

HE Mrs Ruchi Ghanashyam
Office of the High Commissioner for India
India House, Aldwych
WC2B 4NA

21 March 2019

Dear High Commissioner

Solidarity with Indian trade unionists

On behalf of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) representing over 5.5 million workers, I urge you to inform your government of our concerns, shared with our Indian trade union colleagues, about developments in India's labour market and labour laws.

We are particularly concerned that unemployment has reached 200 million despite the government's pledge to create 20 million new jobs; that wages have fallen; and that workplace safety has worsened as labour inspections have become rarer. We support the call of Indian trade unions for a minimum wage of INR 18,000 a month.

The proportion of the workforce that is missing out on essential social protection and job security because they are in the informal economy has already risen to 93 per cent, and yet the government plans reforms to labour law which would informalise many more workers, especially by removing job protection for workers in companies with fewer than 300 employees, and allowing companies to replace contracted labour with apprentices who only get a stipend and have no right to join a union.

Finally, we share the concerns of Indian unions about the growth of slavery and bonded labour, and amendments to labour laws allowing family members to be employed, resulting in a rise in child labour.

We would be grateful if you could convey our concerns to your government and inform us of their response.

Yours sincerely

Frances O'Grady

General Secretary