and the ILO, with its social justice mandate, has the capacity to lead the way.

51. The current debt architecture of the International Financial Institutions places an unfair burden on working people, where governments of developing countries are forced to prioritise servicing a debt rather than funding public services and social protection. Workers bear the main consequences of debt crises, including job losses, declining wages and bargaining power, collapsing exchange rates leading to higher prices and shortages of food and other essentials, and austerity measures including privatization of public services, declining social protection. The IFIs must be reformed to ensure that their debt architectures are fair and sustainable, and that they deliver on their mandate by providing a safety net for all countries in troubled times. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank must ensure that their lending standards promote the advancement of human rights, rather than undermine them.
52. Congress supports the work being undertaken by the ITUC and Global Union Federations in this area and calls on all international financial and development institutions:
 - a. to honour and respect the 2008 ILO Social Justice Declaration for a Fair Globalisation, which provides the framework for implementation of decent work built on core labour standards, social protection and safety;
 - b. to adopt effective social and environmental safeguards that require all investments and projects to comply with all ILO core labour standards, including freedom of association and right to collective bargaining, irrespective of their status in national law;
 - c. to not fund projects that permit the privatisation of public services, or utilise asbestos;
 - d. to create contracts which fully cover government workers, contract and sub-contract workers directly and in the supply chain, and to cover workers in the informal sector.

Peace

53. Congress reaffirms that the Australian union movement stands for peace. Congress notes that peace is the precondition for the realisation of decent work, and that working people are the ones who suffer from conflict and militarism. Congress notes that the climate crisis is a threat to peace.
54. Congress acknowledges the devastating humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, which are inherently indiscriminate and inhumane. Their existence threatens the security of all. Congress is committed to a world free of weapons of mass destruction and a nuclear-free defence policy for Australia.
55. Congress welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the United Nations in 2017, and the entry into force of the TPNW on 22 January 2021, making nuclear weapons illegal in international law. Congress congratulates the Australian-founded International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons for their role in bringing about the TPNW, for which they were awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Congress calls on the Australian Government to sign and ratify the TPNW as a humanitarian imperative.
56. Congress also continues to call for the full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and minimise the proliferation of arms by calling on Governments to reduce military spending and invest in vital public services, decent jobs and renewable energy instead. Congress commits to standing on the front lines of struggles for peace and democratic rights and against autocratic governments and associated militarism.

International solidarity

57. International solidarity is a key part of our movement, and we will continue to stand with the unions and the people in those countries subject to conflict, occupation or dictatorship where there is no rule of law or no guarantee of democratic freedoms. We will continue to support decolonisation and the right to self-determination. We will take a stand against abuses of workers' rights, including forced labour, in global supply chains. Congress affirms the long-standing priorities for action for Australian unions through the ACTU are:
 - a. to uphold the rights of workers everywhere and, in particular, in our immediate neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region;
 - b. To uphold the rights of overseas workers in Australia on temporary visas by working for legislative changes that would promote effective enforcement of legal minimum standards of remuneration and workplace safety.
 - c. to work to eliminate discrimination, xenophobia and racism;
 - d. to promote democratic reform and the peaceful resolution of conflict;
 - e. to support an independent Australian foreign policy;
 - f. to drive support for nuclear disarmaments and non-proliferation and abolition of weapons of mass destruction;
 - g. to support decolonisation;
 - h. to monitor and seek to influence democratic, peaceful outcomes to support workers and unions especially in countries and areas of the Asia-Pacific region including:

- The Pacific, where a key task ahead is for Australian unions to build on and deepen solidarity links with Pacific Island unions. The Australian Government's relationship with the Pacific should be on the basis of mutual benefit to the people of Australia and the Pacific; Congress notes Australia has a responsibility to assist our neighbours in the Pacific region through reducing carbon emissions.
- The Republic of Korea, where the Government is highly repressive of the right to join and establish trade unions and carry out legitimate union activities. In the past few years, the Korean Government has acted repeatedly to limit the basic freedoms of unions. We are particularly concerned with the arrest and prosecution of many trade unionists, the refusal to register and attempts to de-register unions, raids of trade union premises, the criminalisation of strikes and other trade union activities, and excessive damages claims against workers. The ACTU confirms its solidarity with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).
- Hong Kong, where workers mobilised as part of the anti-extradition bill movement in 2019, which transformed into a movement for democracy calling for universal suffrage. Congress condemns the Hong Kong Government's brutal crackdown on the movement, the arrest and harassment of trade unionists for expressing their rights to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association, and the passing of the repressive National Security Law in 2020, which has led to the disbanding of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) and a number of its affiliates, and the jailing of HKCTU leaders. Congress stands in solidarity with Hong Kong unionists in their campaign for democracy and defence of trade union rights, and calls for the immediate release of all imprisoned unionists and political prisoners.
- Cambodia, where the Hun Sen Government, and now the Government led by his son Hun Manet, is attempting to silence political opposition and outlaw legitimate civil society and media scrutiny. The rights of free independent unions continue to be suppressed. Dozens of unions have had their official registration blocked, which has led to them being unable to conclude collective bargaining for their members. Informal workers, who represent 90% of the workforce, continue to be excluded from the Labour Law and the Trade Union Law.
- Prominent trade union leaders and critics of the Government continue to be charged for exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and freedom of association, including leaders and activists of the Labor Rights Supported Union (LRSU) of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld, jailed in 2023 for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.
- Myanmar, where progress towards democracy has been wound back by the military coup of February 2021, which has suspended civilian government and effectively returned full power to the military. The military's coup follows their 2017 campaign of terror against ethnic and religious minorities, which included credible allegations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya people, as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity in Kachin and Shan States. Congress urges the Australian Government to:
 - enact additional sanctions against the military, its leaders, and its business interests and business partners;
 - recognise the National Unity Government (NUG) – the civilian government – as the legitimate representatives of Myanmar;
 - require all Australian businesses operating in Myanmar to suspend their operations until democracy is restored;
 - provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the Civil Disobedience Movement which has

erupted nationally in response to the coup, as well as cross-border humanitarian assistance to those fleeing the violence on the Thai and India borders;

- use all diplomatic leverage and influence to ensure rule of law is upheld and a return to democratic norms, civilian led government and the immediate release of those detained including journalists, civil society activists and MPs;
- support accountability mechanisms and proceedings including at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.
- Congress urges Australian businesses doing business in and with Myanmar to:
 - i. immediately divest from any relationships with military owned, controlled or linked businesses and organisations, including, as long as the military controls the government, state owned enterprises;
 - ii. temporarily suspend operations in Myanmar and call on the Myanmar military to allow a return to democratic norms and a civilian led government.

58. Congress commits to supporting the Myanmar trade union movement in their struggle for democracy and urges the movement to extend their solidarity to the people of Rakhine and seek to build an inclusive and tolerant nation in which strong democratic institutions serve all citizens.
59. West Papua, where violations of human and trade union rights are endemic and reports of atrocities chillingly frequent. Congress supports the right of the West Papuan people to self-determination consistent with UN principles; recognises the Federal Republic of West Papua; and further supports the application by United Liberation Movement for West Papua for full membership of the Melanesian Spearhead Group.
60. The Republic of the Philippines, where over 70 trade union members and leaders have been murdered by extra-judicial violence for their trade union work since 2016. Congress supports the Philippine trade union movement and applauds the ITUC in documenting the 'red tagging', assassination, disappearance, and filing of false criminal charges against trade unionists, as well as cases of picketing workers being shot at. Congress calls on the Marcos Government to stop the 'red tagging', the attacks and killings of trade unionists, and to ensure accountability for the extra-judicial killings; and to repeal the Anti-Terrorism Act, which further threatens the rights of workers to organise, and for the full implementation of the recommendations of the 2023 ILO high level tripartite mission. Congress calls on the Australian Government to stop enabling human rights violations in the Philippines through its continued funding and support of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.
61. Turkey, where the Erdogan regime continues to persecute trade unionists in an attempt to silence the voice of workers. Since the attempted coup in 2016, the Turkish Government has severely restricted civil liberties and cracked down on independent trade unions. Freedom of opinion, expression and association are being systematically undermined, and trade union leaders continue to face arrests and prosecutions to suppress dissent. Along with the ITUC and ETUC, Australian workers demand freedom and justice for the Turkish union movement.
62. Iran, where independent trade unions are banned, and trade unionists are often imprisoned for attempting to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and association. Trade unionists are often detained in remote secret prisons, subjected to ill-treatment and denied access to a lawyer. Workers' demonstrations are violently repressed, with workers and union leaders arrested and imprisoned for exercising their right to strike. Australian unions add their support and solidarity to our Iranian comrades.

