Committee: International Labour Organization
Topic: Extending labor protections to platform and gig economic workers globally.
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Overview of the Problem

Gig employees have been growing in recent years, providing people with employment opportunities due to the better flexibility of the work schedule via apps and websites. Such apps as Uber, DoorDash, and Deliveroo provide people with an opportunity to earn money as a driver, delivery person, or freelancer. However, there are also some drawbacks of this type of job that relate to the workers' rights and working conditions. As platforms classify their workers as freelancers and not as direct employees of the company, most gig workers lack benefits such as vacation pay, health insurance, and social security, as well as their income depending on the demand and number of hours they work. In addition, people have to pay for things such as fuel, vehicle repairs, and internet connection. These issues have different aspects and include platform companies, workers, governmental agencies, and the International Labour Organization. While providing people with employment opportunities and flexibility, workers should not have given up on their fundamental rights to take advantage of them. The committee will discuss ways of improving the working conditions of gig economy workers worldwide.

Introduction

The globalization of labor protections for platform and gig workers is an important issue. Millions of people earn and survive due to their work in the platform economy. Digital platforms are not a justification for workers for not being treated fairly. This issue is applicable to every country in the world due to the continued growth of the gig economy. All workers should have the same access to labor rights, independently of their employment condition or the platform they work for. For the addressing of this issue,

the cooperation of the International Labour Organization is essential. This would help to collaborate globally to form labor standards and encourage the states to put into place actions that can improve working conditions.

Historical Background

As apps and online platforms became more popular throughout the 2000s and 2010s, the issue of labor rights for workers within platform and gig economies began to become a bigger issue. While platforms such as Uber and Deliveroo provided new ways for people to earn money by linking them directly with customers and often gave greater flexibility around working hours, there were concerns about workers' rights. There has been a 2021 report on how the digital labor platforms are changing the world of work and what needs improving (ILO, 2021). Governments have begun to take steps to deal with this issue. For example, in 2024 the European Union adopted the Platform Work Directive, which aims to improve working conditions for those working in the platform industry, including ensuring they have the correct employment status and that they are not being managed unfairly using algorithms. Despite this, improvements have varied between countries, and many workers have little protection. In June 2026, ILO adopted Convention No. 193—Decent Work in the Platform Economy. This is a key step in setting global standards for workers in this industry. However, this convention has yet to come into effect, meaning that its impact will depend on countries ratifying it. Overall, improvements have been made; however, there needs to be further international collaboration to ensure that workers in the platform and gig economy are treated fairly and have fundamental labor rights.

The Situation Today

Digital platforms such as Uber, Didi, and delivery apps have become an important source of income for people. It is estimated that there are between 154 and 435 million platform-or online-based gig workers worldwide (UN DESA, 2026). However, many

workers will experience uncertainty by not knowing how much money they will make, lack of social security, and confusion around if they are employees or self-employed. Many platforms use algorithms to assign work, pay rates, and rate workers, which can cause confusion. There can also be differences depending on the country you are in due to different labor laws and opportunities. Mexico passed their labor reform for digital platform workers on the 1st of January 2026, which has given workers more access to social security while still keeping the flexibility of this type of work. This shows how governments can act to help workers, but this leads to the question of how countries can ensure that workers do not lose out on their rights due to the flexibility of working on a platform. As the digital platform industry grows, governments must ensure those who work on them can earn a living in a fair and safe manner (ILO, 2026; UN DESA, 2026).

Key Stakeholders and Their Positions

There are many different opinions on how the workers in the platform economy should be protected. Governments want to make sure workers have access to basic labor rights while also allowing digital platforms to continue operating and creating job opportunities. Some countries, such as Mexico, have already started introducing new laws to give these workers better protections. International organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) work to bring governments, companies, and workers together to find solutions and establish fair labor standards. Companies such as Uber and DiDi, however, often highlight the flexibility their platforms offer, since workers can usually decide when and how much they want to work. At the same time, they may be concerned about regulations that could increase their costs or change the way they operate. Workers and labor unions have other priorities, such as fair pay, access to social security, safer working conditions, and knowing why a platform makes certain decisions about their work. Even though these groups do not always agree, each one has an important role in addressing the issue. The challenge is to find a balance that protects workers' rights while keeping the flexibility and opportunities that make a platform work appealing. (ILO, 2026; UN DESA, 2026).

Past Attempts and Existing Frameworks

There have been actions taken by several countries and international bodies to improve working conditions of gig workers.

In 2021, the ILO produced into how digital labour platforms are affecting the world of work, highlighting areas that need improvement. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8 encourages decent working conditions, fair pay and worker rights. A new directive called the Platform Work Directive was passed in 2024 by the European Union to improve working conditions for workers, addressing issues such as employment status and algorithmic management. Spain has also implemented measures to improve protections for some platform workers, particularly those who work on delivery applications.

While there have been some efforts to increase social security, seasonal breaks, fair pay and improve working conditions, there are still large gaps within this. There are also issues in some countries in enforcing this. This shows a need for increased international cooperation and clear regulations.

