

GLOBAL UNION STRATEGY MEETING ON MIGRATION

“Building Alternatives”

DRAFT AGENDA

September 24 & 25, 2012

Brussels – ITUH – Room B

Background

Global Unions consider migration as a decent work issue and unconditionally support the realisation of the rights of migrant workers while rejecting the commodification of labour. Global Unions have on many occasions expressed their strong disagreement with the current deregulatory economic approach to migration that treats migrant workers as an ultra-flexible workforce that can be hired and fired according to business cycles. They defend the right of all migrant workers - including the undocumented ones - to form a union, to access justice and to be treated the same as any other local worker. The implementation of UN and ILO standards is a key priority of the international trade union movement.

The deregulatory approach to migration is fuelled by a deficient governance system at international level. Today migration flows are “managed” through inter-governmental trade or cooperation agreements and/or state immigration policies which do not provide adequate protection for migrants’ rights. The promotion of circular or temporary migration schemes, under the false assumption that they benefit countries of origin and destination as well as the migrants themselves, exacerbates several problems such as the brain-drain, social dumping or human rights violations.

At international level, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which relies on unequal bargaining positions among states and lacks any normative reference for its work, is a strong advocate of “migration without rights”. The Global Unions insist that the global governance of migration must be rooted in the UN system under a clear normative framework to oversee the implementation of states’ obligations according to international human rights law. The 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development is an opportunity to move forward in the right direction.

Human migration has become a lucrative business with recruitment agencies playing a key role. In many countries migrant workers are requested to pay huge fees to intermediaries who might not even take them to the promised work and

employment conditions. Recruitment agencies are instrumental in the surge of forced labour worldwide and their activities should be better regulated.

Finally, the influence of trade unions on migration policies at national and international levels depends to a large extent on their capacity to recruit more migrant workers to their ranks. Organising migrants in trade unions is not only a powerful tool against discrimination and abuses on the labour market; it is also a crucial way to strengthen unions and their representative role.

Objective of the meeting

The objective of this two day strategy meeting is to find concrete ways of responding to the current policy agenda that promotes migration without rights worldwide and to propose alternatives underpinned by the decent work agenda. For this, the labour movement must rely on advocacy, campaign and mobilisation work as well as the organisation of migrant workers in unions, with the ultimate goal of building workers' power. A cross cutting element in this strategy meeting is cooperation and partnership with friendly organisations focusing on migrant rights' issues.

The strategy meeting will be organised along 4 clusters (Rights – Governance – Organising - Recruitment). For each of these 4 clusters, the participants will share knowledge and national experiences and define concrete action points to be applied at international, regional and national levels.

Policy documents:

The ITUC and the GUFs have adopted detailed policy on international migration. These positions are listed below as background information:

ITUC policy: *Migration: a decent work issue (October 2011)*: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/9gc_e_06_b_i_-_migration.pdf

PSI: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/migration>

BWI: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Issue=Migrant%20workers%20and%20posted%20workers&Language=EN>

GU Statement to the GFMD: <http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/GU%20Flyer%205th%20GFMD%20FINAL.PDF>

GU Statement to the UN 10th thematic forum on migration (*February 2012*): <http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/tenthcoord2012/P31.Global%20Unions.pdf>

MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

(DAY 1)

9:30 - 17:00

9: 30 Opening session

10:00 - 12:30 Cluster 1: Realising the rights of migrant workers

Presentations:

- How can unions engage with the UN Committee on the Rights of all Migrant Workers: Mr. Abdelhamid El Jamri, Chair of the UN Committee
- Promoting the ILO on the international scene and a better use of the ILO supervisory mechanisms by ILO-ACTRAV, Luc Demaret
- Realising the rights of migrants in the Americas: a trade union perspective, Rafael Freire, TUCA - Secretary for Economic Policy and Sustainable Development

Action points:

A better use of international instruments (working groups):

- UN and ILO ratification campaigns
- Promoting the role of the ILO on the international scene
- Exposing and denouncing violations of migrant workers' rights

14: 00: Special Session

ITUC/ BWI Campaign: "*Qatar: Do the right thing!*" Tim Noonan, ITUC Director, Jin Sook Lee, BWI Director

14:30 – 17:00 : Cluster 2: Challenging the current governance of international migration

Presentations

- Analysis of civil society's engagement under different institutional arrangements (GFMD, WSFM, ILO, UN Committee) *CSO or GU speaker*
- 2013 UN High Level Dialogue: Holding states accountable, *GU speaker*
- Fighting for equal treatment: Samuel Engblom, TCO- Sweden

Action points

Challenging the current system (working groups):

- Strategy for trade unions' engagement in 2012 GFMD (Mauritius, November 19- 22) and WSFM (Manila November 26-30)
- Defining a common advocacy strategy for the High Level Dialogue (HLD)

TUESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

(DAY 2)

9:30 - 17:00

9:30 – 12: 30 Cluster 3 organising migrant workers in the trade union movement:

Presentations

- Organizing Case Study: Outreaching and Recruiting Migrant Workers Prior to Departure, Raam Arumugam Murugan, Founder President of Rural Workers Organisation, BWI
- The AFL-CIO experience on organising migrant workers, Ana Avendaño, AFL-CIO –US
- *Migration from an African perspective: Experiences from Southern Africa, Kaizer Makole, SADTU ([South Africa](#))*

Action points:

Increasing the number of migrant workers in trade union membership (working groups):

- Reaching a global target of 20,000 migrant workers organised by the end of 2013
- Developing an organising agenda with migrant rights' organisations

14:00 Cluster 4 - Exposing the role of recruitment agencies

Presentations

- The Dhaka Principles, Neill Wilkins, Institute for Human Rights and Business
- Ethical Recruitment in the Health Sector – Genevieve Gencianos, PSI and Jillian Roque, PSLINK (Philippines)
- Sharing experience on recruitment agencies, [Shannon Lederer, AFT \(USA\)](#)

Action points (working groups):

- Defining a strategy to promote the regulation of recruitment agencies

16:00 Conclusions and takeaways

- GU representatives
- Adoption of a statement on the 2013 UN High Level Dialogue