63. The Kingdom of Thailand, where despite some positive legislative changes, modern slavery in the fishing and sex industries remains rife. Tens of thousands of people are kidnapped, suffer forced labour, and endure physical violence and the threat of death each year. Congress supports the ITF and ILO in their work to document and address the issues. Congress is outraged at the three-year prison terms imposed on thirteen leaders of the State Railway Workers' Union (SRUT) in 2020 for campaigning for improved health and safety measures, following a fatal train derailment in 2009. Congress supports the return of the democracy movement in Thailand and calls on for the end of the military dictatorship.
64. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES), the mainly Kurdish region also known as Rojava. The Turkish and Syrian Kurds and their allies were instrumental in crushing the Islamic State, at the cost of thousands of lives. Congress condemns the continued attacks by Turkey, led by President Erdoğan, against Rojava. We demand that the Australian Government do all in its power to protest and stop Turkey's brazen aggression.
65. Timor-Leste, which has reached an agreement for a treaty on disputed maritime borders with Australia and is on a "pathway" to develop the giant Greater Sunrise offshore gas fields. We support the news that up to 80% of the gas and oil revenues will go to our youngest neighbouring country.
66. Cuba has been under United States economic and financial blockade for 60 years. The US blockade affects every single family in Cuba and undermines its right to self-determination. Since 1996 Australia has voted against the US blockade at the UN General Assembly with only the US and Israel continuing to vote in favour of the inhumane blockade. Congress calls for an immediate end to the blockade.
67. Support for independent, representative and democratic unions in other countries including China, North Korea, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.
68. Support for the work of the ITUC and GUF's to continue their efforts to ensure that the Qatari Government ends the kafala system of modern slavery, and spread the campaign to the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
69. Support for the work of the international trade union movement to end forced labour in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the People's Republic of China, where as many as 1.8 million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Muslim minorities are, or have been, arbitrarily detained and subject to forced labour, both inside and beyond the internment camps.
70. Support for ending the occupation of Palestine and a just and sustainable peace in accordance with resolutions 242 and 338 of the UN Security Council, with the removal of illegal settlements, the withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian lands along with the dismantling of the separation wall. In line with our commitment to a two-state solution with the security of borders for both nations, we call on all countries to recognise, without delay, Palestine as a sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This will confirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a free and independent Palestine. Congress calls for an immediate and lasting ceasefire, and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid into Palestine corridors to allow humanitarian aid into Palestine. Congress calls on the Australian Government to exercise all avenues of influence and pressure and diplomacy to stop the bombing and ground assault by Israel into Gaza and work for an immediate and lasting ceasefire.
71. Support for the development of trade unions and the organising of workers in Pacific Island countries and support for the newly formed Pacific Council of Trade Unions (PICTU) to provide a collective voice and support the organising of workers in the Pacific.
72. Support for Western Sahara, where around 173,000 Saharawis continue to live in dire conditions in refugee camps in South West of Algeria. Congress deplores the flagrant violation by the Moroccan army of the ceasefire in November 2020, and the subsequent resumption of conflict in Western Sahara. Congress condemns the use of drones by Morocco to target and kill civilians in the liberated areas of

