

ITUC Global Poll 2013

Economic and Social Outlook



Executive Summary	4
Personal or family experience of unemployment	6
Family income and cost of living	8
Economic situation	10
Own financial situation	12
Future generations better or worse off?	14
Employment prospects for young people.....	16
Union better for workplace.....	18
Government and unemployment	20
Government prioritises business interests	22
Work protection laws provide inadequate protection	24
Direction of country	26
The road forward – Five point plan	
Job creation policy agenda.....	28
Reasonable wages through fair pay for goods and services.....	29
Labour rights	30
Social protection floor	33
Make large companies pay their taxes	34
Survey Methodology	35

The global economy is no more stable today than it was six years ago. The scourge of unemployment and inequality is driving economic instability.

One in two working families are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or the reduction of working hours. Young women in particular are most affected by the jobs crisis.

Meanwhile, more than half of the world population say their incomes have fallen behind the cost of living in the past two years.

Global citizens feel abandoned by their governments because they are seen as failing to tackle unemployment and prioritising business interests over the interests of working families.

The state of the world for working families is bleak. Unemployment is again rising above 200 million and youth unemployment is a problem in nearly every nation.

The ITUC Global Poll 2013 covers the adult populations of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The findings represent the opinions of more than 3.7 billion people, or according to UN estimates about half of the world population.

Financial crisis reaches new depths

Over the past two years, a large number of people (49 percent) have directly experienced unemployment or the reduction of working hours – either in their own job or that of a family member.

The pain is felt harshest in South Africa (73 percent) and Spain (73 percent). Self employed workers are heavily hit (62 percent). Young women under 35 years of age are particularly hard hit (57 percent).

Unemployment has a deep impact on personal finances

Unemployment breeds inequality. A dramatic 76 percent of those who get by with 'great difficulty' have direct experience with unemployment or partial unemployment. This contrasts with just 29 percent of those who get by 'very well' being directly impacted by unemployment or partial unemployment.

Global citizens are hurt by the financial crisis

Two-thirds of the respondents (63 percent) rate their national economy as bad. More than half the respondents (58 percent) say they have seen their family incomes fall behind the increase in the cost of living.

One out of eight respondents (12 percent) are struggling financially and can no longer pay for basic living expenses like housing, food and electricity; more than half of all respondents (59 percent) are no longer able to save any money.

Future generations will not be better off

Fifty-five percent of the global respondents expect future generations to be worse off than their own. Just twenty-three percent expect future generations to be better off. Sentiment is particularly gloomy in Europe where only 10 percent expect future generations to be better off. China and India are the only two countries with a majority of the respondents expecting future generations to be doing better than their own.

National governments are seen as failing

When it comes to fighting unemployment and defending the interests of working families, global citizens feel abandoned by their governments:

- **Failing to tackle unemployment.** A dramatic 80 percent of the respondents say their government has failed to tackle unemployment effectively.
- **Prioritising business interests over worker interests.** When asked whether their government is focusing more on the interests of 'working people and their families' or focusing more on the interest of 'private companies, investors and financial institutions', more than half of the respondents (59 percent) choose prioritising business interests. Just 13 percent believe their government is more focused on the interests of working families.
- **Serious doubt about effectiveness of current labour laws.** Global citizens also continue to doubt whether current labour laws provide adequate job security (63 percent) and fair wages (65 percent). To a lesser extent, global citizens also express concern (38 percent) about the effectiveness of current labour laws to secure reasonable working hours.
- **Women voice the deepest uncertainty.** Women are less optimistic than men about the direction of their countries, with 54 percent who think their country is going in the wrong direction.

“

Half of the global population is directly impacted by unemployment; young women are particularly hard hit.

”

Unions offer hope for improvement

Unions offer hope for a better future: more than two out of three respondents (68 percent) agree that 'workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers'.

In the face of increasing lack of trust in institutions, governments need to heed the warning signs.

Only 13 percent of people think that governments are acting in their interests and 28 percent are disenchanted or worse disengaged with the belief that governments acting in the interests of neither people or business. This is a serious risk to trust in democracy.

Workers need an urgent plan, a plan for our economy and society which gives families hope for the future.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation

The road forward

A five point plan for jobs, decent wages and social protection

The ITUC Global Poll 2013 shows global citizens support a 5 point plan towards reducing uncertainty and inequality, a plan offering hope for billions of workers.

Jobs: Investment in infrastructure, new green technologies and industries

There is overwhelming support for 'public investment in education, research and new technologies' (92 percent support) and 'public investment in clean energy and environment-related industries' (88 percent support).

Fair wages: ensure reasonable wages through fair prices

When confronted with the choice between paying the lowest possible price for goods and services and paying 'a little more for most goods or services if companies paid workers a reasonable wage', half the world's population prefer paying a little more to paying the lowest possible price.

Strong labour laws: adopted and strengthened national and international labour rules

Global citizens continue to express very strong, emotionally anchored support for a wide range of national labour laws and international standards including:

- 'The right to strike for better wages, conditions and health and safety.' (99 percent in favour, of which 75 percent 'strongly favour')
- 'Establish and protect a decent minimum wage.' (89 percent in favour, 68 percent strongly)
- 'All companies, businesses and employers should pay workers a reasonable wage regardless of where they work.' (95 percent in favour, of which 55 percent 'strongly favour')
- 'Give workers the right to collectively bargain.' (91 percent in favour, 47 percent strongly)
- 'International companies should be subjected to international rules for the working conditions of the employees making their products and services, no matter which country the workers are in.' (91 percent in favour, 46 percent strongly)
- 'Give workers the right to join a union' (89 percent in favour, 44 percent strongly)

A social protection floor: governments step forward to protect the interests of workers and their families

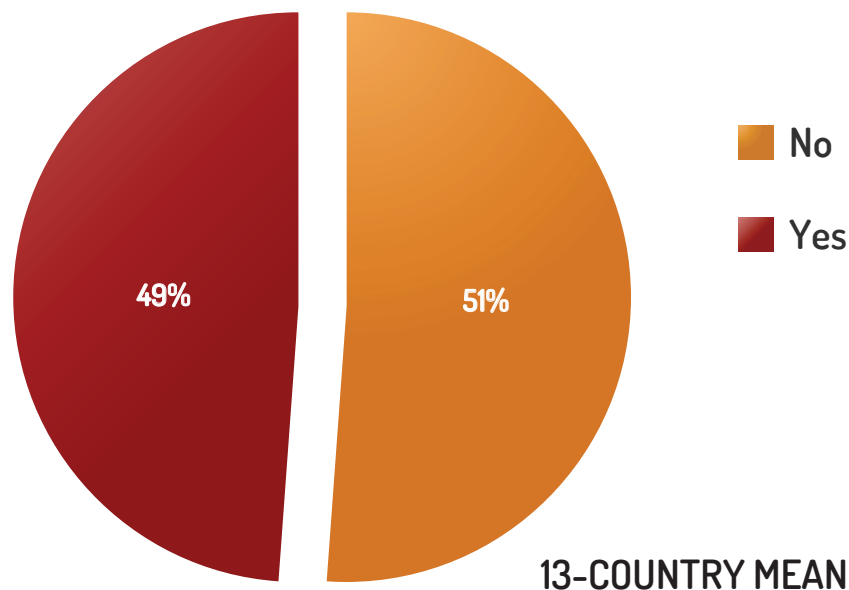
Governments need to step forward and protect the interests of workers and their families to reduce inequality. There is overwhelming public support for a social protection floor with active income measures.

- 'Affordable access to health care.' (97 percent in favour, 76 percent strongly)
- 'Affordable access to education.' (97 percent in favour, 72 percent strongly)
- 'Decent retirement incomes.' (96 percent in favour, 74 percent strongly)
- 'Affordable access to child care.' (92 percent in favour, 58 percent strongly)
- 'Unemployment benefits.' (88 percent in favour, 49 percent strongly)

Make large and multinational companies pay their taxes

Global citizens want tax evasion to end. An overwhelming majority of global citizens (86 percent) support policies to stop large and multi-national corporations avoiding tax. 80 percent are open to raising taxes for large companies. People insist on more equality.

Chart 1: Unemployed or reduced hours in last 2 years?



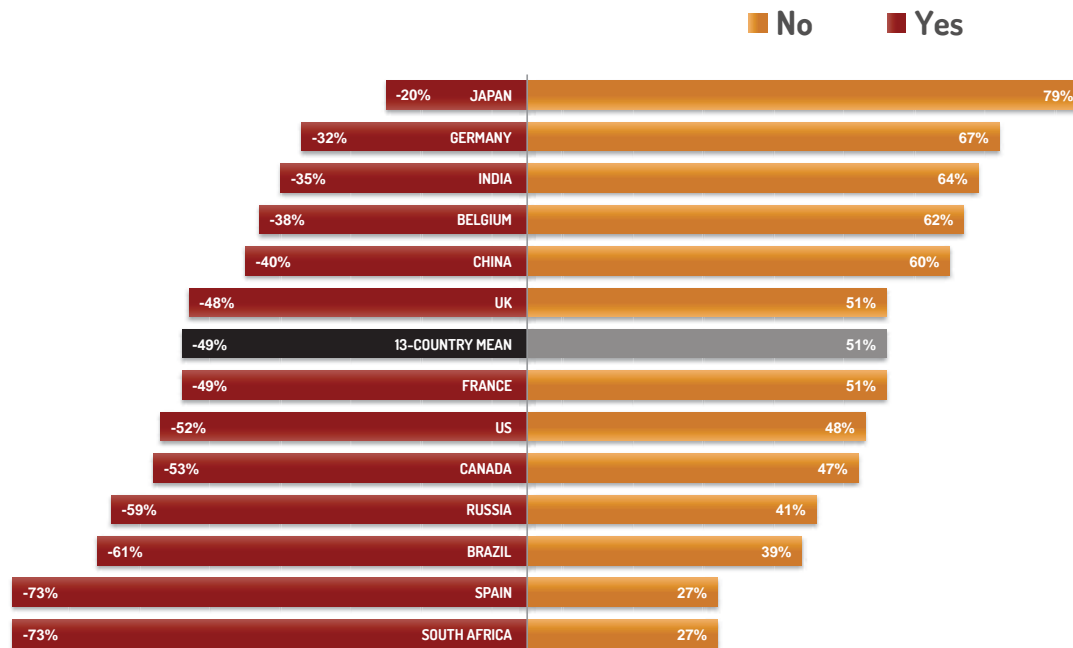
Question

In the last two years, have you or someone in your family been unemployed, or had their working hours reduced?

