



# IUSY WORLD CONGRESS

26-29  
MARCH  
2026

ISTANBUL  
TURKIYE

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**Title | Título | Titre:**

## PROTECTING GIG WORKERS AND FORMALIZING THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

**Organization | Organización |  
Organisation:**

**Akbayan Youth**

**Country | País | Pays:**

**Philippines**

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3 We recognize that the gig economy and platform-based work have fundamentally  
4 transformed labor markets across the Asia-Pacific region, creating new forms of  
5 employment for millions of workers while simultaneously generating unprecedented  
6 exploitation and insecurity. Over 77 million workers in India alone are engaged in the  
7 gig economy, with projections estimating this will reach 235 million workers by 2030.  
8 Across the Asia-Pacific region, food delivery workers, ride-hailing drivers, domestic  
9 workers, and other platform workers face systematic denial of basic labor rights, social  
10 security, and workplace protections.

11 Platform companies including Uber, Ola, Swiggy, Zomato, Grab, Gojek, and  
12 multinational corporations deliberately misclassify workers as "independent  
13 contractors" or "partners" rather than employees, thereby evading all legal obligations  
14 including minimum wages, health insurance, pension contributions, paid leave, and  
15 occupational safety standards. This exploitation is most severe in developing nations  
16 where labor protections are weak and enforcement mechanisms inadequate. Workers  
17 face algorithmic management systems that monitor their every movement, impose  
18 arbitrary penalties, and can "deactivate" them without explanation or appeal—  
19 effectively terminating their livelihoods with no due process.

20 We commend the pioneering efforts of progressive state governments in India,  
21 particularly Telangana and Karnataka, which have enacted comprehensive gig worker  
22 protection legislation. The Telangana Platform-Based Gig Workers (Regulation of Work  
23 and Social Security) Act, 2023, and Karnataka's Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social  
24 Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024, establish crucial protections including registration of  
25 all platform companies and workers, social security benefits including health insurance,  
26 accident insurance, and old-age pensions funded by platform companies, welfare  
27 boards with representation from workers, companies, and government to oversee  
28 implementation, protection against arbitrary termination, establishment of grievance  
29 redressal mechanisms, and regulations on algorithmic management to prevent  
30 exploitative practices.



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31 However, these state-level initiatives face resistance from powerful multinational  
32 platform corporations who threaten to withdraw services and lobby aggressively  
33 against worker protections. The central Indian government has failed to enact national  
34 gig worker legislation despite years of promises. Meanwhile, most countries in the  
35 Asia-Pacific region have no legal framework whatsoever to protect platform workers,  
36 leaving them in a legislative vacuum where 19th-century labor laws cannot address  
37 21st-century digital exploitation.

38 The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the brutal reality of gig work, as platform workers  
39 were deemed "essential" yet received no health protections, hazard pay, or sick leave  
40 while risking their lives to deliver food and transport passengers. Many died from  
41 COVID-19 exposure with their families receiving no compensation. The informal  
42 economy, which platforms claimed to "formalize," has instead created new forms of  
43 informal exploitation at massive scale, with workers bearing all risks while corporations  
44 extract profits without responsibilities.

45 This is fundamentally a question of whether we will allow a future of work characterized  
46 by algorithmic tyranny and precarity, or whether we will ensure that technological  
47 advancement serves workers' dignity and security. The International Labour  
48 Organization (ILO), the United Nations specialized agency that sets international labor  
49 standards, has recognized that the gig economy must be formalized through  
50 comprehensive legal frameworks that extend all fundamental labor rights to platform  
51 workers.

## 52 **Therefore, we call on IUSY and all member organizations to:**

53 1. Support and amplify the demands of gig worker unions and collectives across the  
54 Asia-Pacific region, including standing in solidarity with workers striking for better  
55 conditions and protections.

56 2. Campaign for national legislation in all countries modeled on the Telangana and  
57 Karnataka acts, ensuring comprehensive social security, minimum earnings  
58 guarantees, occupational safety standards, and protection against arbitrary termination  
59 for all gig workers.

60 3. Demand that platform companies be legally classified as employers with full  
61 responsibilities for their workers' welfare, including contributions to social security  
62 funds, provision of equipment and safety gear, and recognition of collective bargaining  
63 rights.

64 4. Urge governments to establish tripartite welfare boards bringing together workers,  
65 companies, and government to regulate the platform economy, with democratic  
66 representation for workers in all decision-making processes affecting their conditions.

67 5. Call for international labor standards through the ILO specifically addressing platform  
68 work, algorithmic management, cross-border employment, and the right to disconnect,



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69 with enforcement mechanisms that hold multinational corporations accountable across  
70 borders.

71 6. Support universal social protection floors in all countries that provide health  
72 insurance, unemployment benefits, and old-age security to all workers regardless of  
73 employment classification, funded through progressive taxation of wealthy platform  
74 corporations.

75 7. Advocate for data rights and algorithmic transparency, ensuring workers have  
76 access to the data collected about them, the right to challenge algorithmic decisions,  
77 and democratic oversight of algorithmic management systems that determine their  
78 working conditions and earnings.

79 8. Oppose all attempts by platform companies and right-wing governments to weaken  
80 labor protections, create "special economic zones" exempted from labor laws, or lobby  
81 international trade agreements that prioritize corporate profits over workers' rights.

82 The formalization of informal work must mean extending protections upward to platform  
83 workers, not pushing formal work downward into precarity. As the informal economy  
84 becomes increasingly digitized and formalized through platforms, we have an  
85 opportunity to ensure that this transition benefits workers rather than further enriching  
86 multinational corporations. We stand for a future of work with dignity, security, and  
87 democratic rights for all workers, whether they work in factories, offices, or through  
88 digital platforms.