

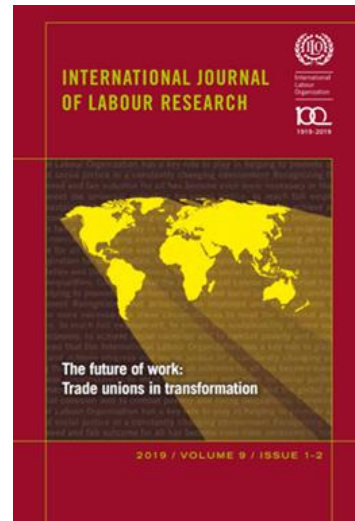
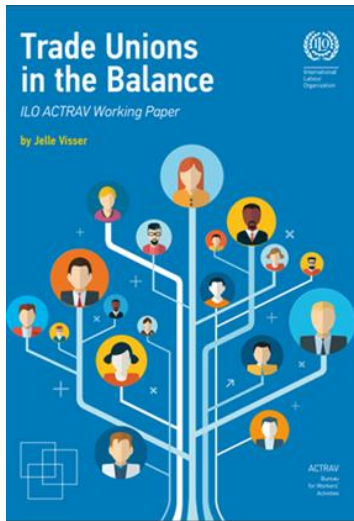


# Trade Unions in Transition

## What Future for Trade Unions ?

ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities – ACTRAV

Rafael Peels, November 2020



[Interview with Prof. Jelle Visser](#)



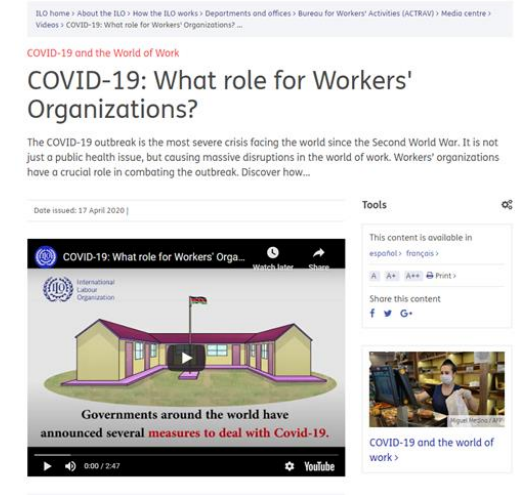
# Covid-19 crisis ... ... and the world of work

All workers worldwide are impacted by the Covid-19 crisis

- Loss in working-hours : 500 million full-time equivalent jobs ...
- Global decline of 10,7% in labour income ...

Exposing existing inequalities

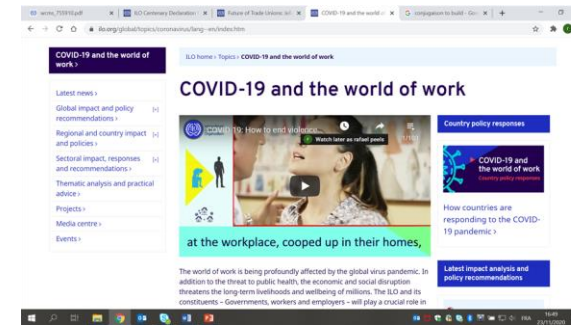
- Frontline workers, workers in the informal economy...



## ILO and the Covid-19 crisis ...

ILO Covid-19 policy guidance is structured around four pillars ...

