



The Director-General

16 APR 2020

Dear Secretary General,

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2020 providing information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on supply chains and mobility networks. I hope all IRU colleagues are keeping safe and in good health.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge your efforts to give international visibility and exposure - within the United Nations and amongst other stakeholders - to the industry's main demands and decent work challenges in these difficult times. The shock and economic impact that this pandemic is having in the road transport sector are of great concern. I commend you, and Stephen Cotton of the ITF, for issuing on 7 April 2020 the IRU-ITF [joint statement](#) calling for support from governments and international bodies to ensure international supply and mobility chains remain connected during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is heartening to see such an effective demonstration of social dialogue in the midst of this crisis.

In the article "[COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of our economies](#)" (ILO website, 27 March 2020), I expressed our concern for road freight transport workers, saying "*Truckers [...], who deliver medical equipment and other essentials, must be adequately protected.*"

I have asked my colleagues to reach out to the IRU to assess how the ILO can respond most effectively to the various points raised in your letter. The ILO is well-placed to raise international awareness about this sector, one that is the lifeblood of the economy by ensuring first and last mile connectivity and that provides livelihoods to almost 6 per cent of the world labour force. I am pleased to report that the Officers of the ILO Governing Body have recently authorized me to publish and disseminate the [Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work and Road Safety in the Transport Sector](#), which you helped develop.

Mr Umberto de Pretto
Secretary General
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Since your letter, the ILO has continued to develop its response to the crisis, including by issuing:

- [New guidelines to help employers support families during COVID-19](#), ILO and UNICEF, 30 March;
- [Social protection monitor on COVID-19](#), updated on 6 April;
- [ILO standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) - FAQ: Key provisions of international labour standards relevant to the evolving COVID-19 outbreak](#), 27 March; and
- ILO Monitor 2nd edition: [COVID-19 and the world of work: Updated estimates and analysis](#), 7 April.

In the second edition of the Monitor, we note that the transport, storage and communications industry, which as a whole accounts for 204 million jobs, is ranked relatively high in terms of workers at risk. We again draw attention to the importance of workers in these sectors, including drivers, in keeping open global supply chains. The document also sets out the ILO policy responses, including four pillars: 1) stimulating the economy and employment, 2) supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes, 3) protecting workers in the workplace, and 4) relying on social dialogue for solutions, and we will move forward along these lines.

Finally, let me also take this opportunity to commend the IRU's initiative in partnering with the UNECE to launch the Observatory on Border Crossings Status, and that includes collaboration with other United Nations Regional Economic Commissions. The information available on the platform will be of the utmost importance to keep trucks moving with essentials and with medical equipment to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic more effectively.

Yours sincerely,



Guy Ryder