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ILO calls for guarantee of basic work rights in changing economy

The peak body for working people welcomes a landmark report from the ILO calling for a reaffirmation of basic workers' rights as we face systemic change brought on by automation.

The report calls for all workers to be protected by a Universal Labour Guarantee which guarantees organising, collective bargaining and other fundamental workers' rights along with health and safety at work, an adequate living wage and limits on working hours.

The report recognises that globalisation left behind the majority of working people and that this cannot be repeated as we navigate automation.

The report calls for life-long social safety net, a universal right to life-long education, using technological change to create good jobs, more investment in care, environmentally friendly technology and rural areas, a measurable commitment to gender equality and reshaping incentive structures to encourage long-term investments from business over short-term profit.

The report is a great step forward in the lead-up to the ILO Centenary Conference in June, which the trade union movement hopes will see the ILO make a strong commitment to basic rights for all workers in an increasingly automated world.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"We need to use automation as a chance to improve the quality of the lives of working people, not funnel more and more money into the pockets of the wealthy few.

"The ILO recognises what we know in Australia, working people need rights for today and tomorrow.

"This means we cannot be stuck in the past as too many workers are losing their rights as these rights were designed for last century.

"Technology and our changing economy mean we need to upgrade workers rights so they are compatible to today's world.

"The Australian union movement already recognises the need to upgrade rights so people are not left behind. This is why we are campaigning to change the rules."

ENDS

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