- ▶ Stimulating the economy and employment
- ▶ Supporting enterprises, jobs and income
- ▶ Protecting workers in the workplace
- ▶ Relying on social dialogue for solutions



## Trade unions and the Covid-19 crisis ...

- **How does Covid-19 affect TUs' capacities to be partners in the answer to COVID-19 ?**
  - Rising unemployment
  - Sectors, employment relationship, wages, etc. under pressure
- **TUs' capacities to be the voice of all workers ...**
  - What about union membership and dues ?
- **People relying on trade unions for labour and social protection ...**

**Message 1: Economic and societal changes affect the future of trade unions**

**Message 2: Trade union membership in the world is in decline**

**Message 3: Four scenarios to respond to these challenges**

**Message 4: Successful experiences of trade union revitalization**

**Message 5: It is time to act !**

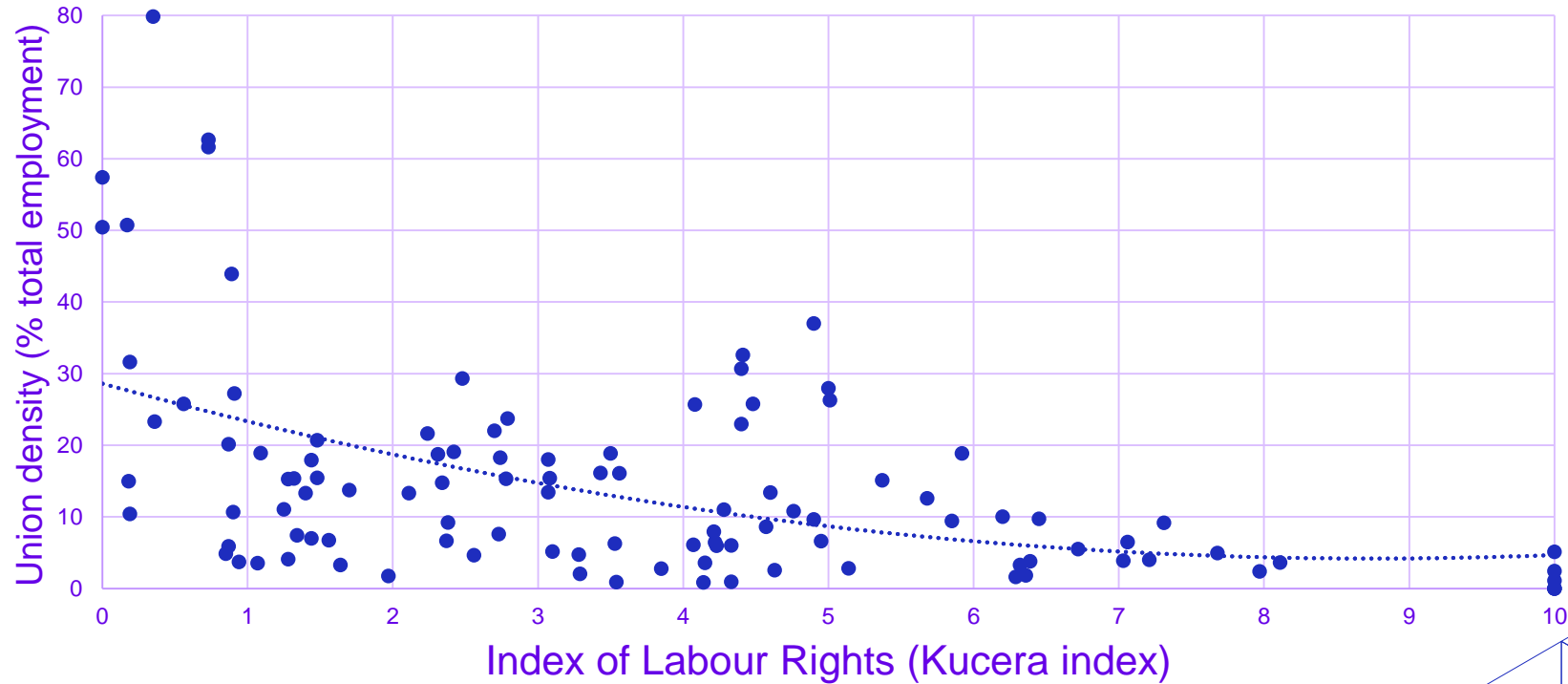
## Economic and societal changes affect the future of trade unions ...

