**ILO contribution to the implementation of *GA resolution 74/148 Protection of migrants***

**Labour migration is and will remain a key feature of the world of work**. According to the latest ILO global estimates on migrant workers, migrant workers accounted for 164 million in 2017. **Migrant workers contribute to growth and development** in their countries of destination, while countries of origin greatly benefit from their remittances and the skills acquired during their migration experience. Yet, **the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of governance, decent work deficit and migrant workers' protection**. The **ILO works to forge policies to maximize the benefits of labour migration for all those involved**. ILO also builds and promotes understanding of the vulnerability of migrant workers, especially women, to discrimination, exploitation and abuse throughout the international labour migration process. Through its standards, ILO fosters the strengthening of legislation, policies and action to prevent these problems, promote decent work and better protect migrant workers in a vulnerable situation.

Overall, in 2018-19, ILO supported 48 member states and five regional institutions to adopt, formulate, or implement rights-based, gender-responsive labour migration policies, regulations, institutional mechanisms or services to protect migrant workers, and foster inclusive labour markets. The ILO supported constituents in 24 Member States to improve their governance frameworks, through the development or updating of labour migration policies; legislative review; or issuance of regulations on specific issues such as reintegration of migrant workers, standard contracts, or the zero worker-paid recruitment fee principle. 6 bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) were developed with ILO support. With ILO support, 11 government institutions are delivering new inclusive, non-discriminatory services to promote decent work for migrant workers and refugees.

The **Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** recognizes the importance of labour migration. It is rooted in the 2030 Agenda and rests on international human rights and labour standards, particularly those related to decent work and migration. The **Global Compact for Refugees (GCR)** adopted in 2018, specifically references ILO Recommendation 205 and the Guiding Principles on Access of Refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market. **ILO is a member of the Executive Committee of the UN Network on Migration**. As part of the Network’s support efforts, ILO co-leads, together with IOM, a **Thematic Working Group on bilateral labour migration agreements (BLMAs).** The ILO supervisory bodies have emphasized the **important role of BLMAs in promoting effective labour migration governance and the protection of migrant workers’ rights.** Furthermore, a number of ILO Conventions and Recommendations encourage the adoption of bilateral or multilateral agreements to give effect to the provisions set therein. The Thematic Working Group on BLMAs looks at **enhancing** **pathways for regular migration in a manner that facilitates decent work and labour mobility through common guidance on BLMAs** **while having migrant workers at the centre of all efforts** as laid out in the work plan of the UN Network on Migration and the relevant objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Measures and policies, in conformity with international labour standards, enhancing capacities

and supporting opportunities for labour migration

With the support of ILO, consultative processes including Labour and other ministries, as well as social partners, contributed to the development and adoption of National Labour Migration Policies (NLMP) in **Lesotho, Zimbabwe** and **Eswatini**. The development was guided by relevant ILO Conventions ratified by those countries. Support to the revision and elaboration of National Labour Migration Policies is undergoing respectively in **Sri Lanka** and **Guatemala**.

In October 2018, the **Ethiopian Government** developed and adopted a **Reintegration Directive**, which is guided by international labour standards and draws on preliminary research conducted by the ILO, to support the reintegration of returned migrants.

ILO, in partnership with UN Women, is coordinatingthe **Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region** programme. Part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, the programme aims to **address women migrant workers’ vulnerabilities to violence and trafficking, strengthen rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to violence against women and labour migration governance and support access to essential services.** Safe and Fair contributed towards strengthening policies and implementing regulations on gender-sensitive labour migration governance in **Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Viet Nam** and initiated various research initiatives in **Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam** to support evidence-based policy making.

Strengthening regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue

**SADC** Ministers of Employment and Labour and Social Partners met in March 2020, and adopted an **Action Plan on Labour Migration in the Southern Africa Development Community**. The objectives of the Plan are (1) To strengthen labour migration policies and regulatory systems for better labour migration governance; (2) To protect migrant workers’ rights and improve advocacy and awareness of their contribution to development and regional integration; and (3) To enhance the participation of migrant workers in socio-economic development processes in countries of origin and destination.

