

Geneva, 6 May 2020

His Excellency Mr. Ambrose Dlamini
Prime Minister of Eswatini
Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini
Mbabane, Eswatini
ndlangamandlabo@gov.sz; contact@missionofeswatini.ch

IndustriALL Global Union urges Government of Eswatini to facilitate payment of delayed wages and engage in fair labour practices

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org) which represents 50 million workers from 140 countries, including Eswatini, to urge you to intervene to guarantee the health and safety of workers during the Covid-19 pandemic and also address the social and economic impact of it. We are extremely concerned about the fate of thousands of workers who have not been paid their wages for the month of April, including 18, 000 textile and garment workers.

Whilst we understand the need to take precautionary measures to prevent the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health of workers and the communities in Eswatini, it is our view that contingency plans should be put in place to protect workers' wages. Whilst lockdowns are effective in controlling the spread of the coronavirus, workers need food to feed their families, pay rentals and other basics. The COVID-19 pandemic should not be used as an excuse to suspend workers' rights to fair wages and the conditions of service, as defined in existing collective bargaining agreements. These agreements are hard won victories of the workers that must be respected and not reversed.

As IndustriALL Global Union, we stand in solidarity with our affiliate, the Amalgamated Trade Unions of Swaziland (ATUSWA), in their demands for the payment of the wages using the Eswatini National Provident Fund that workers contribute to. A moratorium on housing rentals for at least three months should be introduced to cushion workers. Furthermore, we concur with ATUSWA on the introduction of minimum wages of about Emalangeni 1400 during the COVID-19 lockdown period. In addition, employers should move towards higher wages of at least E3500 after the pandemic.

We sincerely hope that the current negotiations between the government, employers and labour will be able to entail urgent actions to support the workers by immediate payments rather than expose them to a dual crisis of COVID-19 and poverty. Social dialogue is key at this moment, and new social pacts are necessary in dealing with the effects of the pandemic on workers.

Yours sincerely,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary