



The challenges facing the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development

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Action theme 4: Migration governance and partnerships

The UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development which will take place next October represents a real opportunity to change the current course on migration and development. Migrant workers around the world need meaningful responses to the rise in trafficking, exploitation, inequality and xenophobia taking place in virtually every country.

A paradigm shift is urgent. The international community must have the courage to challenge the current deregulatory approach to labour migration that puts economic interests before workers' rights. Today's high levels of unemployment must not lead to more abuses of migrant workers' rights. The focus must be on decent work for all, migrant and local workers alike. This is how we will achieve shared prosperity, fairer societies and fight xenophobia.

Challenging the current paradigm requires political courage. We feel inspired by those governments that took important steps towards developing a rights-based approach to migration. We also feel inspired by the progress made in several countries towards achieving decent work for domestic workers, a great proportion of whom are migrants.

Getting our countries out of the current global crisis requires all of us – governments, international organisations and civil society- to focus on the creation and promotion of decent work for all; to ensure migrant workers enjoy the same wages and working conditions as their local colleagues; to protect their rights to join and organise in unions and to access justice.

At intergovernmental level, governments should be encouraged to increase their cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, the only international organisation which has a mandate to protect migrant workers. The High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development must promote the UN legal framework and reaffirm the leadership of the ILO when it comes to labour migration.

The world needs a more robust commitment to a gender sensitive human rights-based approach to migration.

From an institutional perspective, civil society needs a space to discuss in a more coherent and comprehensive way the human rights dimension of migration. Such a space would help us engage in genuine dialogue beyond stereotypes and prejudices, exchange best practices and establish a common understanding on issues related to human rights and migration. The UN must provide that space for dialogue and enhanced cooperation on the human rights and migration nexus, involving all relevant international organisations, states and civil society actors.

The Global Migration Group (GMG) which already gathers together all international organisations dealing with migration might appear an obvious avenue for such a dialogue to take place. A concrete proposal might therefore

be to revisit the mandate of the GMG so as to include a higher focus on the human rights dimension of migration and invite states and civil society actors to join some of its meetings.

Realising the rights of migrant workers is in the interest of the migrants themselves but also in the interest of the population in both the countries of origin and destination.

One of the key challenges for the High Level Dialogue is to find and agree upon an institutional setting at global level that will enable better protection of migrant rights at national level. If it fails to do so, abuses, exploitation and xenophobia are likely to continue to spread all around the world.