- shift from manufacturing towards services ...
- informalisation of the economy ...
- just transition towards a green economy ...
- gaps in labour legislation and application ...
- technological change ...

**... determine the capacity of trade unions to organize and service workers**

# Trade union environment ... ... affects trade union membership

Trade Union Density and Violation of Labour Rights



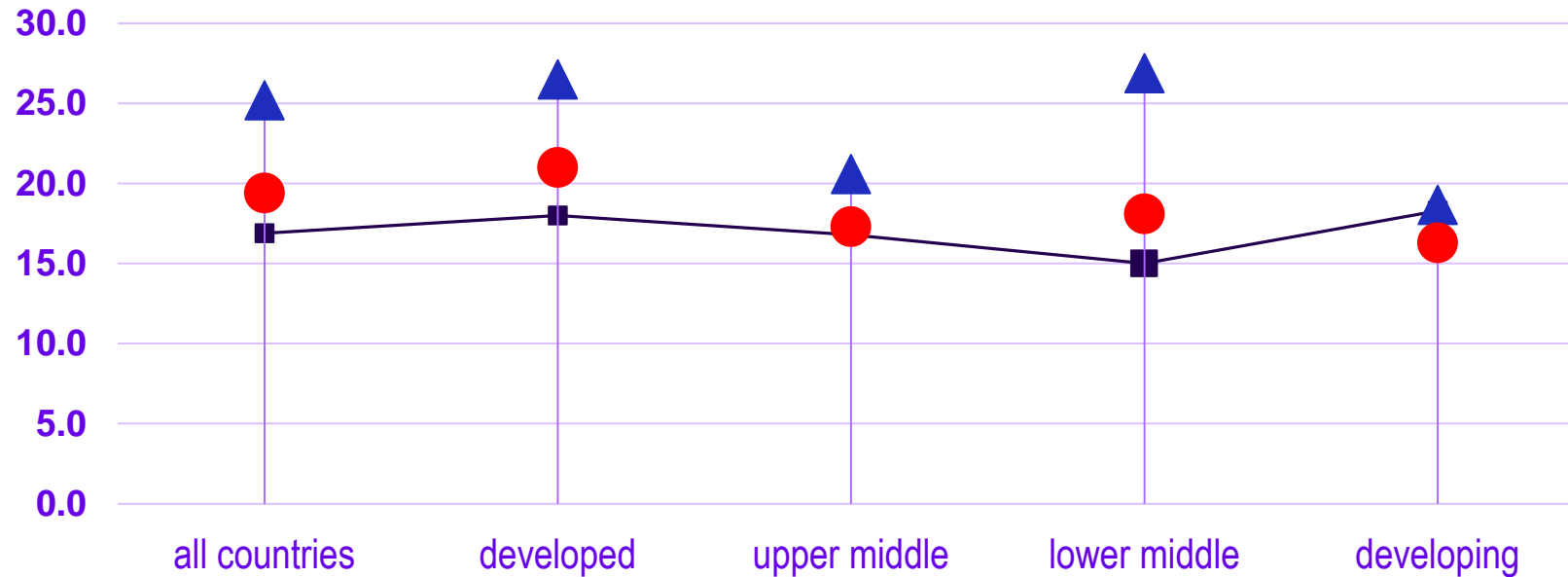


## Overall trend ...

... trade union density is going down

Union density rates 2000-2016/17

▲ 2000 ● 2008 ■ 2016/17



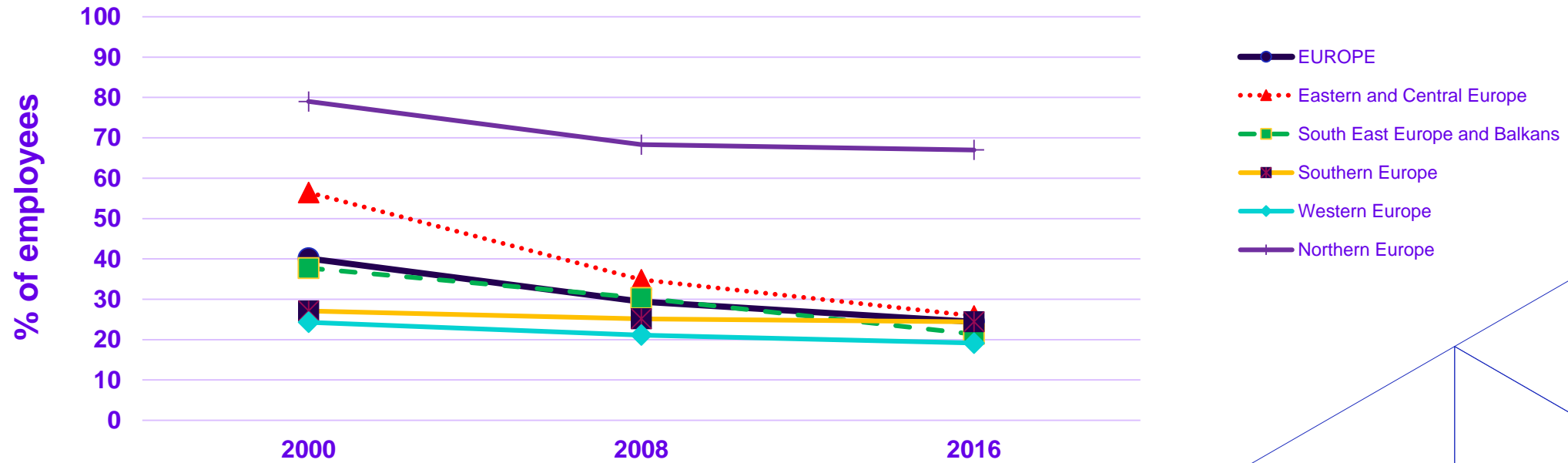
# Africa ...

## AFRICA Trade Union Density



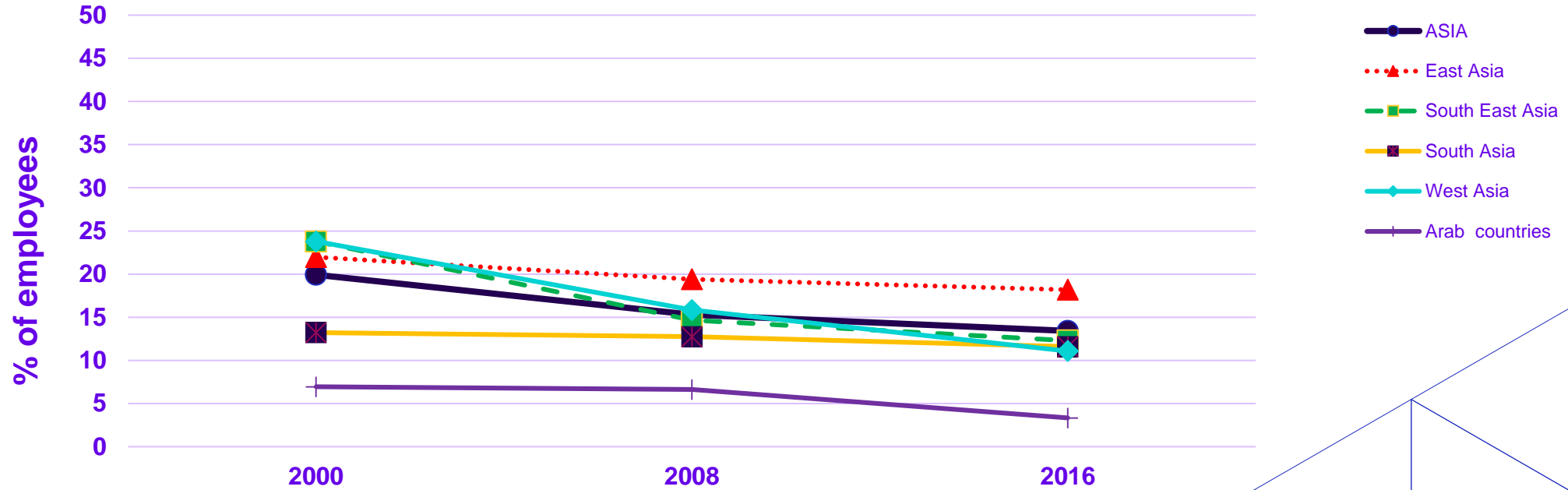
# Europe ...