Note $N=13,015$ for 13 country average.

“ One in two working families are directly impacted by the loss of jobs or the reduction of working hours. Unemployment creates inequality and inequality is both social and economic poison.
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary ITUC ”

Chart 2: Unemployed or reduced hours in last 2 years?



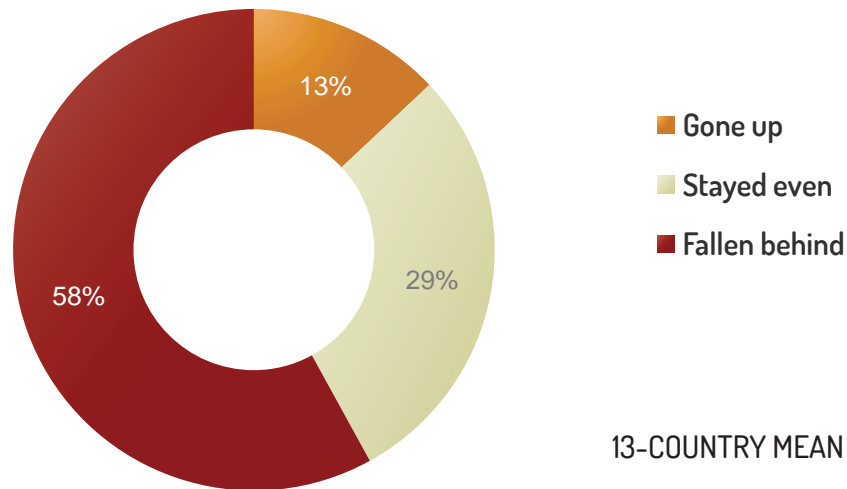
“ The pain of unemployment is widespread from Brazil, Russia South Africa, Europe and the US.
John Evans, General Secretary TUAC ”

Question

In the last two years, have you or someone in your family been unemployed, or had their working hours reduced?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Countries ordered from highest to lowest 'yes' (i.e., was unemployed or had hours reduced) score.

Chart 3: Family income against cost of living in the last two years



“ People across the world are facing serious financial pressure. Family incomes are falling behind the cost of living. Only 13 percent have income to spend to boost the economy.

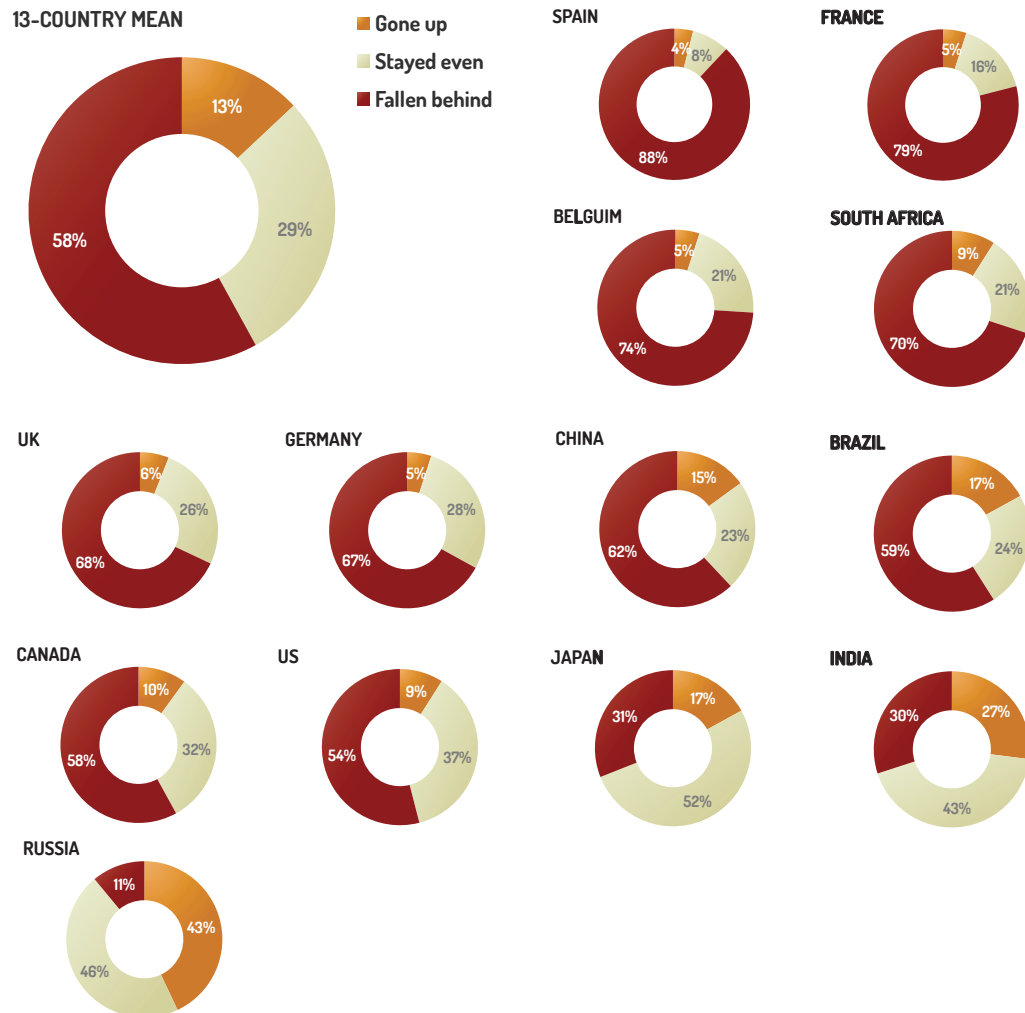
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC ”

Question

In the last two years, do you think that you and your family's income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind, or stayed even with the cost of living.

Note N= 13,015 for 13 country average; Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was just 1 percent.

Chart 4: Family income against cost of living in the last two years



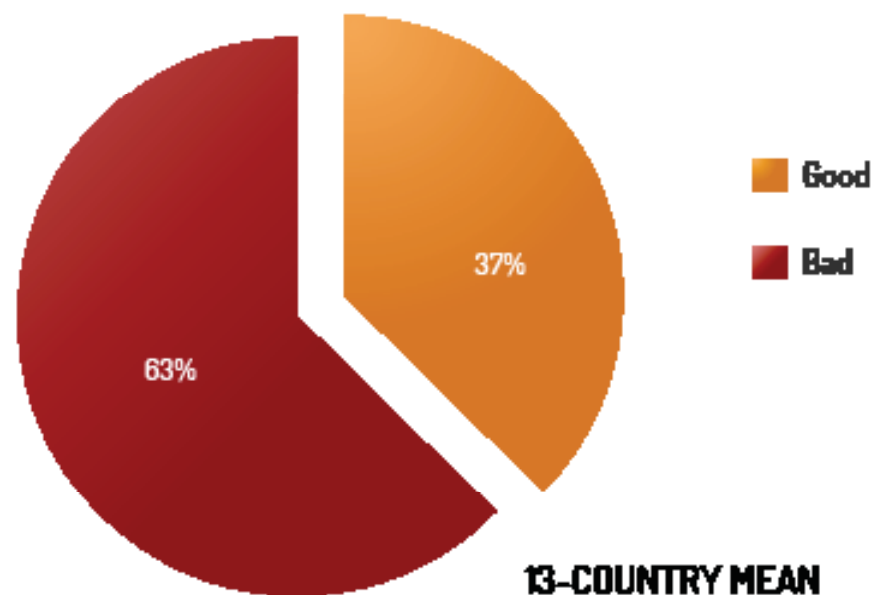
“ The five European countries in the ITUC Global Poll 2013, including Germany have the bleakest situation in terms of income falling behind the cost of living.
Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC ”

Question

In the last two years, do you think that you and your family's income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind, or stayed even with the cost of living.

Note N= 13,015; N is about 1000 for each individual country. Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was just 1 percent. Countries ordered from the highest score on 'fallen behind cost of living' based on pattern obtained when temporarily disregarding 'stayed even' responses.

Chart 5: Describe the economic situation of your country



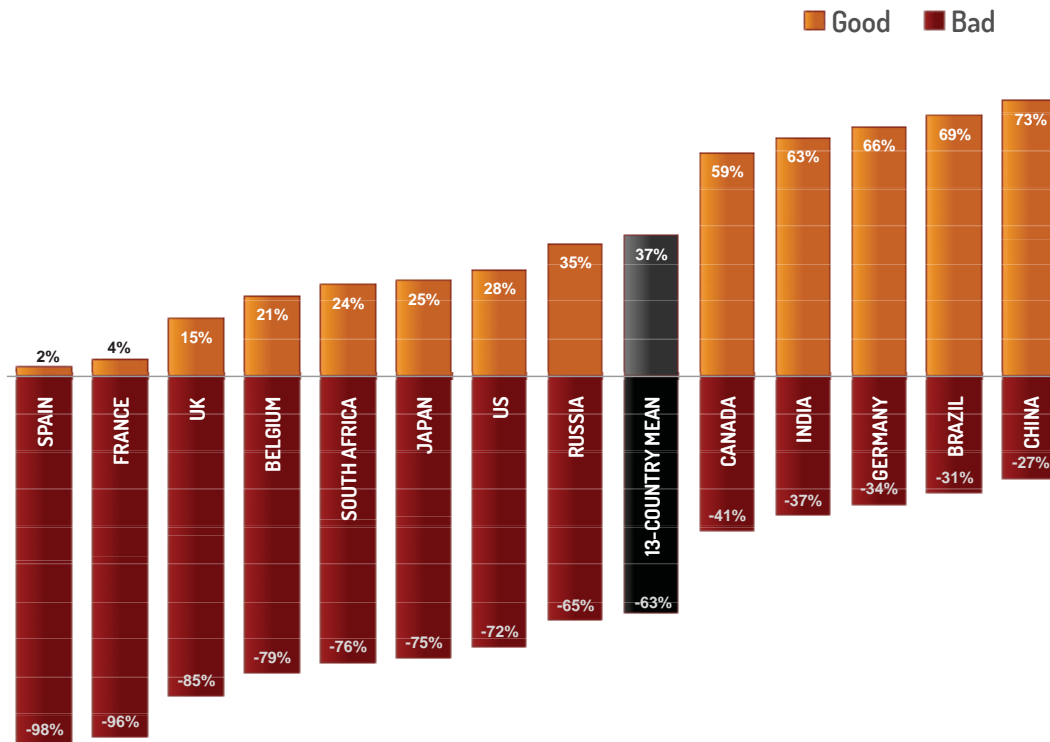
Question

Thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (country)?

Note N=13,015 for 13-country average; Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was just 2 percent.

“ Two thirds of respondents hold negative views of the economic situation in their country. Governments are making policies which are divorced from the very dignity of work that leads to stable economies and optimism. *John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC* ”

Chart 6: Describe the economic situation of your country



“ The majority of respondents from BRICS countries are more optimistic about their economies, but as global growth stagnates they are becoming more anxious.

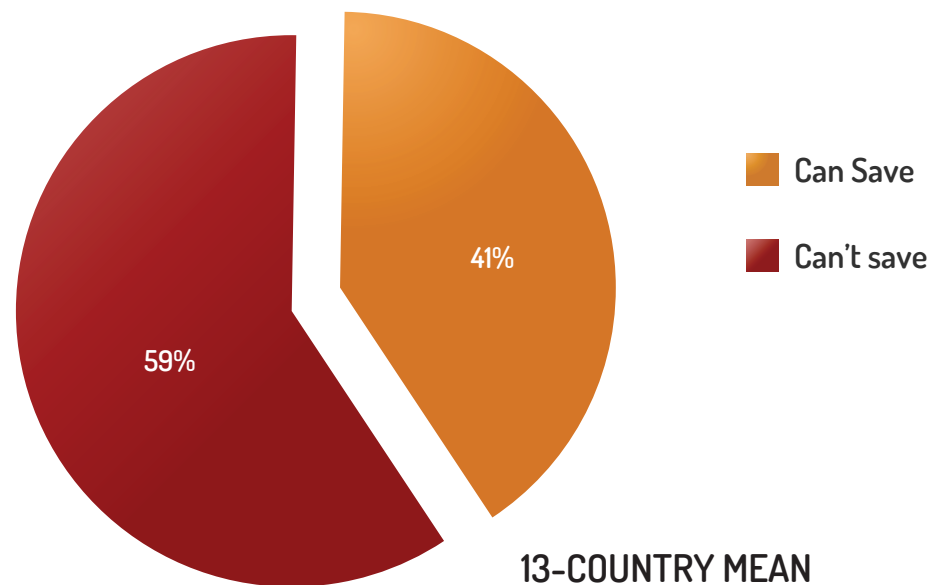
John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC ”

Question

Thinking about our economic situation, how would you describe the current economic situation in (country)?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was just 2 percent. Countries ordered from highest to lowest score on (adjusted) score on '(very) bad.'

Chart 7: Personal financial situation



Question

How would you describe your financial situation?

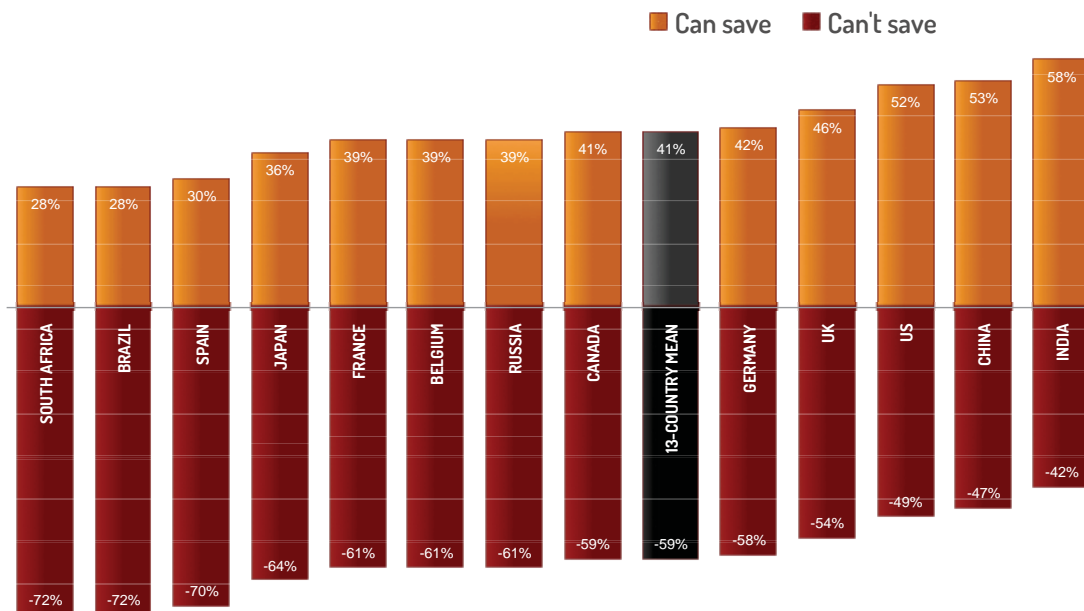
Note N=13,015 for 13-country average. Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was 0 (zero) percent.

Answers combined for "You don't have enough for basic essentials, like housing, food and electricity and You have enough for basic essentials, but you cannot save any money" (Can't save) and "You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a little money and You have enough for basic essentials, and you can save a lot of money." (Can save)

“ More people are struggling financially; over half of all respondents are no longer able to save any money. Only income led growth will stabilise economies. Yet leaders have no serious jobs plan, tax evasion is rampant and the distributional tools of collective bargaining and social protection are under attack.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC ”

Chart 8: Personal financial situation



“ Serious poverty is widespread in all countries, and large majorities of people cannot save money. Without jobs families are losing hope for the future.”

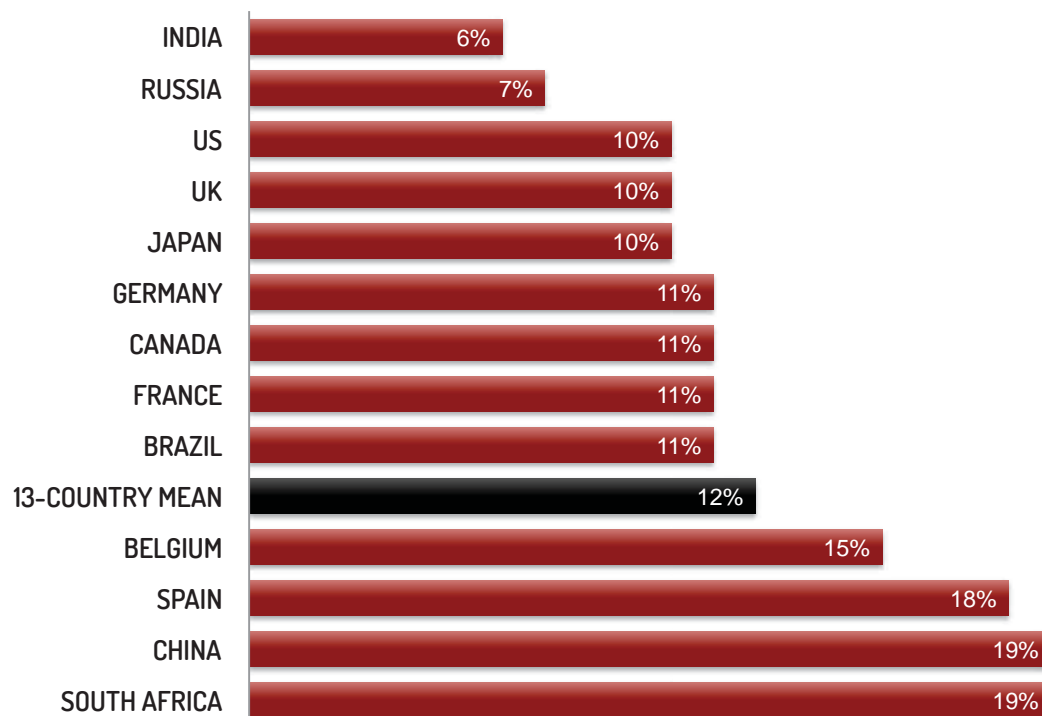
*Kwasi Adu-Amankwah,
General Secretary of ITUC-Africa*

Question

How would you describe your financial situation?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was 0 (zero) percent. Countries ordered from lowest to highest score on combined score for 'enough, can save a little' and 'enough, can save a lot'.

