

The United Nations and One World present:

The Age of Cheap



Frederic Brunnuell

Frédéric Brunnuell started his career at Radio France, and was a freelancer for ten years during which he wrote five books. In 1996, he joined the agency Capa as a reporter until 2008. Afterwards, he was Director and head of documentaries at 2P2L for two years and a producer-director at AMIP multimedia.fr from 2010 to 2012.



Patrick Itschert

In May 2011, Patrick Itschert was elected Deputy General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (representing 85 national trade union organisations in 36 European countries + 10 industry-based federations). He is in charge of European Social Dialogue and responsible for relations with employers' organisations. He is also in charge of other matters such as youth employment, corporate social responsibility, fundamental rights and ETUC campaigns.



Claire Courteille

Claire Courteille-Mulder was appointed as head of the ILO Office in Brussels in January 2014. Before, she was a director at the International Trade Union Confederation, responsible for issues related to labour market policies, inequality, social protection, gender and migration. Throughout her career, Mrs Courteille-Mulder has worked for different humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR and OSCE.



Carlos Jimenez

Mr Carlos Jimenez is a Desk Officer at the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels. Mr. Jimenez started his career at the United Nations in 1984 and has since worked at UN offices in New York, Madrid and Geneva. He studied journalism at the School of Communications of American University in Washington and was a correspondent at EFE, Spanish News Agency.

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Workers get a smaller slice of the pie

In its Global Wage Report 2012/2013 the ILO found that workers have been getting a smaller share of national income, as a bigger slice has gone to profits in most countries. This is causing public dissatisfaction and increasing the risk of social unrest. It has affected perceptions of what is fair, particularly given the huge payments some company executives have been getting. Simply put: more of the national pie has been going to profits, and less to workers...

Key facts

- Workers get a smaller share of GDP, as a bigger slice goes to capital income. This trend has wide-ranging economic and social implications.
- In 16 developed economies, the average labour share dropped from 75 % of national income in the mid-1970s to 65 % in the years just before the economic crisis.
- In a group of 16 developing and emerging ILO countries, it decreased from 62 % of GDP in the early 1990s to 58 % just before the crisis.

Wages grow slower than labour productivity

The ILO's Global Wage Report 2012/2013 also highlights recent findings that show wages have grown at a slower pace than labour productivity over the past decades in a majority of countries for which data is available. This has resulted in a change in the distribution of income, meaning that workers are benefitting less from the fruits of their work while the owners of capital are benefitting more.

Key facts

- In developed economies, labour productivity has increased more than twice as much as wages since 1999.
- In the United States, hourly labour productivity in the non-farm business sector increased by about 85 per cent while earnings only increased by about 35 per cent since about 1980.
- In Germany, labour productivity surged by almost a quarter over the past two decades while wages remained flat.