



# **StarMUN 2025, OHCHR:**

## **Research Report on the issue of the**

### **Right to Work**

#### **Introduction**

The right to work is more than a means of livelihood - it is essential to human dignity, development, and the realization of numerous other rights. Enshrined in core international human rights treaties, this right guarantees access to employment under just and favorable conditions, free from discrimination and exploitation. However, across the globe, millions face barriers such as forced labor, unemployment, informality, and discrimination, undermining the effective enjoyment of this right. This paper explores the scope and significance of the right to work, the challenges to its realization, and the responsibilities of states and the international community to protect it.

#### **Definition of Key Terms**

*Right to Work:* The right of everyone to access and freely choose or accept work without discrimination or coercion.

*Decent Work:* Employment that is productive, delivers fair income, ensures workplace security, and provides social protection and equal opportunities.

*Forced Labor:* All work or service extracted under threat or without consent, prohibited under international law.

*Informal Economy:* Economic activities not regulated or protected by the state, often lacking labor rights or benefits.

*Unemployment:* The state of being able and willing to work but without access to suitable employment.

#### **Background Information**

The right to work is articulated in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). While global unemployment and underemployment remain persistent, many also endure exploitative conditions, including child labor, gender-based discrimination, and unsafe workplaces. Migrant workers and marginalized populations are particularly vulnerable. Technological change, climate disruption, and globalization further complicate labor markets. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed systemic weaknesses, with over 255 million full-time jobs lost in 2020 alone, according to the ILO.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

- Bangladesh: Struggles with labor rights enforcement in the garment industry.
- Germany: Strong protections for workers' rights through social partnership models.
- United States: Debates over minimum wage, gig economy regulation, and labor protections.
- Qatar: Criticized for migrant labor practices but has initiated recent reforms.
- International Labor Organization (ILO): UN agency setting international labor standards.
- OHCHR: Promotes human rights-based labor protections and monitors violations.

## **Relevant International Agreements**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 6–8)
- ILO Conventions No. 87 (Freedom of Association) and 98 (Right to Organize)
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998)
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

## **Implications on Human Rights**

- Right to Dignity: Employment is tied to self-worth, identity, and empowerment.
- Right to Equality: Discriminatory practices deny equal access to work for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.
- Right to Health and Safety: Unsafe working conditions can violate the right to life and health.
- Right to Education: Child labor interferes with education and long-term development.
- Right to Social Security: Unemployment or informal labor often denies access to benefits and protections.

## **Past UN Actions**

- ILO Global Reports on Employment Trends
- UN General Assembly Resolutions on Decent Work
- UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights reports
- OHCHR guidance on business and human rights in labor
- Human Rights Council sessions addressing the impact of economic crises on employment

## **Possible Solutions**

- Implementing full ratification and enforcement of ILO conventions
- Establishing social protection floors, including unemployment benefits
- Ensuring minimum wage policies meet living wage standards
- Protecting workers in the informal and gig economy
- Promoting inclusive employment for marginalized groups
- Supporting skills training and transitions to green jobs

## **Conclusion**

The right to work is central to the realization of economic and social rights. As global inequalities deepen and labor markets evolve, governments must reaffirm their commitments to decent work, equality, and protection against exploitation. At STAR MUN 2025, delegates are encouraged to develop innovative, rights-based strategies to ensure universal access to dignified employment.

## **Bibliography**

- International Labour Organization (ILO): World Employment and Social Outlook
- OHCHR: “The Right to Work” Factsheet
- ICESCR Articles 6–8
- UN Human Rights Council Resolutions on Economic Rights
- UN SDG 8 Documentation
- Reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty and Human Rights

## **Useful Links and Sources**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/49/21>

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385510>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/227>

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/code-practice-disinformation>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/our-work/digital-space-and-human-rights>

<https://www.accessnow.org>

<https://www.article19.org>

<https://globalnetworkinitiative.org>