

Unilever vows living wage for all in value chain by '30

Namrata.Singh
@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Global consumer products giant Unilever has committed to ensure that everyone who directly provides goods and services to the company earns at least a living wage or income by 2030. While Unilever, which directly employs 1.5 lakh employees across 190 countries, already pays its employees a living wage, it wants to ensure the same for people beyond its workforce and across its value chain.

Estimates suggest this could impact over a million people in 10 years, helping to reduce the social inequalities gap that is said to have only widened since Covid. A living wage allows people to afford a decent standard of living covering a family's basic needs — food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing as also a provision for unexpected events.

A living wage is higher

“It's about creating a systemic change not just in Unilever, but across other businesses in various countries. The hope is it will have a trickle effect and touch the lowest level in the value chain



Leena Nair | CHRO, UNILEVER

than the minimum wage as defined by various countries, cities or regions. Unilever is working with Fair Wage Network to arrive at a living wage standard across countries.

In an exclusive interaction with **TOI**, Unilever's chief HR officer Leena Nair said, “When we look around us and this is even more evident post-Covid, social inequality is a big issue. As a business that wants to be sustainable, we are announcing wide-ranging commitments and actions.” Nair said the process will be audited and certified across the world.

In India, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) will support employees in the ecosystem, who are providing goods and services to the company, such as service providers, co-packers, carrying & forwarding agents (distribution network), and sales network. This would impact over 1.2 lakh people by 2030.

Before making this commitment, Nair said Unilever had to ensure that the same is provided for in terms of the business model. The 52-billion-euro Unilever is also pioneering new employment models and equipping 10 million young people with essential skills to prepare them for job opportunities, by 2030.

HUL executive director (HR) Anuradha Razdan said, “In India, we aim to positively impact women in the grassroots levels by hiring over 2,000 women in the shopfloor in factories. We are also working towards re-skilling and up-skilling over 12,000 blue-collar employees to make them future-fit.”