Western Sahara. Congress strongly supports the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence in accordance with UN resolutions and relevant UN decolonisation doctrines; and calls on the Australian Government to recognize the Saharawi Republic. Congress condemns the gross violations of human rights in the occupied territories of Western Sahara and calls on the Moroccan Government to withdraw its army from the Buffer Strip and respect the terms of the ceasefire, respect human rights in the Saharawi occupied territories, and to release all Saharawi political prisoners, particularly the Gdeim Izik group of human rights defenders whose detention was deemed illegal by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Congress calls on the UN to:

73. pressure Morocco to withdraw its army from the Buffer Strip and respect the terms of the ceasefire;
74. expand the mandate of its mission to include human rights monitoring;
75. protect the natural resources of Western Sahara and set up a UN Council for the Natural Resources of Western Sahara;
76. take immediate steps to restore the ceasefire and deliver a lasting resolution to the conflict, which must include the long overdue referendum of self-determination.
 - Support the demands of people for peace and security in other nations ravaged by conflict including Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen
 - Support ongoing work in Bangladesh, where labour law is still not compliant with core ILO Conventions, especially Conventions 87 and 98 with respect freedom of association and the right to organise: for example, the ability to form unions is constrained (30% of a factory workforce required to be members before a union can be registered), work health and safety laws are very weak, with no legal right to elect WHS representatives or committees and no legislated right for workers to stop work in dangerous situations; Congress calls on the ILO to pressure the Bangladesh Government through all means available to stop trade union rights violations and to further reform the labour law and for the Australian Government to register its concerns with the Bangladesh Government over the slow progress of the Safety Accord.

Overseas aid

77. Congress calls on the Australian Government to honour international commitments to raise international development expenditure to 0.7 per cent of GNI, with at least 20 per cent of the aid program delivered by non-profit Australian NGOs in partnership with local civil society organisations. Overcoming the COVID-19 crisis requires expanding aid budgets; COVID-19 responses and any new initiatives must be funded by additional ODA funding – not reductions in aid to other regions or initiatives. The Australian Government should allocate additional aid resources to focus on building the capacity of public health systems to build resilience, and the development and expansion of social protection systems. Additionally, Australian aid should focus on addressing the climate crisis and increased inequality.
78. The current situation in which such a significant proportion of the aid budget goes to a handful of for-profit companies is unacceptable. The Australian Government should ensure that the aid funds it assigns to the private sector establish resilient supply chains by making funding conditional on safe and secure employment, and any private sector actors receiving ODA funds should also uphold freedom of association, occupational safety and health, and provide decent wages and conditions. Congress further calls on the Australian government to hold an inquiry into the transparency, accountability, effectiveness, value for money and profit margins in the large commercial contracts within the aid program.

79. Congress notes that trade unions are a key contributor to social and economic development, and as a leading component of democratic civil society.
80. Congress commits the ACTU to press the Australian Government to substantially refocus aspects of its international development assistance programs so that:
- a. Recipient nations commit to internationally accepted labour standards as part of acceptance of Australian aid;
 - b. Programs involving employment contain a component requiring independent trade union participation;
 - c. The development of quality public services are supported and the privatisation of public and community services is reversed and public sector programs assist recipient nations develop regulatory structures capable of tackling corruption and ensuring those nations have the capability to ratify and comply with the ILO's Core Conventions;
 - d. The objectives of overseas aid-funded programmes reflect our internationally agreed targets set within the Sustainable Development Goals and other related international treaties and conventions;
 - e. A component of aid program funding is set aside to ensure that in all significant infrastructure and resource development projects the local population is trained in skills to enable them to be employed in these projects, to ensure these jobs respect workers' rights as espoused by the ILO's Core Conventions, and to ensure that the government of that country receives a fair share of the wealth generated from their resources to provide public goods;
 - f. Ongoing funding is earmarked for the development of the trade union movement.
81. Congress reaffirms support for Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA as the global justice organisation of the Australian union movement, advancing international solidarity in support of equality, justice and human rights for all. Union Aid Abroad works to support the building of strong union and social movements, in particular along four priority areas:
- a. trade union and workers rights' and safety;
 - b. rights of migrant workers and refugees against exploitation;
 - c. women's rights and feminist movement development; and
 - d. climate justice, just transition and energy democracy.

