

Thank you Chair, for giving TUAC and IndustriALL the opportunity to comment on the important work of the OECD Steel Committee. IndustriALL brings the voice of 50 million workers in 140 countries, including many steelworkers in all OECD countries and beyond who are very concerned about recent developments in the global steel sector in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We share many of the concerns raised today, and we stress that the health pandemic will not be over until everyone, including in the global South, has access to vaccines. There will be a “new” normal after the pandemic and we have to be prepared. To this end, it is crucial to involve workers and their union representatives in shaping the world of tomorrow.

Thankfully, many steel using sectors have recovered faster than initially expected with an increase in demand globally. However, the **continued global tendency to increase steelmaking capacity above actual steel demand**, risks the global recovery for the entire steel industry. Indeed, increasing global overcapacity could exasperate the pre-existing pressures on the steel market: price-dumping leading to lower ecological standards and to decreased wages and social conditions. For us, it is imperative that we work together to **stop this race to the bottom**. We all know that steelmaking is not an industry like any other, quality steel making depends on high standards:

- **High social standards;**
- **High labour standards;**
- **High environmental standards and;**
- **High standards in decarbonisation.**

Every government, every steel producer and every organisation who is willing to work in this direction, can count on the support of the unionised workforce.

We agree with the members of this Committee that urgent action is needed to tackle global overcapacity, which can flood the international market and abruptly drive down steel prices. Now more than ever workers call for **international action to ensure a fair global level playing field** that allows for fair international trade. This requires cooperation in good faith between all

stakeholders, including the people who actually make the steel, who deserve good living and working conditions.

To this end, we ask this Committee to embrace a strategy on **granting global minimum standards for steelworkers**. In other words:

- **ILO Core conventions in all steel making facilities are minimum, not maximum standards;**
- **This goes namely for the Freedom of Association and for the Health and Safety of workers in the industry, as laid out in the respective ILO conventions.**

In relation to health and safety, we must again raise our **grave concerns about the steady incline of fatal accidents** at steel sites over the past year. This is unacceptable, and we remind you all that a fair and level international playing field is not only related to trade, it must also include health and safety standards, working conditions and workers' rights.

This requires real worker participation and improvement in existing social dialogue structures, including joint health and safety committees, on all levels, in all companies and in all countries.

Let me conclude with the following remark. We recognise the vital role that our industry plays in limiting global warming and keeping this world a place worth living in. We are convinced that **investments in clean technology must be accompanied by upskilling plans and Just Transition schemes for steelworkers**. However, this can only be achieved via fair and open negotiations between governments, steel companies, the workforce and their unions. We therefore again call for a **tripartite structure for these stakeholders** to come together and jointly bring forward the best and most sustainable proposals and solutions for the industry.

Given the complexity and broadness of the challenges that the steel sector is facing, TUAC encourages the Steel Committee to work closely with other OECD bodies, including the Economic Committee, the Environment Policy Committee and the Employment, Labor and Social Affairs Committee to advance dialogue and offer viable solutions.

Thank you for your attention.