Date: 22.05.2020

To
Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

Ref.: Nationwide Protest on 22nd May 2020 against Draconian Changes in Labour Laws and opening floodgates of privatization of national resources and assets and other demands

Sir,

You must have received reports of nation-wide protests by mass of the workers called by joint platform of almost all the central trade unions and independent national federations of employees, held on 22nd May, 2020 against draconian changes in labour laws being affected by various state governments at your behest and ushering in an era of rampant privatisation, while ignoring all the demands of the working people of the country for direct universal food support and cash support to the needy households who are suffering the most under lockdown situation . The extreme cases are those of UP, Gujarat and MP, where almost all the labour laws are sought to be suspended for three years while same is being expanded to other states at the direct instance and insistence of central government.

The trade unions independently and unitedly have made several representations to you and the Labour Minister in this regard as well as about the rampant violations of the government's own directives/advisories in regard to payment of full wages to workers during lock down and non-termination of employment but in vain. Overwhelming majority of workers were denied even the wages for the work done immediately before and during the lockdown period, lakhs have been thrown out of employment and also evicted from their place of stay in arrogant violation of the directives of your government. Now your government has withdrawn the above directives, instead of enforcing them, in fact legitimizing the non-compliance by the employers' class, in which the Govt is quite liberal.

Daily reports about the migrant workers show their desperation to reach their homes. Many have been walking for several hundreds of miles on roads, on railway tracks, through fields and jungles with several precious lives having been lost on the way due to hunger, exhaustion and accidents. The worst sufferers have been women and children in this process. Complete lack of sensitivity and co-ordination between the Centre and the States in dealing with this gigantic human problem, which is of your own making, due to abrupt decisions without taking into confidence, Parliament, the state governments, political parties and the people who were key in fighting COVID 19, is glaring. Migrant workers are being turned back from inter-state borders. It has been observed that there is an attempt to prevent the workers from going back and make them work in the factories from which they were driven out! All this means that the workers are to be used as bonded labour without any rights to protest against for cruel exploitation in the interest of capital without any guarantee of wages, safety and healthcare, social security and above all human dignity only to benefit those who maximize their profits on the blood and sweat of workers. This is against the basic tenets of human rights.

There is much talk of the Rs 20 lakh crore package rolled out by your government, of which according to several economists, the real money transfer to common people is only around 1% of the GDP; all the rest is only the guarantees against various borrowings by different sectors as announced by the Finance Minister. But our immediate concern is that there is nothing concrete in it to feed our people when their employment/livelihood has been stopped due to lock down. We cannot but object to the fact that your government has not withdrawn the budgeted expenditure on "New Parliament Project", the "NPR Process" when expenditure on migrant workers transport back to their villages is being debated whereas it should be the priority as well as binding responsibility of the Govt! In essence, the five tranches' announcement by your Finance Minister, instead of providing any relief to several crores of working population, both in urban and rural economy, has in actuality, come out as permanent empowerment of the big corporate and business houses, both foreign and domestic to deny, rather kill, the basic human entitlements of the working people on human survival with dignity. There is a continuous neglect of health sector, key sector in war against corona, and the front line workers at the lowest rungs like scheme and sanitation workers by your government.

We demand immediate relief to stranded workers for safe reaching to their homes, food to be made available to all, universal coverage of ration distribution without conditions, ensure wages to all of the entire lock down period, cash transfer of Rs.7500/- to all non-income tax paying households including unorganized labour force (registered or unregistered or self employed) for at least three months i.e. April, May and June, withdraw DA freeze to central government employees & CPSEs and DR freeze to pensioners, stop surrendering of live sanctioned posts, put a complete halt to any changes/dilutions in the labour laws. We also demand the strengthening of the Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act 1979 to ensure compulsory registration of migrant workers by the governments at the both ends, by the establishments employing them directly and through contractors with adequate protective provisions on wages, social security, accommodation and welfare needs with a strong and accountable enforcement mechanism. The Act should not be repealed as being planned by your Govt.

We demand that you halt your policy of wholesale privatization PSUs and government departments through multi-pronged routes like corporatization, outsourcing, PPP, liberalized FDI etc, which were reiterated and announced during the package announcements by the FM from 13th May to 17th May 2020 in particular and also in your own addresses during lock down period.
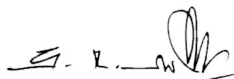
Yours sincerely,

INTUC	AITUC	HMS	CITU	AIUTUC

TUCC	SEWA	AICCTU	LPF	UTUC

And the Federations and Associations of various sectors