Chart 9: Personal financial situation: Not enough for essentials



“ More than one out of eight respondents lack the money for even basic essentials like food, housing and electricity. This picture well demonstrates prevailing hardships of people and pressing need for higher income policy as well as fairer income distribution. ”

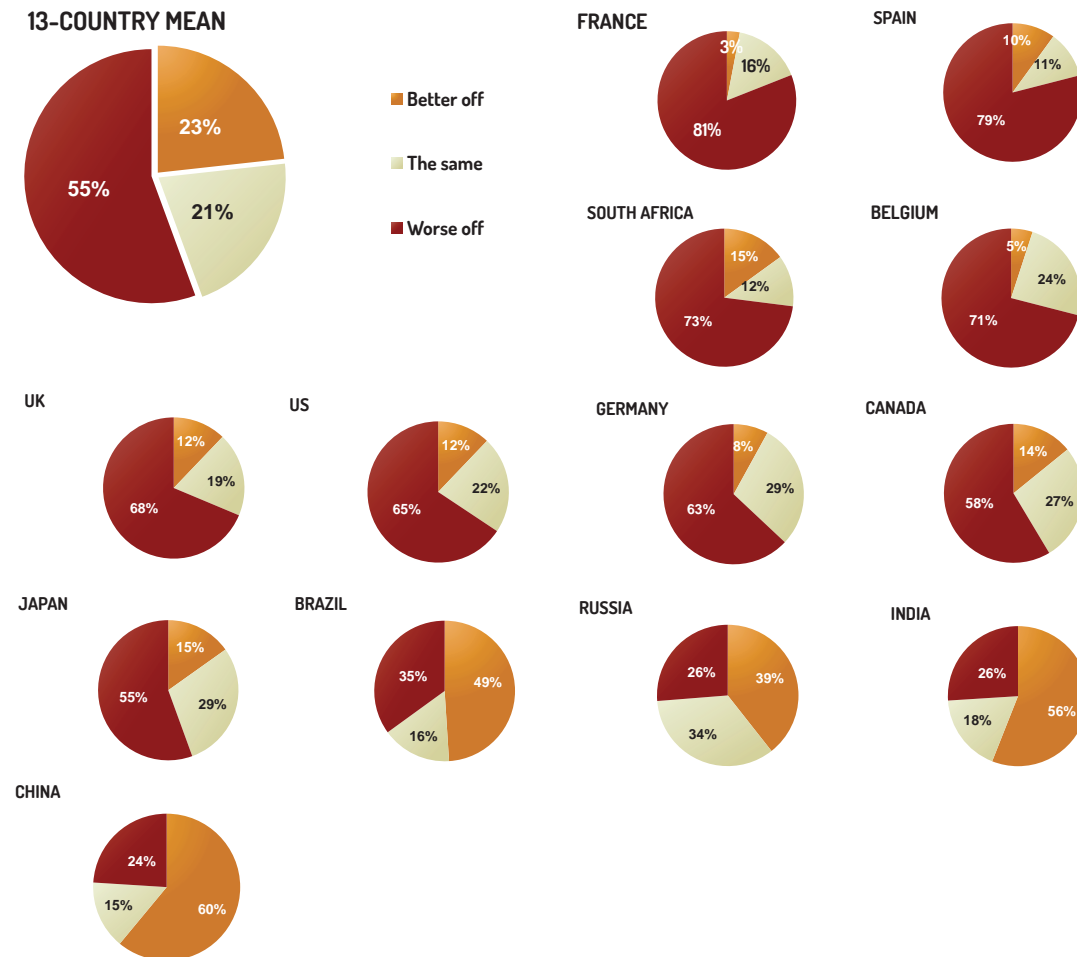
*Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary,
ITUC – Asia Pacific*

Question

How would you describe your financial situation?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know responses omitted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was 0 (zero) percent. Countries ordered from lowest to highest score 'not enough for essentials'.

Chart 10: Future generations better or worse off?



“Widespread uncertainty persists. A fundamental driver for social and economic progress, confidence that our children and grandchildren will be better off is not in place in most countries. In some countries, families will face two generations of unemployment. This is a serious threat to economic recovery.”

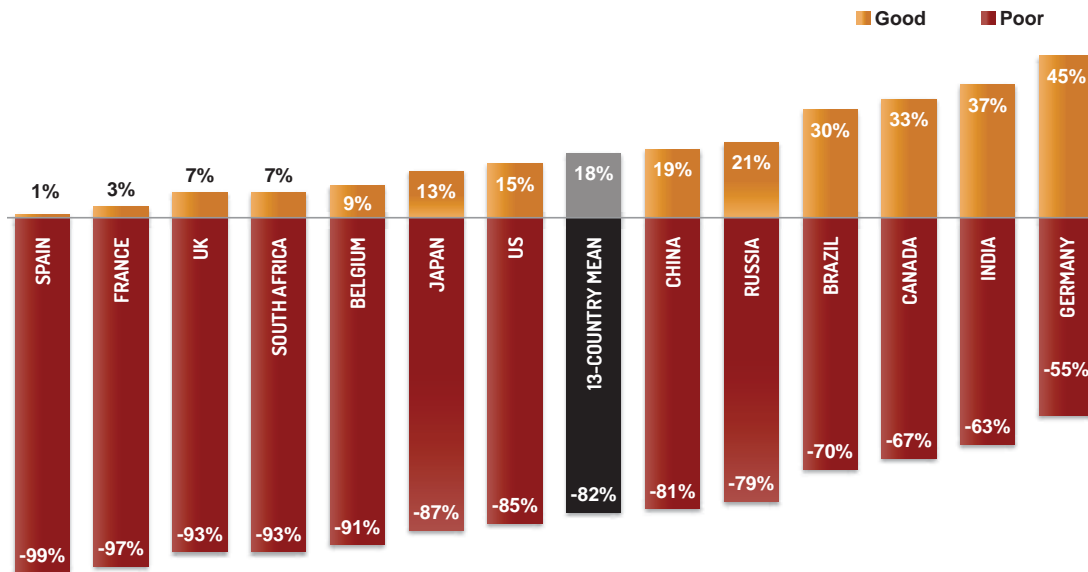
Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC

Question

Overall, do you feel future generations will be better or worse off than your own generation?

Note N=13,015 for combined average; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Labels for 'don't know' not shown. Countries ordered from highest proportion "worst off" to lowest, based on pattern obtained when (temporarily) disregarding "the same" and "don't know" responses.

Chart 11: Young people employment prospects: current



“ 82 percent of all respondents say employment prospects for young people are poor. The failed policy of austerity has left a legacy of extreme levels of unemployment, rising inequality and the marginalisation of a generation of young people.

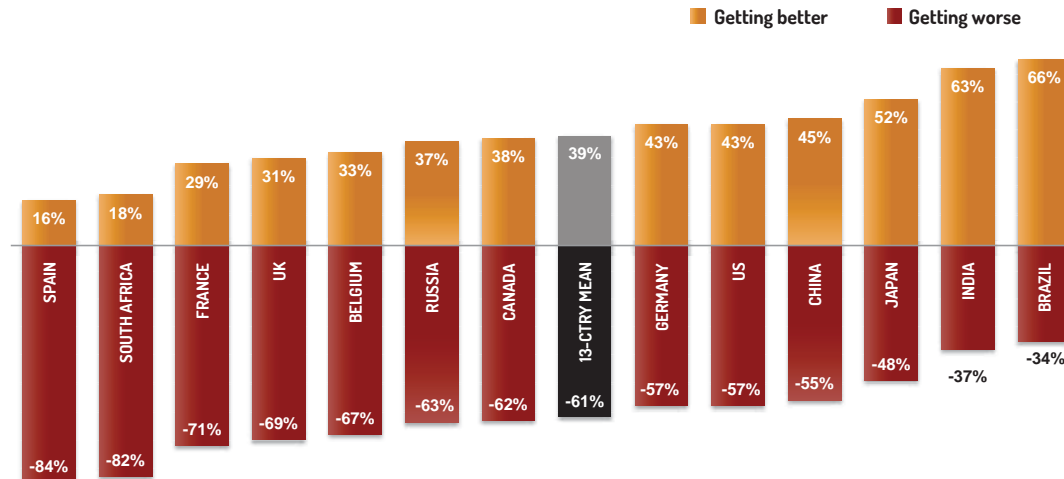
John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC ”

Question

For young people in your country how do you see their employment prospects?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

Chart 12: Young people employment prospects: future



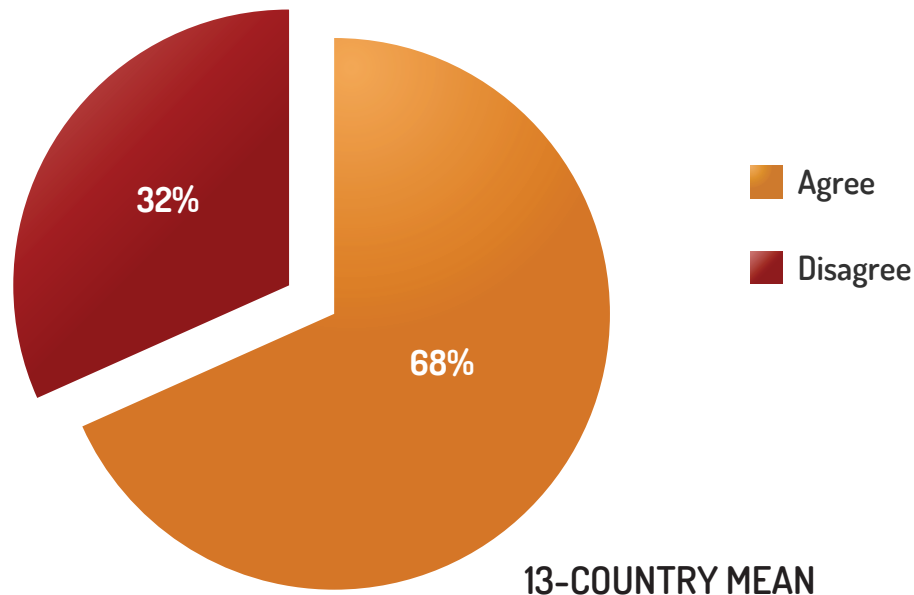
“ The bloc of EU countries in the poll stand out for sombre perceptions of jobs prospects for young people. Almost half the European respondents believe employment prospects for young people are not only poor, but are worsening. ”
Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC

Question

For young people in your country how do you see their employment prospects?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

Chart 13: Workplaces with unions have better wages, conditions and safety



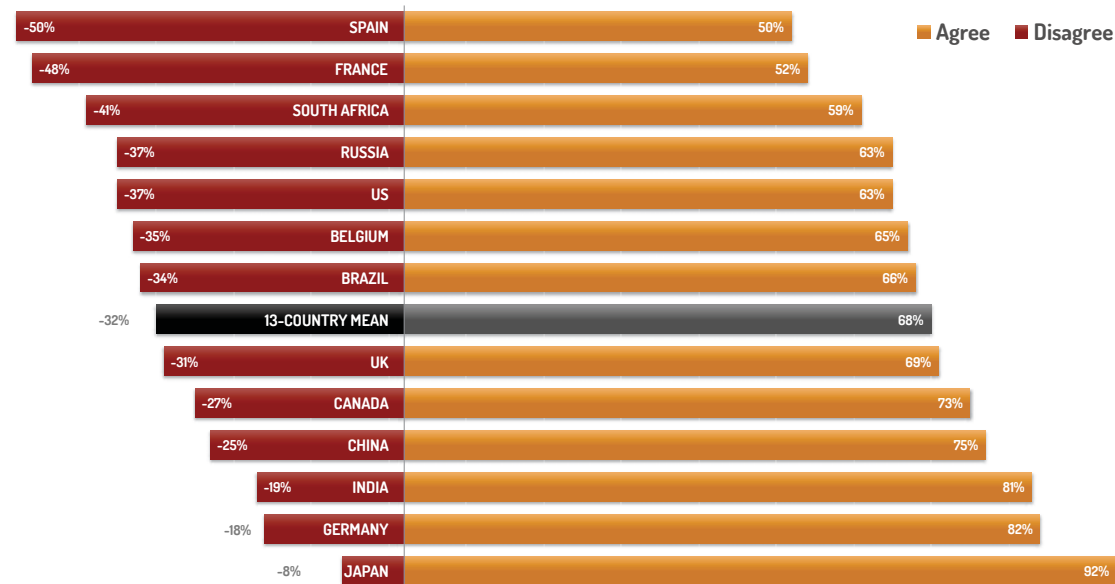
Question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.

