

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
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**INPUT OF THE GLOBAL UNIONS TO THE TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION¹**

Global Unions

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

Migrant workers are increasingly becoming victims of discrimination and abuse. The global financial and economic crisis makes them even more vulnerable than in the past. Xenophobia, exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking are on the rise. The UN High Level Dialogue must provide adequate responses to these burning questions by prioritising three issues:

1. Shift the global debate towards labour migration

Since 2006, the focus of the international community has been on the migration-development nexus. Global Unions feel it is time to shift the focus towards labour migration because employment is at the heart of the overwhelming majority of migration flows. There is an urgent need to look at migration from an employment perspective both in countries of origin and destination. The context of economic downturn, labour market deterioration and demographic change makes the need for international cooperation on these issues even more acute.

Global Unions demand:

- *A focus of the international community on labour migration;*
- *Increased international cooperation on the promotion of decent work in the context of labour migration; and*
- *More transparency in the process with genuine participation of trade unions and migrant workers' organisations.*

2. Formalise and democratise the migration governance system

The current governance structure is inadequate as it does not promote a rights-based approach to migration. Currently, migration issues are discussed through informal networks, with no monitoring system, no genuine participation of civil society and no reference to the legal normative framework agreed upon by the international community. The informal nature of the settings in which governments meet leads to decisions and programmes that overlook States' obligations to protect the human rights of migrant workers. This has an adverse effect on the respect of migrant workers' rights. In addition, it puts countries of origin and destination on an unequal footing with the former often being forced to accept the conditions imposed by the latter.

Global Unions demand:

- *That the role of the UN on migration issues be reaffirmed;*
- *That international debate and cooperation on migration take place within the normative framework of the UN;*
- *Increased resources for the promotion of international standards, including the UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and ILO Conventions No 97 and 143; and*
- *The creation of mechanisms to ensure compliance with international standards such as reporting systems, exchange of best practices and genuine dialogue with trade unions and organisations of migrant workers.*

3. An enhanced role for the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The ILO is the only UN organisation which has a mandate to protect migrant workers. The weak enforcement of workers' rights in the context of migration allows abuses and exploitation to continue. *De jure* or *de facto* restrictions on workers' rights that prevent migrants from joining trade unions are important elements that help explain the surge of forced labour. The non-application of the principle of equal treatment creates a downward pressure on wages and working conditions to the detriment of all workers.

Global Unions demand:

- *Full recognition of the ILO mandate on migrant workers in the global governance system;*
- *A clear role for the ILO in the preparation of the 2013 High Level Dialogue; and*
- *A higher level of responsibility for the ILO in the Global Migration Group (GMG)*