

Webinar on Four Labour Codes: Implementation – Challenges and Remedies

6 December 2025



Event Overview

UN Global Compact Network India (UN CCNI), in collaboration with the Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Governance (CTAG), National Law University Delhi (NLU), PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Confederation of Law Teachers (CLT), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), and AUT, organised a full-day national webinar on India's Labour Codes on 6 December 2025.

The second National Commission on Labour had recommended that the existing Labour Laws should be broadly grouped into four/ five Labour Codes on functional basis. Accordingly, the Ministry of Labour & Employment started the exercise to rationalize, simplify and amalgamate the relevant provisions of the labour laws in four codes. The four Labour Codes were enacted after the deliberations held in the tripartite meeting of the Government, employers', industry representatives and various trade unions during 2015 to 2019.



The webinar provided a comprehensive platform to examine the key themes, legal provisions, and implementation challenges of the Labour Codes through expert-led sessions and in-depth discussions. It brought together a diverse group of stakeholders—including legal experts, industry representatives, trade unions, academia, and civil society organisations—facilitating informed dialogue and reinforcing the importance of collaborative approaches to effective labour law implementation and governance.



Strategic Context and Objectives



The Four Labour Codes—

Code on Wages, 2019

Industrial Relations Code, 2020

Code on Social Security, 2020

Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code, 2020 represent one of the most comprehensive labour law reforms in India's history.

While these reforms seek to simplify compliance, improve ease of doing business, and strengthen worker protection, they have also generated diverse perspectives among stakeholders.

The webinar was strategically conceptualised to provide a comprehensive understanding of India's labour law reforms. It aimed to critically examine the scope, intent, and structural framework of the Four Labour Codes, while assessing their implications for employers, workers, MSMEs, and the informal sector. The discussions focused on identifying key operational, administrative, and legal challenges associated with implementation at the ground level.

Equally important, the webinar sought to promote meaningful tripartite dialogue and consensus-building among government, industry, and labour representatives, while exploring pathways to align India's labour reforms with global labour standards and principles of responsible and sustainable business conduct.



Structure and Key Discussions



The full-day webinar was structured into five thematic sessions, each focusing on a specific Labour Code and its practical implications.

Session 1: Labour Code on OSH, 2020

Discussions focused on workplace safety, inspection mechanisms, and compliance challenges across organised and unorganised sectors, highlighting the importance of preventive safety culture and effective enforcement.

Session 2: Industrial Relations Code, 2020

This session examined trade union recognition, dispute resolution mechanisms, and the balance between industrial flexibility and worker rights, with emphasis on social dialogue and trust-based industrial relations.

Session 3: Social Security Code, 2020

Panelists deliberated on extending social security coverage to informal, gig, and platform workers, and the need for institutional preparedness, digital systems, and inter-agency coordination.

Session 4: Labour Code on Wages, 2019

Moderated by Dr. Somnath Singh, Deputy Director, UN GCNI, this session underscored the Wage Code as the foundational layer of labour reforms, influencing social security contributions, industrial relations, and workplace equity. Discussions highlighted floor wages, gender-neutral remuneration, transparent wage computation, and alignment with UN Global Compact Labour Principles



Session 5: Enforcement of Labour Codes and Other Dimensions

The concluding session focused on enforcement mechanisms, inspector capacity, legal interpretation, and the need for continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure smooth transition and compliance.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

Balanced Reform Perspective:

The webinar reflected diverse viewpoints, acknowledging both the reform potential of the Labour Codes and concerns related to coverage, consultation, and enforcement.

Importance of Capacity Building:

Speakers emphasised training of labour Officers, judiciary, employers, and workers as critical to effective implementation.

Technology as an Enabler:

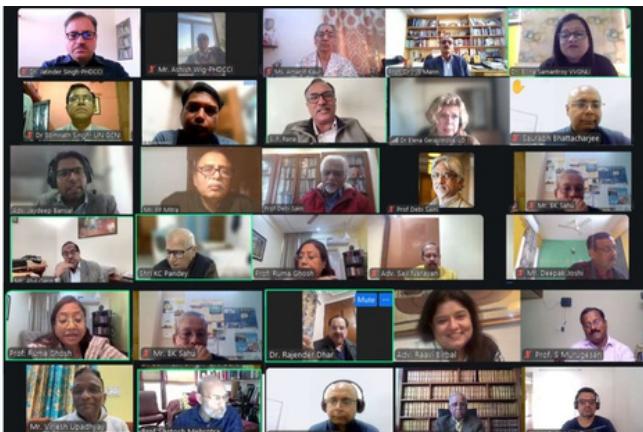
Digital compliance systems, data integration, and transparent inspections were highlighted as key enablers of efficient governance.

Alignment with Global Labour Standards:

The discussions reinforced alignment between India's labour reforms and international labour standards, particularly fair wages, non-discrimination, and safe working conditions.

Role of Social Dialogue:

Tripartite engagement among government, employers, and workers was recognised as essential for minimising disputes and ensuring inclusive outcomes.



Conclusion

The Webinar on Four Labour Codes served as a timely and impactful knowledge-sharing platform, enabling constructive dialogue at a critical juncture in India's labour reform journey. By bringing together administration, industry, labour representatives, legal experts, academia, and international perspectives, the webinar reinforced the message that effective labour governance requires collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility.

Through this initiative, UN Global Compact Network India, along with its partners, reaffirmed its commitment to advancing decent work, ethical labour practices, and sustainable development—ensuring that economic growth and social justice progress hand in hand.