Note $N=13,015$.

“ Fundamental labour rights are good for working families and for the economy as more equal societies generate more stable demand – unions work. ”
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

Chart 14: Workplaces with unions have better wages, conditions and safety



“ From Spain to China, people agree that unions make for better workplaces.

Michael Sommer, President, DGB and ITUC

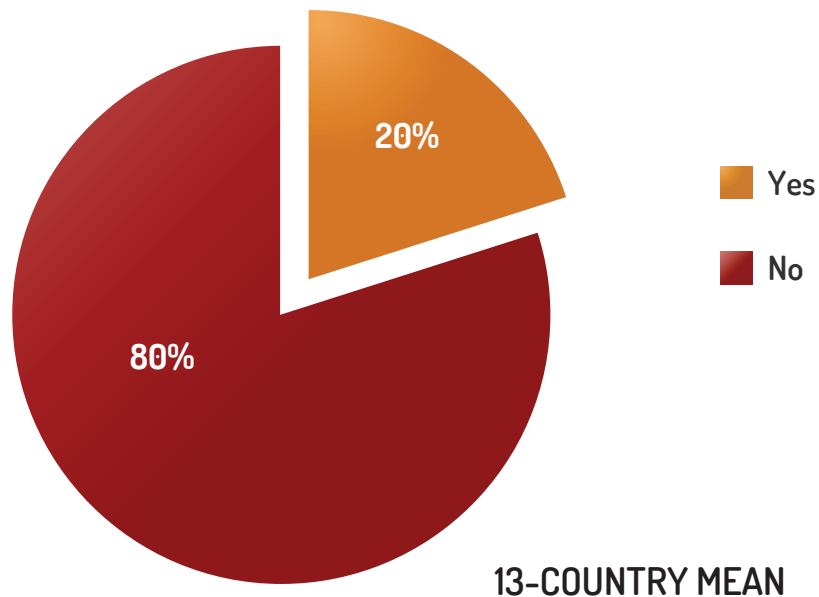
”

Question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Workplaces that have a union representing workers provide better wages, conditions and health and safety for workers.

Note N=13,015. N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

Chart 15: Has government effectively tackled unemployment?



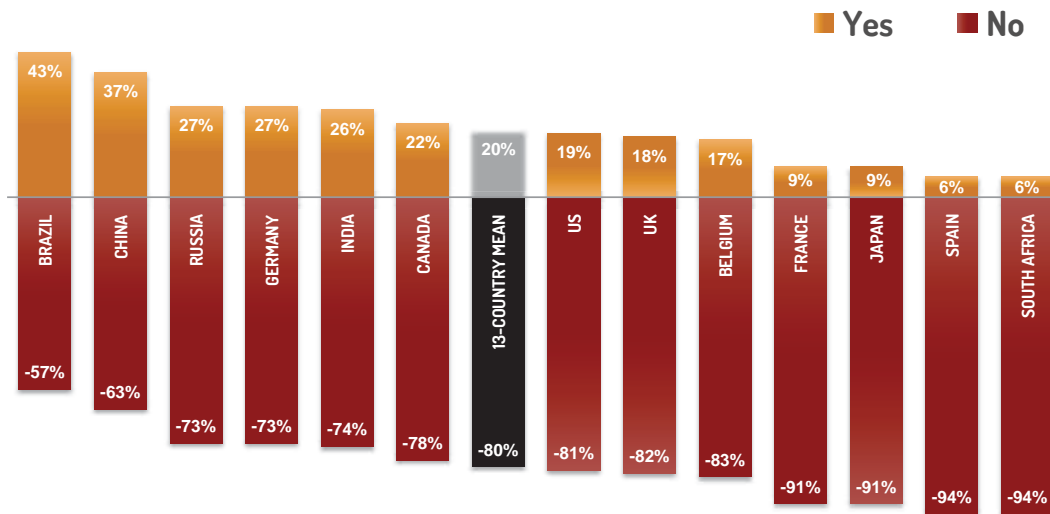
Question

Do you think your government effectively tackled unemployment over the past year or two?

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

“ People feel abandoned by their governments as they fail to tackle unemployment and prioritise business interests over worker interests.”
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

Chart 16: Has government effectively tackled unemployment?



“ The state of the world for working people and their families is very bleak. People, regardless of age, gender or education and across all countries, share a sense that governments have failed to tackle unemployment. ”

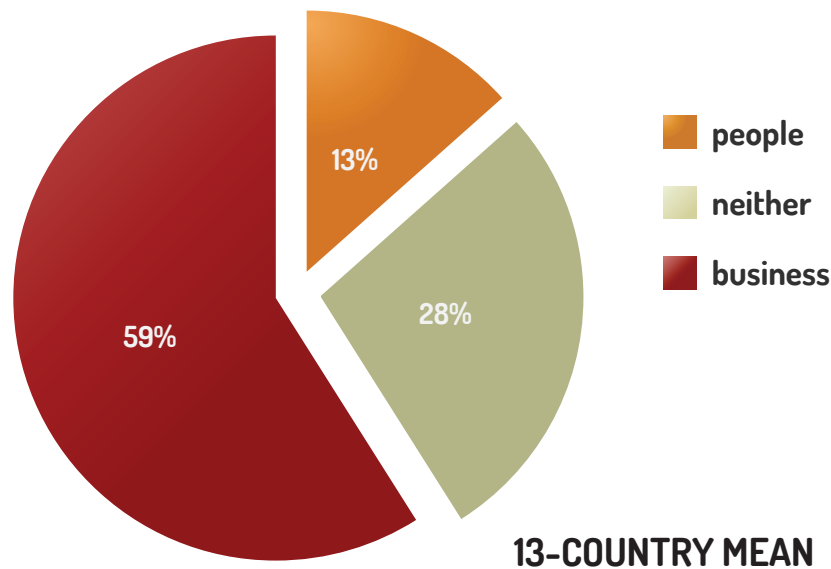
John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC

Question

Do you think your government effectively tackled unemployment over the past year or two?

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1000 for each individual country. Don't know responses deleted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest score on 'Yes'.

Chart 17: Government economic policies - whose interest first?



“Of critical concern is that only 13 percent of people feel their government are acting in the interests of people, and even more worrying, 28 percent of people say their governments are not acting in the interests of either people or business.

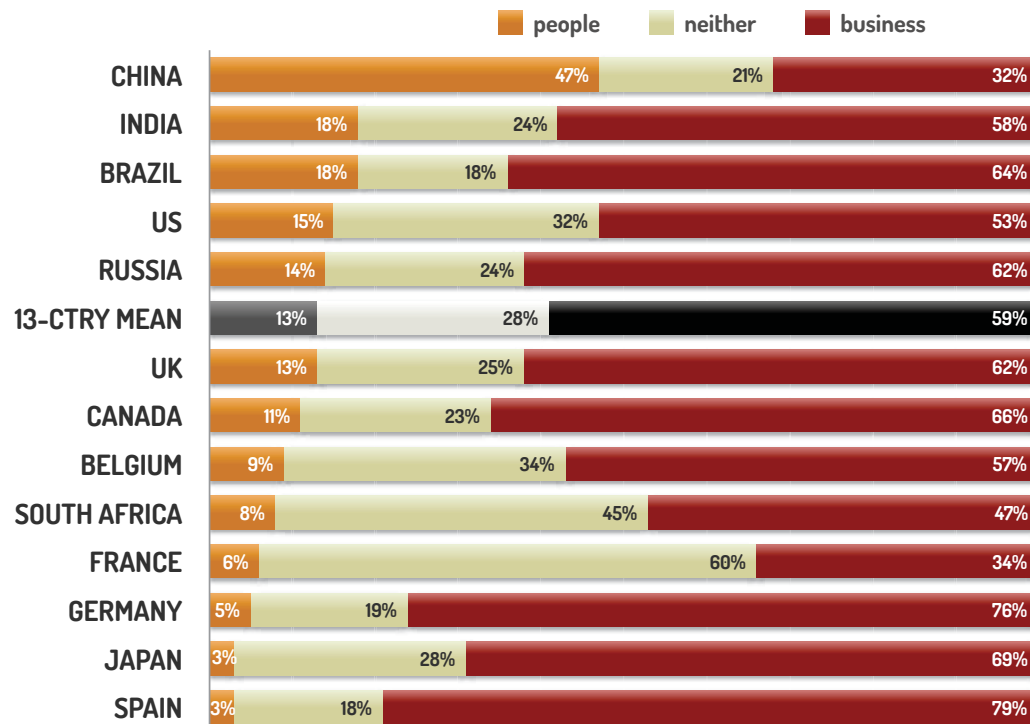
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC”

Question

Do you think that when it comes to deciding on economic policies, your government's focus is on putting the interests of working people and their families first, or the interests of private companies their investors and financial institutions.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

Chart 18: Government economic policies - whose interest first?



