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8 hour day for unorganised workers mooted

NEW DELHI The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) has recommended an eight-hour working day, with at least a half-hour break and one paid day of rest, for workers in the unorganised sector.

Report submitted

In its report, "Comprehensive Legislation for Protection of Unorganised Workers," the Commission also suggested a statutory national minimum wage, including for home workers, and that women-specific employment be treated on a par with work done by men.

Penal provision

The report, to be presented to the Prime Minister by the month-end, also stressed the need for a penal provision on delayed payment of wages and on non-deduction of wages in the form of fines.

It ratified the right to non-discrimination on the basis of sex, caste, religion, HIV/AIDS positive cases and place of origin.

Safety equipment

It sought adequate safety equipment at the workplace and compensation for accidents, besides protection from sexual harassment and the provision of childcare and basic amenities.

The NCEUS has presented two draft Bills on "conditions of work" and "social security for unorganised workers" to the Prime Minister.

Minimum conditions

They prescribe minimum conditions of work and introduction of minimum social security for both agricultural and non-agricultural unorganised workers.

Quality of life

Arjun Sengupta, Chairperson of the Commission, said the recommendations had the potential to improve the quality of life of the more than 340 million of the most marginalised and vulnerable working poor in India.