

GLOBAL MIGRATION GROUP

5TH Thematic session on “Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims”

Vienna, 4th September 2017

Statement of the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Honorable Chair, distinguished participants;

- In 2012, almost 21 million people around the world were victims of forced labour which means they had been coerced or deceived into jobs which they could not leave without punishment¹. Almost half of the victims had moved either cross borders or within their countries. 28% of all trafficked persons were children.
- The Alliance 8.7, a global partnership to end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour, will present updated data on prevalence and trends during the UN General Assembly, as part of a collaborative effort with the IOM and other partners to provide UN Member States with a baseline for the achievement of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- This year in June, the International Labour Conference concluded that fair and effective labour migration governance is needed to reduce the risk of being trapped into forced labour, debt bondage or sexual exploitation, especially for

¹ “All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”; ILO Convention num.29 on forced or compulsory labour (1930), Art. 2, 1.

low-wage workers, in countries of origin, transit and destination. What does that mean in practice?

- It means, prevention is key and we have to look some root causes of migrant workers' vulnerability related to the functioning of labour markets. It also means closing the gaps basically in three areas: 1) gaps in legislation, 2) gaps in policy design and 3) implementation gaps.
- The ILO promotes cooperation between governments to facilitate regular and safe migration and to prevent trafficking in persons. This includes coordinated efforts to regulate and monitor labour recruiters, to eliminate recruitment fees charged to the workers, and thus prevent any form of debt bondage. The "ILO General Principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment" and the "Fair Recruitment Initiative" provide further guidance. Access to decent work, safe incomes and skills training is also crucial to provide livelihoods.
- Employers and businesses are taking effective measures to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address the risks of forced labour, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery in their operations or in products, services or operations to which they may be directly linked. The ILO has recently created a global business network against forced labour and human trafficking in order to work with companies on challenges they may face in their operations in these two areas.
- The role and capacities of workers' organizations to support and assist victims of forced or compulsory labour should also be recognised, including through coordinating action across borders.

- The ILO has launched campaigns like “50 for Freedom” to assist member States in making progress towards the ratification of Protocol 29 to the Forced Labour Convention and adapting their national legislations and policy frameworks accordingly. We stand ready to work together with other UN agencies, member States, workers’ and employers’ organizations, civil society and other stakeholders to address the challenges in the governance of international labour markets.