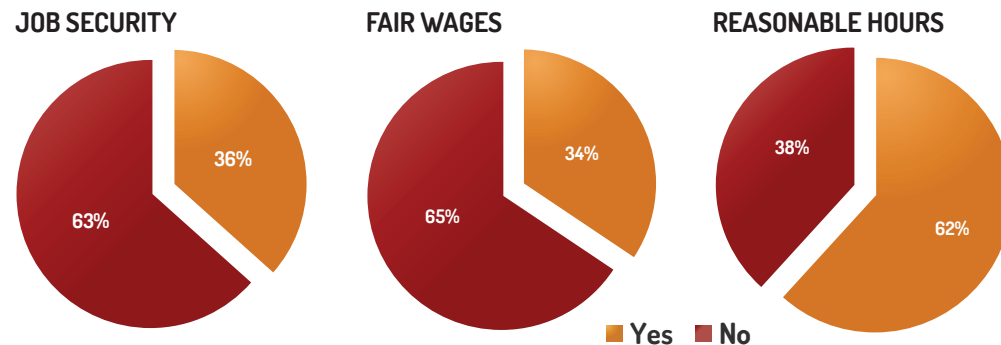
Question

Do you think that when it comes to deciding on economic policies, your government's focus is on putting the interests of working people and their families first, or the interests of private companies their investors and financial institutions.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Countries ordered from highest score on 'more focused on the interests of working people and their families'.

“Disenchantment and disengagement is undermining confidence in democracy. The loss of trust is serious and must be addressed.
Victor Baez, General Secretary, TUCA”

Chart 19: Do laws adequately protect workers?



Question

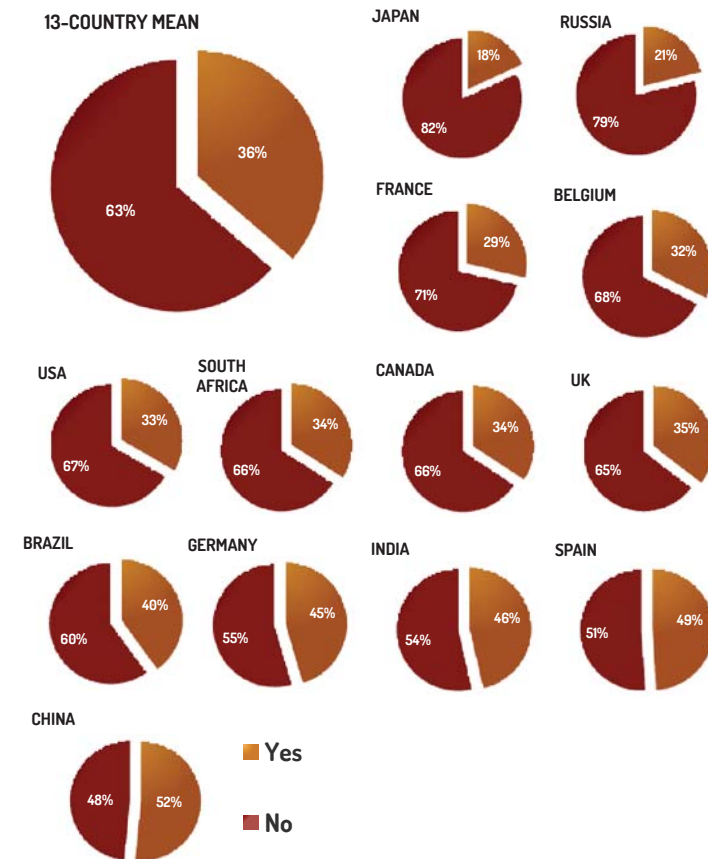
Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect each of the following items for workers.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

“Despite rather regulated working hours, there is an evident coincidence between job insecurity and unfair wages. Strong labour institutions and actions against insecure work directly address this labour market deficit.”

*Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary,
ITUC – Asia Pacific*

Chart 20: Job security

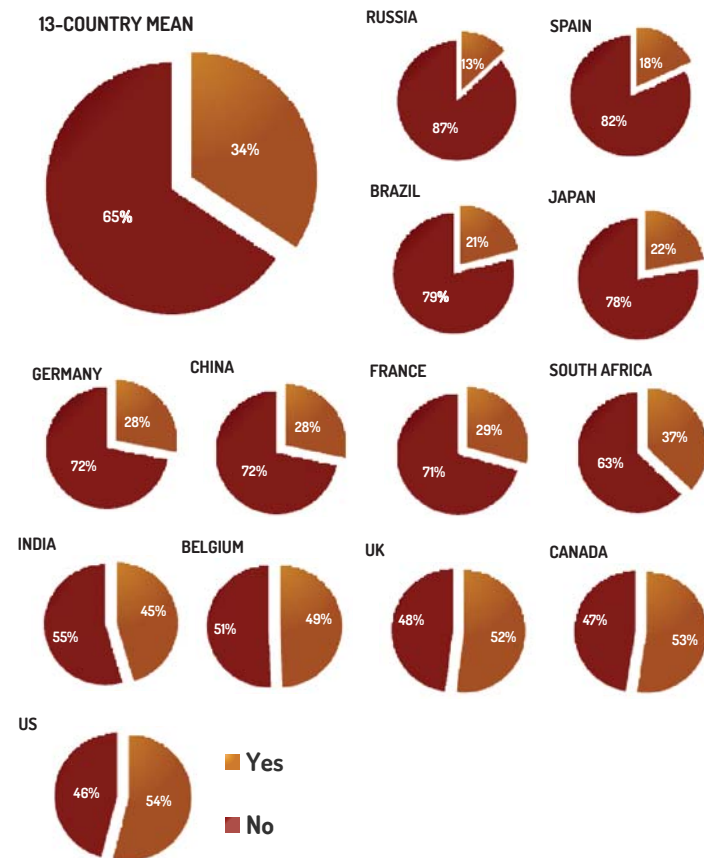


Question

Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect workers job security.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest to lowest scores on 'no'.

Chart 21: Fair wages

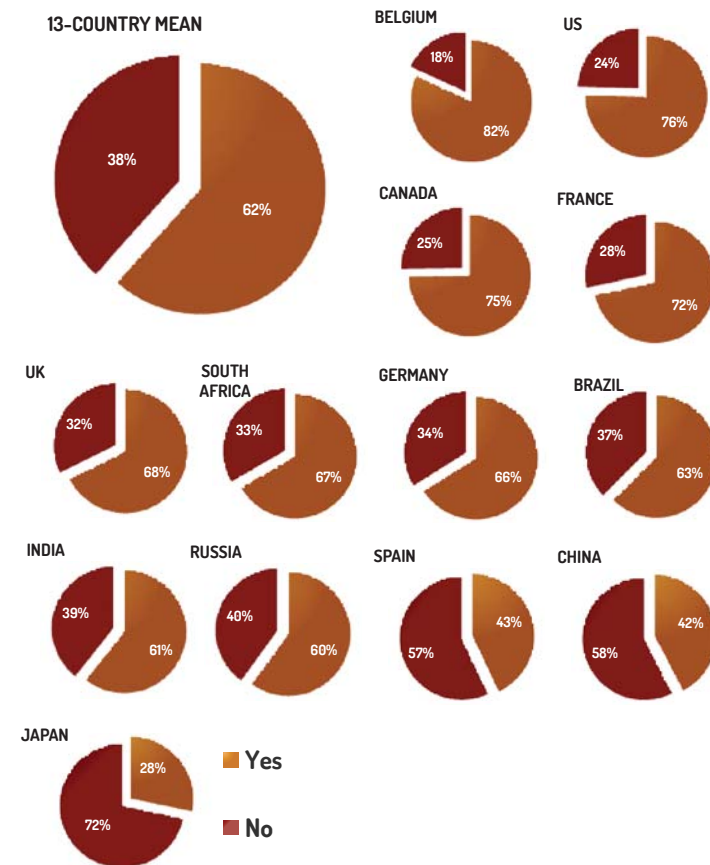


Question

Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect workers fair wage.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest to lowest scores on 'no'.

Chart 22: Reasonable working hours

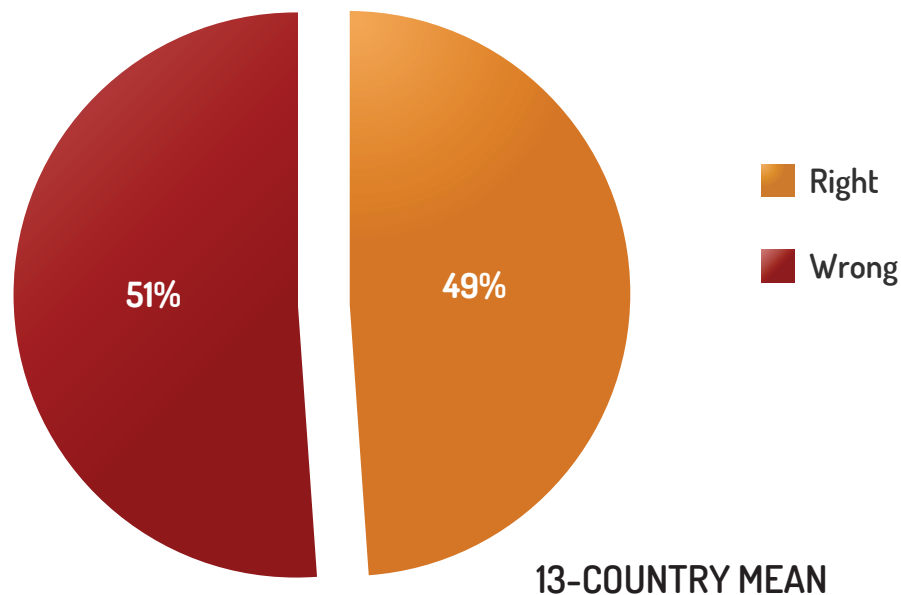


Question

Do you believe the laws in your country adequately protect workers reasonable working hours.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know response omitted for ease of presentation. Countries ordered from highest to lowest scores on 'yes'.

