

RESPONSE TO THE 'UNORGANISED WORKERS' SOCIAL SECURITY BILL, 2007' PLACED ON THE WEBSITE BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The Network members opposed this Bill of Ministry of Labour on the ground that it ignored the demands of trade unions, demands raised in the Nagpur Declaration and the demands submitted to the Labour Ministry by the consortium. We submitted following points to the Ministry vide letter dated February 15, 2007.

- i) The draft 'Unorganised Workers Social Security Bill 2007' is not comprehensive; the provisions of employment regulation, livelihood protection and dispute resolution are deliberately taken out.
- ii) The draft bill is merely a charity handout rather than a document that affirms the rights of workers based on the principle of social justice.
- iii) The term Social Security has not been defined in the current Bill. The components of social security as in ILO definition together with security needed immediately after disaster like earth quakes, flood etc and additional social security needed for dalits, women, tribal and other marginalized workers with decent work should be the necessary components of definition of 'Social Security'.
- iv) The definition of 'worker' excludes those getting above Rs. 6500/- and unpaid women workers. The wage ceiling for different social security benefits could have been left to the powers of boards in the schemes so as to make it flexible.
- v) The bill deliberately avoids affirming the rights of unorganised workers; their right to organise, rights of women, dalits, tribal and other marginalized workers, right to social security and other labour rights.
- vi) Accountability of the government has not been established-- a. Accountability from Consolidated Fund of India. b. Accountability of the Board to the Parliament.
- vii) Representation of dalits, women, tribal and other marginalized workers in the Social security boards and in administration of social security is ignored.
- viii) Affirmative provisions concerning these marginalized sections have not been incorporated.
- ix) The bill undermines the autonomy of the Social security boards.
- x) The role of the Social Security Boards and the government are confusing and overlapping. The bill does not prescribe clear autonomy of the Board.

xi) The government has blatantly ignored the demands of trade unions, peoples' organizations, this consortium and other community organisations. This Bill is a shell without content; a very diluted, narrow and rejectable attempt of the labour ministry.

In the light of the points given above, we strongly reject this bill in its present form.

Moreover, the manner in which this bill has been floated on the net gives little time to the citizens to respond to. It throws serious doubts on the intentions of the government. We wonder whether there is a deliberate attempt on the part of government to create confusions and further delay a comprehensive legislation for unorganized workers.