

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes GS-II

Topic: World Confederation of Labour

World Confederation of Labour (WCL) was initially founded in 1920 by the name of International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU). The main purpose of its establishment was to represent the interests of Christian labour unions in Western Europe and Latin America. In 1940, the Fascist and Nazi suppressions led to the abolishment of the IFCTU but it was later reconstituted in 1945. The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) was renamed as World Confederation of Labour (WCL) in 1948.

The World Confederation of Labour was formed to fight against the discrimination and for the protection of rights of the female as well as the male workers. The WCL was formally dissolved on 31 October 2006 when it merged with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to form the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Objectives of World Confederation of Labour

Headquartered at Brussels, Belgium, the World Confederation of Labour aims to assist the development of trade unions and also to defend trade union freedoms. Some of the main objectives of WCL are:

1. To gain respect for trade union freedom.
2. To provide moral support to its member countries and ensuring permanent collaboration with them.
3. To take a step for the respect and promotion of the workers' dignity and also improving their living conditions.
4. Developing effective solidarity between the member countries and the affiliated organizations.
5. Promoting cross-country worker unity and to provide emergency assistance.

Structure of WCL

Congress is the governing body of the World Confederation of Labours and has a major role to play in appointing the Secretary-General. The Congress also elects the confederation committee, president, secretary-general and treasurer. WCL consists of both trade-union centres as well as a number of non-trade-union associations. WCL had 12.7 million members from the trade unions of 74 countries in the year 1968. Apart from Congress, WCL also has a General Council which has members from Confederal Board. The General Council also includes the representatives of international trade federations, national confederations and trade union organisations. The general leadership of the WCL is controlled by the Confederal Board. The World Confederation of Labour may seek national, regional and international economic integration but its influence is virtually limited to domestic policies and local affairs in member-countries. The WCL is the smallest international labour federation. It has brought into its fold Christian, Buddhist and Muslims member confederation, as well as organisations without religious reference.