Chart 23: Direction your country is moving in?



“Brazil, Russia, China and India share an optimism which contrasts with a pessimistic outlook from other nations.”

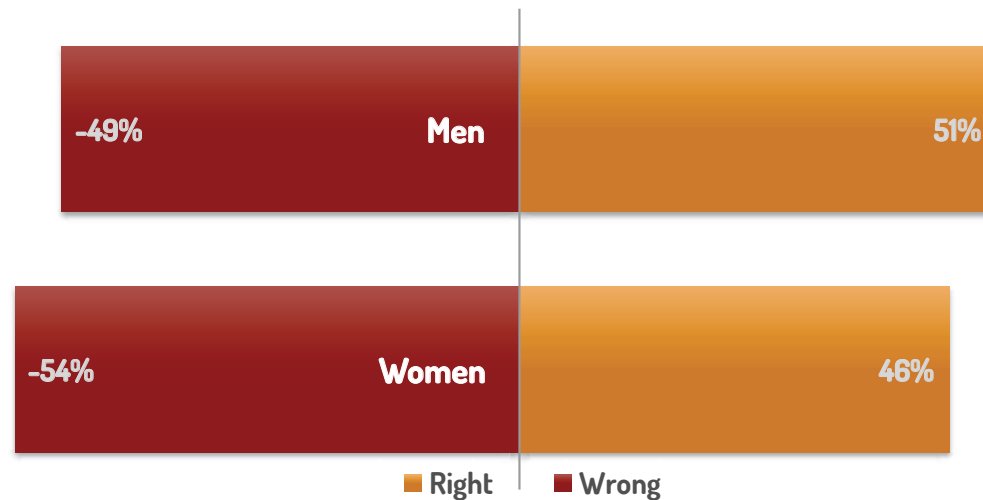
Victor Baez, General Secretary, TUCA

Question

Overall, would you say (COUNTRY) is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Note N=13,015; N is about 1,000 for each individual country.

Chart 24: Gender: Direction your country is moving in?



“ Women are more pessimistic than men as they feel the impact of unemployment and inequality hardest.

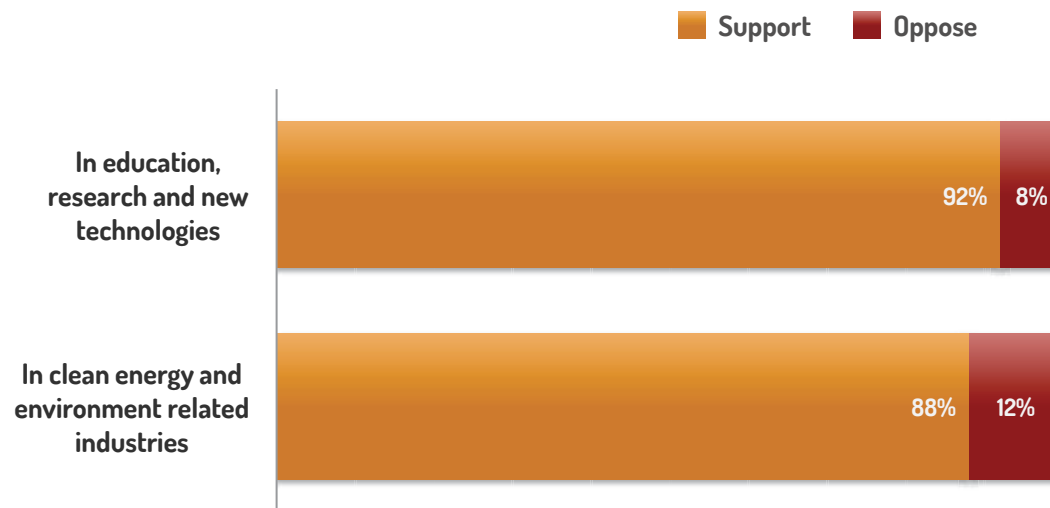
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary , ITUC ”

Question

Overall, would you say (country) is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Note N=13,015 for 13-country average;

Chart 25: Investment policies



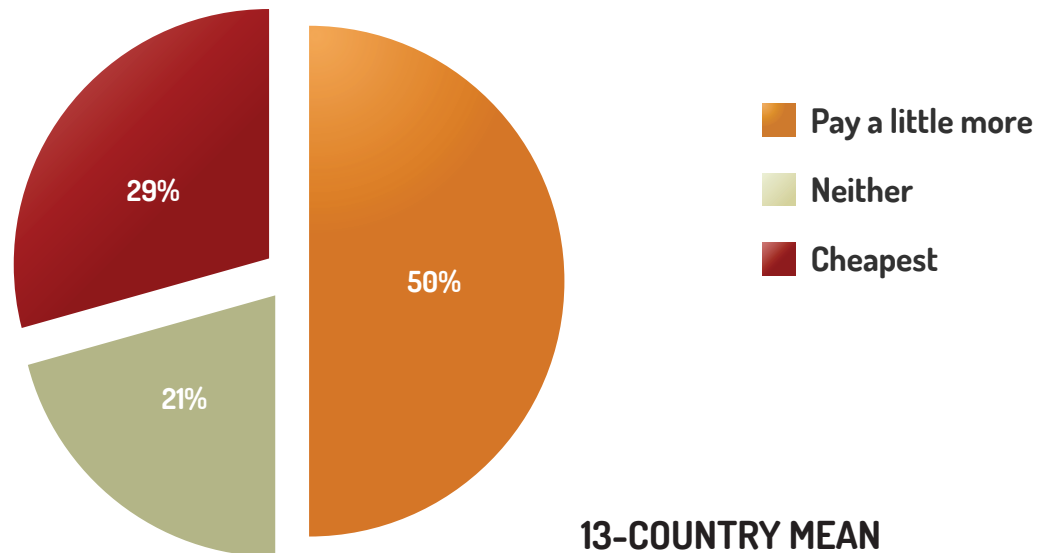
“ Unions are calling on leaders to invest 1 trillion euro into infrastructure - less than half of the public money handed to the banks, according to estimates across Europe and the U.S. We simply have a message that people want action. *Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC* ”

Question

Please indicate your level of support for the following policies to create jobs, develop new industries and reduce unemployment: Government and public investment in education, research and new technologies; Government and public investment in clean energy and environment related industries.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

Chart 26: Attitude to fair trade – cheapest good vs pay more



Question

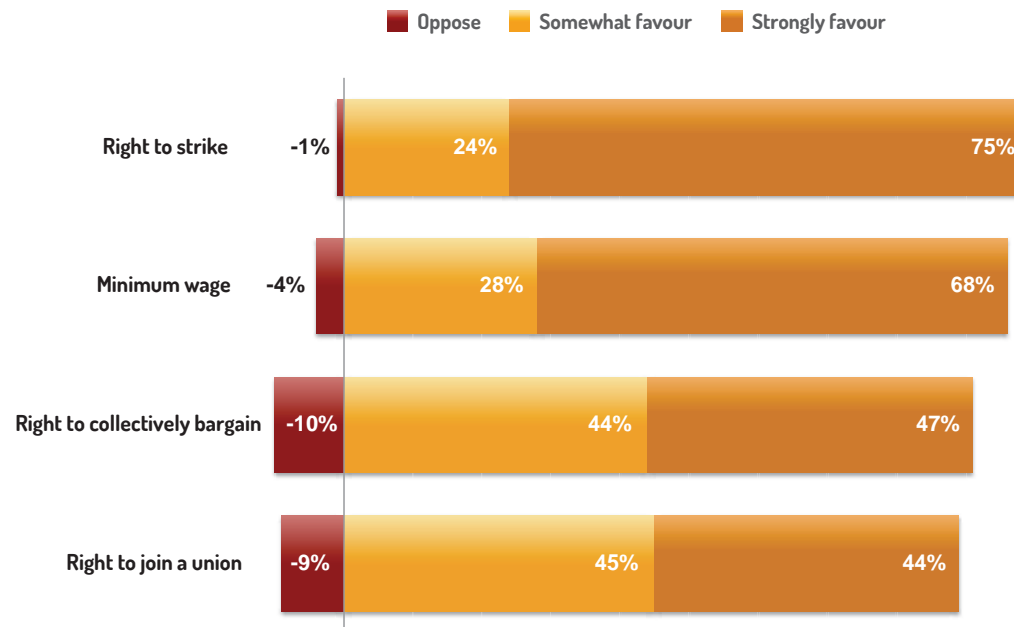
Many businesses and companies argue that they have to move their manufacturing or service centres to other countries, which have lower wages, in order to stay competitive and provide lower prices on their goods and services.

Which of the following statements best reflects your attitudes to buying goods and services:
It is important for me to be able to buy the cheapest goods or services (or) I would be prepared to pay a little more for most goods or services if companies paid workers a reasonable wage, neither of the statements.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average.

“ There is a clear willingness to pay higher prices in exchange for reasonable wages for workers. Even people without real disposable income, and facing real inequality still indicate they are willing to pay extra for goods and services provided with decent wages. ”
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

Chart 27: Laws that protect workers



“ The ill-timed move from stimulus to austerity has brought with it an attack on labour market institutions. Global citizens on the frontline of these attacks express overwhelming support for labour laws in each of the 13 countries.