## EUROPE Trade Union Density



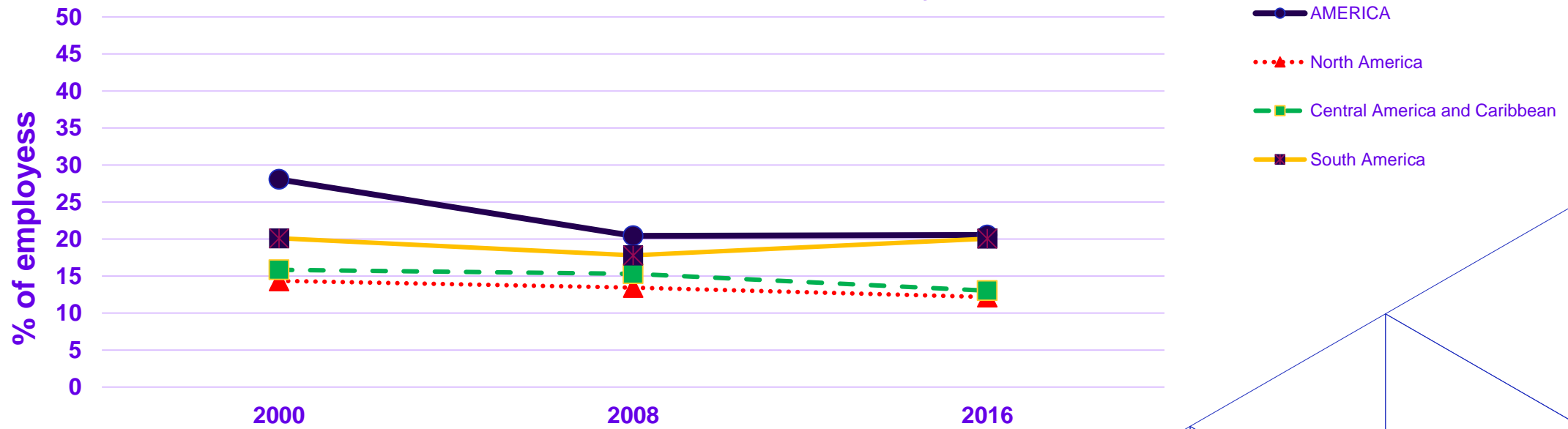
# Asia ...

