

28 april '20

International Workers' Memorial Day

Video message Catelene Passchier, Chair Workers' Group ILO

I am Catelene Passchier, chair of the Workers' Group in the ILO.

Today, I light a candle on the occasion of International Workers' Memorial Day.

I light a candle for all workers who lost their lives or were injured by their work.

Millions of workers suffer from the lack of protection of their health and safety at work.

This must stop.

Now, more than ever, is the moment to recognize the protection of the health and safety of workers as a fundamental right.

At the ILO, we are fighting for this as a matter of urgency.

Today, I especially light a candle for all workers risking their health and their lives in the frontlines of the Covid-19 crisis.

For the healthcare workers, doctors and nurses

But also for the workers in elderly care, the cleaners, and all the other workers in vital services and professions, many of them women.

They deserve not only our applause but also better protection of their health and safety.

This also means recognition of Covid-19 as an occupational disease.

And our solidarity must reach beyond this crisis.

We must stand with them for better wages and working conditions, and for strengthening public services and the public sector.

The Covid-19 crisis shows that workers are not sufficiently protected against the impact of viruses. Therefore, at the ILO, we must push for a new convention on protection against biological hazards.

But the Covid-19 crisis has also an enormous impact in the wider world of work, with millions of workers losing their jobs and livelihoods, not knowing how to feed their families

This once more shows the urgent need for universal social protection everywhere.

So, let's light a candle together, in memory of those who died because of their work, and let's pledge to fight for better protection of the living!