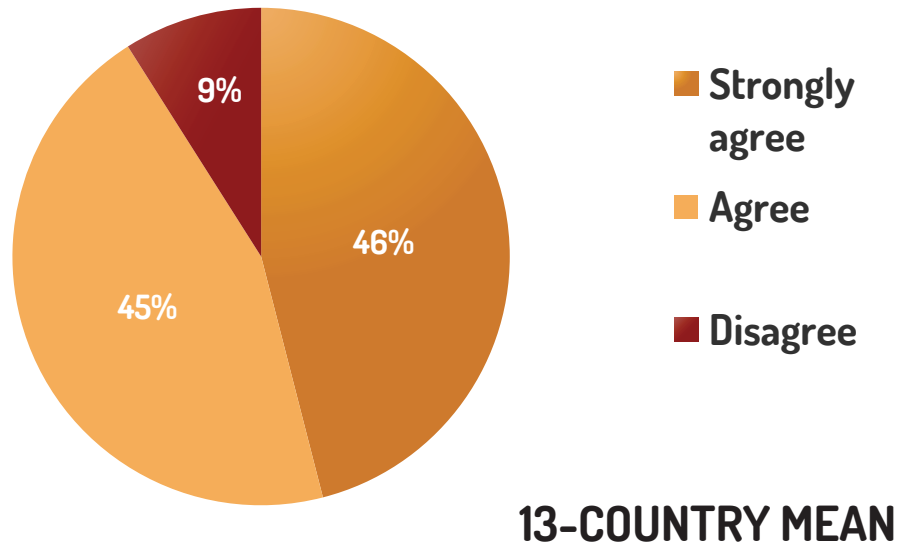
John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC ”

Question

Could you please tell me if you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following laws? Laws that protect the right to strike for better wages, conditions and health and safety, Laws that establish and protect a decent minimum wage for workers, Laws that give workers the right to collective bargain, so they can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions, Laws that give workers the right to join a union.

Note N=13,015 for 13 country average. Items ordered from highest favour score to lowest score.

Chart 28: International companies subjected to labour rules



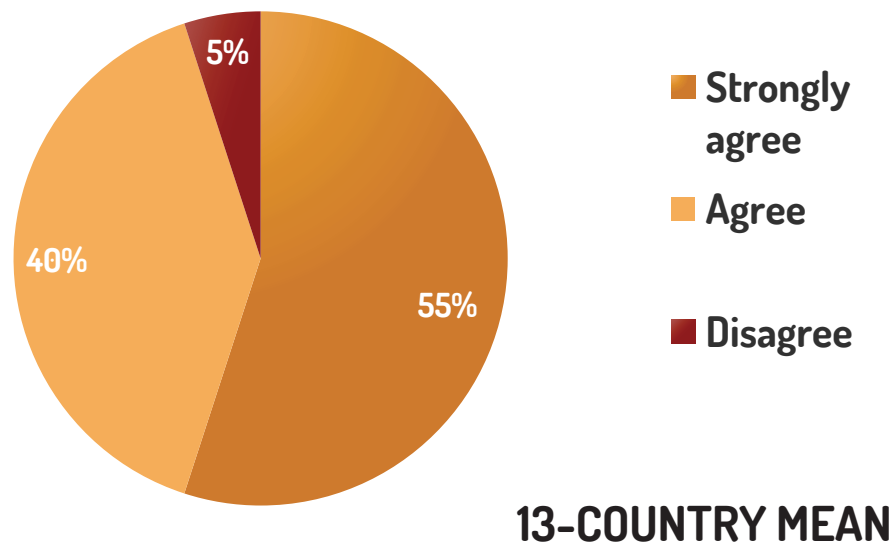
“ People are demanding business take their responsibilities seriously. Support for international rules is robust, but with slightly greater intensity in BRICS countries.
John Evans, General Secretary TUAC ”

Question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? International companies should be subjected to international rules for the working conditions of the employees making their goods and services, no matter which country the workers are in.

Note N=13,015 for 13-country average; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don't know responses deleted for ease of presentation. Largest don't know response was 1 percent.

Chart 29: International companies pay workers reasonable wages



“ Virtually all respondents (95 percent) agree that international companies should pay workers a reasonable wage. You can’t build a global economy on exploitation.

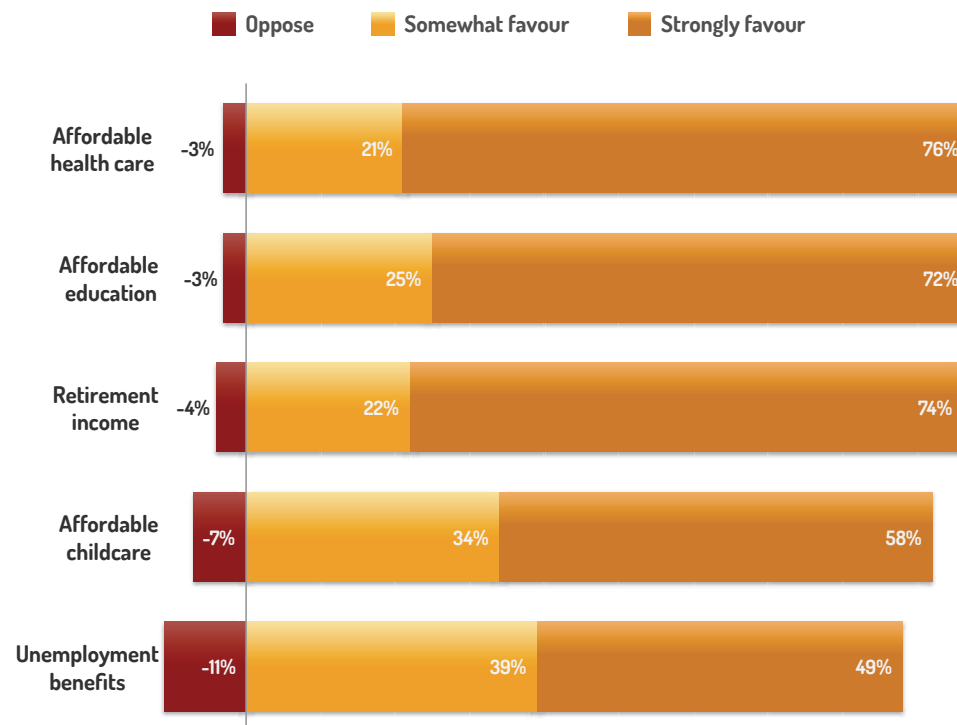
*Kwasi Adu-Amankwah,
General Secretary, ITUC-Africa*

Question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? All companies, businesses and employers should pay workers a reasonable wage regardless of where they work.

Note N=13,015 for 13-country average; N is about 1,000 for each individual country. Don’t know responses deleted for ease of presentation. Largest don’t know response was 1 percent.

Chart 30: Social protection policies



Jobs, collective bargaining, a minimum wage on which people can live, social protection and essential services are the core elements of reducing inequality.

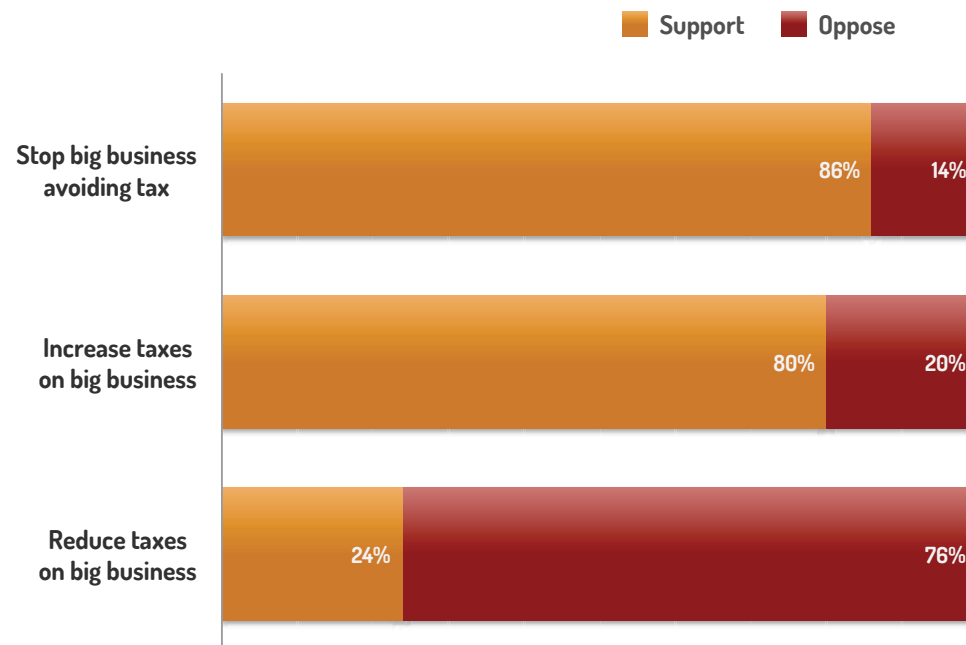
Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC

Question

Would you strongly favour, somewhat favour, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the government working on providing workers with each of the following items? Unemployment benefits, decent retirement incomes, affordable access to health care, affordable access to education, affordable access to childcare.

Note N = 13,015 for 13 country average. Policies ordered from highest to lowest 'strongly' favour.

Chart 31: Tax policies



“ Five years into the economic crisis the threat posed by tax havens has not disappeared. We need action not words. A coordinated jobs plan could be funded by closing corporate tax loopholes.
John Evans, General Secretary, TUAC ”

Question

Please indicate your level of support for the following policies to create jobs, develop new industries and reduce unemployment: Increase taxes on large and multinational corporates, reduce taxes on large and multinational corporates, policies to stop large and multi-national corporates avoiding tax.

Note N= 13,015 for 13 country average. Policies ordered highest to lowest with combined strongly support and support.

This project covers the adult (18 years and over) populations of Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the UK and the USA.

Essential Research constructed the survey in consultation with TNS Opinion and the ITUC.

TNS Opinion conducted the survey fieldwork through local partners Lightspeed Research. TNS Opinion was responsible for translations, the fieldwork in the 13 countries and data processing.

The survey was in the field from the 18 April and 1 May 2013.

The sample in each country has been selected by quotas to reflect national proportions in terms of age, gender and region.

In each country 1000 interviews were targeted for a total of 13,015 conducted interviews.

All interviews were conducted online.

SPSS software and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse and present the data.

This project was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.

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EMC and Essential Research, was responsible for question design and project management.



Anker Solutions was responsible for analysis and report writing.



TNS opinion

TNS Opinion, coordinated the field work with reputable local partners in each of the countries involved.