## ASIA Trade Union Density



# Americas ...

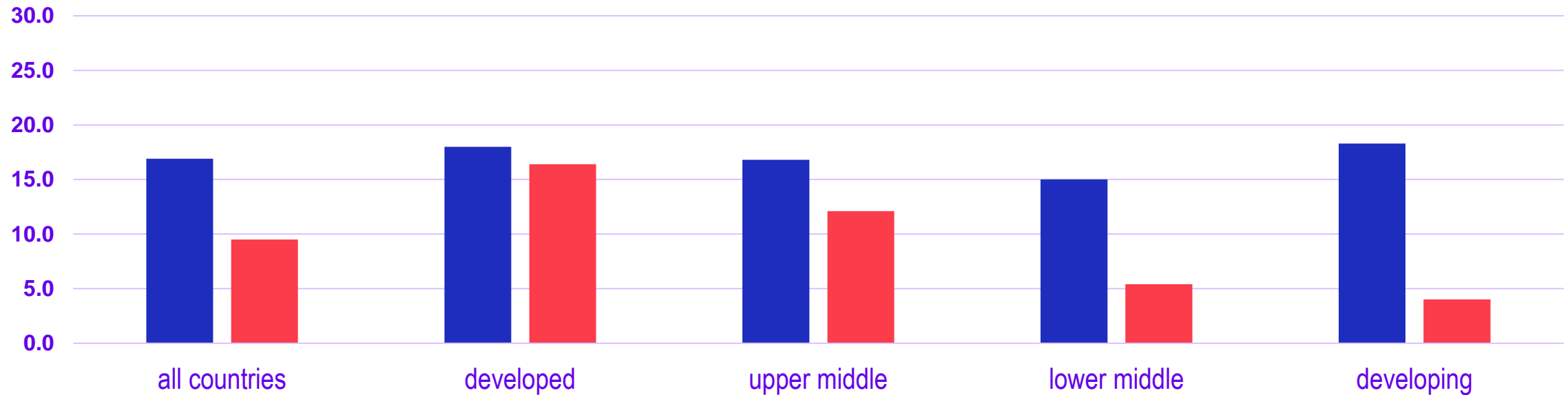
## AMERICA Trade Union Density



## Changing employment relationship ... ... a threat to workers and workers' organizations

### Union density rates 2016/17

■ employees ■ total employment



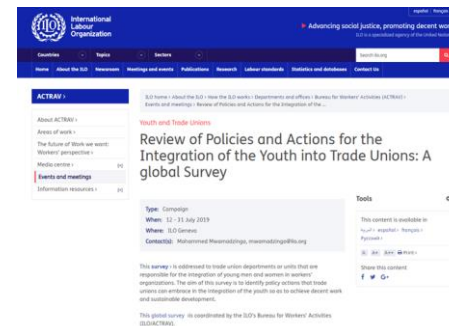
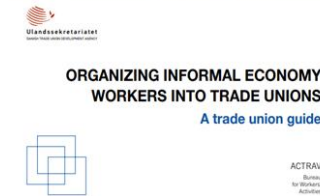
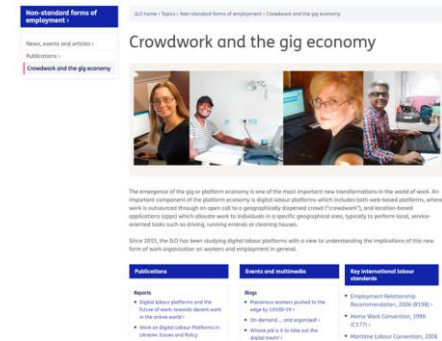
## ► Four scenarios for the Future of Trade Unions ...

- **Marginalization** - decreasing rates of unionization and aging unions
- **Dualization** - defending current positions and servicing members closest to them
- **Replacement** - a process of replacing trade unions by others
- **Revitalization** - innovating tactics and coalitions to strengthen trade unions as strong, relevant, democratic and representative actors

# Successful experiences of trade union revitalization ...

## Trade unions organizing and servicing ...

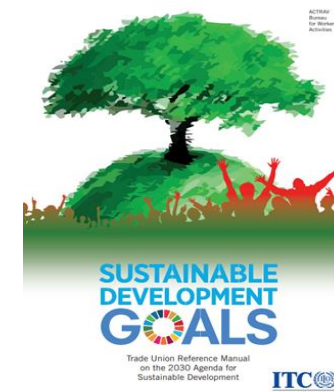
- ... informal economy workers
- ... gig workers
- ... young workers





## ► Successful experiences of trade union revitalization ...

- Trade union cooperation ...
- Internal governance ...
- Inclusive and effective **social dialogue** ...



## It's time to act ...

## ACTRAV supports trade unions ...

- engaging in debate and transformative action on the future of trade unions
- collecting examples, drawing lessons
- disseminating, scaling up and replicating good practices

Even more urgent

in times of COVID-19

