
Platform work international governance from the bottom-up: assessing cloudworkers' challenges and demands in the context of the ILO international convention

Jonas Valente*¹

¹University of Oxford – United Kingdom

Abstract

Research objective

The proposal evaluates the International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines for an international convention on platform workers' rights, focusing on whether and how they address the challenges faced by cloudworkers and responding to the primary rights they value.

While the ILO convention's scope encompasses all platform workers, this proposal focuses on a less visible segment of the platform economy: cloudwork. This term refers to situations where digital labour platforms organize and offer jobs that can be performed remotely (Howson et al., 2023). Types of platform work in this category include microwork, content creation, and technology development, among others (Tubaro et al., 2020; Woodcock & Graham, 2020).

The convention is a key agenda item for the ILO conference in 2025. A set of guidelines was proposed in a new report, referred to as the "Yellow Report" (ILO, 2025). Cloudwork is included in its definition of platform work.

Methodology

The proposal employs a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods across two streams. The first stream involved mapping the challenges and demands of cloudworkers through an online survey conducted between January 2024 and January 2025 with 448 cloudworkers from 16 global and regional cloudwork platforms. Participants indicated which rights they would like to see granted from a list covering various labour protections, such as minimum wage, social security, working hours, and data protection.

The second stream utilized policy analysis methods focusing on norm assessments. The recommendations outlined in the ILO Yellow Report were evaluated against the main problems and challenges identified in the survey, as well as the key rights emphasized by the workers. The qualitative analysis aimed to determine how well the proposed guidelines address these aspects and identify any gaps that need to be addressed during the convention discussions.

*Speaker

Main findings and theoretical developments

The analysis revealed that cloudworkers are recognized in the recommendations as deserving the same rights as on-location workers. Regarding jurisdictional conflicts that create constraints for workers in these international companies (Graham & Anwar, 2019), the suggestions acknowledge the rules based on the location where the work is performed. However, the recommendations only partially and inadequately meet the primary demands of cloudworkers identified in the survey. These demands include: receiving at least the local minimum wage (33.3%), ensuring payment for all completed work (18.3%), implementing measures to mitigate unpaid work (10%), granting access to social security (8.7%), and limiting working hours on the platform (7.14%).

Keywords: Cloudwork, Platform work, Platform work regulation, Cloudworkers' rights, ILO