Challenges and Complications

Ensuring worker protection within today's global economy presents complex regulatory challenges for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Within the digital platform industry, there are significant challenges. The first issue involves the different national policies currently in place. Countries do not have agreement over how they should protect gig workers. While some countries have implemented specific policies, such as China, and widened some social protection coverage for platform workers like India, the United States has multiple policies across the country. In contrast, Mexico has developed a specific polity of its own , In contrast, Mexico introduced a reform to the Federal Labor Law on DIgital Platforms in December 2024, which came into force in January 2026.This reform provides eligible platform workers with access to social security, labor benefits, and protection against unfair dismissal. It also promotes transparency in platform algorithms while allowing workers to choose their schedules.Mexico believes that flexibility and labor rights should work together.

This makes it incredibly difficult to create one universal policy (ILO, 2024). Many countries lack the resources to enforce policies. They do not have the required funds, staff, and resources that are required to monitor workers effectively (ILO, 2025).

The fast-paced development of technology introduces more issues. Platform workers are often supervised by algorithms instead of people. These algorithms decide how workers are allocated jobs, what rating they get, and can even terminate their account. Algorithms often cannot be understood by workers (ILO, 2024). This issue leads into the debate around classifying platform workers. Deciding whether platform workers should be classed as employees or independent contractors is a huge issue. Different countries have varying methods of doing this. For example, Brazil, China, India, and the U.S. have their own legal frameworks in place to classify platform workers. This causes confusion globally over how to classify them (ILO, 2024).

Cultural facts play a large role in defining how worker rights should be protected. The ILO operates in many different countries with different socioeconomic backgrounds, so it needs to make policies that can be adapted to fit different countries while still protecting basic rights (ILO, 2006). Overall the main focus of the ILO is to ensure policies are set to a high standard while taking into consideration the country. Although countries such as Germany, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Brazil may have different perspectives on protecting workers' rights and working together to protect workers fairly with social protection and decent working conditions (ILO, 2024).

The Committee's Role and Powers

The International Labour Organization committee aims to safeguard workers' rights and establish clear, fair working-condition guidelines across the globe. It pays special attention to people who work on app-based jobs, like food-delivery careers, ride-hailing drivers, and self-employed freelancers. Many of these workers get classified as independent contractors rather than regular employees. Because of that label, they often struggle to access proper benefits, reasonable pay rates, and basic social security support. The committee can suggest solutions and create international labor standards, but it cannot force countries or companies to follow them. However, protecting gig

workers is not easy because countries have different laws, economic situations, and opinions about workers' rights. Some governments worry that stricter rules could increase business costs and reduce job opportunities. Other challenges include limited resources, unclear decisions made by technology and algorithms, and a lack of proper implementation of existing laws. To address these problems, delegates will work together to create a resolution with useful solutions that improve workers' safety, payment, and rights while allowing businesses to grow and workers to keep the flexibility they value. The ILO can also collaborate with other UN groups, such as ECOSOC, to support these goals. During the debate, delegates must respect different opinions, follow the chair's instructions, speak formally, and work together to find solutions that benefit gig workers around the world.

Guiding Questions for Debate

1. How can the ILO protect gig workers without taking away the flexibility that many of them value?
2. Should gig workers be classified as employees or independent contractors, or should there be a new category for them?
3. How can countries with very different economies, such as the United States, China, India, Mexico, and Germany, agree on common protections for gig workers?
4. Who should be responsible for providing benefits and social security to gig workers?
5. How can governments regulate companies without creating rules that are too expensive for businesses or reduce job opportunities?
6. What should happen when an algorithm makes an unfair decision about a worker’s pay, hours, or access to the platforms?
7. How can the ILO make sure that workers in countries with fewer resources receive the same basic protections as workers in wealthier countries?

8. Should countries be allowed to create their rules for gig workers, or should the ILO establish stronger international standards?
9. How can governments protect gig workers while still encouraging technology and new digital businesses to grow?
10. What solutions could help countries with different cultural, legal, and economic systems agree on minimum rights for gig workers?
11. How can the ILO make sure that new protections are actually implemented instead of only existing on paper?
12. What can governments, companies, workers, and international organizations do together to make gig work safe and fairer?

Protecting gig workers is a key issue, as many individuals are reliant on these platform-based jobs. Many workers still face a lack of job security, limited benefits, unfair pay, and unclear working conditions. The ILO plays a key role in enabling countries to work together to improve gig workers whilst taking into account their differing laws and circumstances (ILO, 2024).

Now is the time to take action as the gig economy is expanding rapidly alongside technological advances. If countries delay actions, more workers may be left facing unfair conditions. International organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) work to collaborate with governments, companies, and workers together to find solutions and establish fair labour standards. Delegates can contribute by remaining open to different opinions,understanding their countries' positions, and focusing on cooperation and consensus. You can suggest solutions that will ensure workers are protected but also allow businesses and technology to develop. All workers should feel safe, valued, and fairly treated. As a delegate you can work with others to create a future where new working styles can provide opportunities without leaving workers behind.

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