The revised **ECOWAS Directive on Minimum Standards for Harmonizing Labour Legislation** in ECOWAS member States was approved by the regional tripartite ECOWAS Social Dialogue Forum on 18 July 2019 and adopted by the Ministers of Labour on 19 July 2019 and applies to every citizen of the Community. The Directive is guided substantially by International Labour Standards.

As per the **African Union (AU)** Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development adopted by the 24th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in January 2015, in April 2019 the AU operationalized the **Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC)**. The LMAC is a regional tripartite mechanism, which provides advice to Governments **to promote improved labour migration governance and protect the rights of migrant workers and members of their families**. It ensures the follow-up on the implementation, promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families enshrined in the appropriate AU and International Conventions, Charters and Protocols. The work of LMAC is guided by international labour standards and the GCM.

The ILO Fair Project supported a **Trade union-to-Trade union bilateral agreement between the Progressive Labour Union of Domestic Workers (PLU) in Hong Kong (China) and the Center of United and Progressive Workers (SENTRO)** in the Philippines to enhance mobilization of migrant domestic workers and coordination and information sharing along the Philippines-Hong Kong (SAR) corridor.

**In Central America,** trade union confederations in **Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Panama** have formed a **Trade Union Regional Committee** as a platform of information exchange and experiences on the human rights of migrants as well as incorporating migration issues in their trade union agendas.

Cooperation with workers’ and employers organizations and other stakeholders towards protection and fair recruitment of migrant workers

Within the **ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative[[1]](#footnote-1)**, launched in 2014, the issue of recruitment of migrant workers has caught up vast attention in the trade union movement and has served as a catalyst to advocate for the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

With the support of the ILO REFRAME Project[[2]](#footnote-2), the **Guatemalan Chamber of Agriculture (CAMAGRO)** has integrated reference to the **ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment** into its Human Rights and Business Policy.

The **Mexican non-profit Agricultural Association for Social Responsibility (AHIFORES),** which brings together 80 per cent of all agricultural exporters in Mexico, and the ILO REFRAME project formalized their collaboration through an MoU to strengthen fair recruitment in the sector through the adoption of the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment among all members in an effort to promote good practices and social responsibility.

The ILO Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East (FAIRWAY) also supported the establishment of the Gulf region’s first domestic workers member-based organization: the **Sandigan Kuwait Domestic Workers Association** created to ensure voice and representation and to deliver improved services to its members.

The ILO FAIR II[[3]](#footnote-3) Project has partnered with the **Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions and the research group Rights Exposure** to undertake research on migrant domestic workers’ access to justice in **Hong Kong (China)**. The report exposes how migrant domestic workers face a range of administrative and financial obstacles when filing a claim against their employer at the conciliation service or Labour Tribunal.

The ILO has supported the development and expansion of the Recruitment Advisor recruitment agency information and review web platform. The **Recruitment Advisor platform** was developed by the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC),** with support from the ILO Fair Recruitment initiative, to help protect migrant workers from abusive employment practices, by providing migrants with peer-to-peer reviews about recruitment agencies in their country of origin and destination. The platform lists thousands of agencies in **Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore,** and other countries. An integrated complaints mechanism “HAMSA” is being developed in partnership with **Migrant Forum in Asia (NGO).**

In **Madagascar** a new domestic workers trade union was created and officially registered in September 2019, with support also from the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF). An official congress will be organised to elect the leaders and adopt the constitution with the technical support of the ILO under the REFRAME Project.

The ILO FAIR project supported the **Union générale tunisienne du travail (UGTT) in Tunisia**, the **Progressive Labour Union of Domestic Workers (PLU)** and the **Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Union (FADWU) in Hong Kong**, the **Center of United and Progressive Workers (SENTRO)** **in the Philippines, and the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) in Nepal** for the establishment of migrant resource centers and the development of sensitization programmes and other information services for migrant workers.

Information campaigns and tools fostering evidence-based narratives

**The ILO has developed, in partnership with the** **International Federation of Journalists**, **a toolkit for journalists to report on forced labour and fair recruitment** including a Media-friendly Glossary. The toolkit is available in multiple languages and several countries have developed national adaptations. The toolkit forms a basis for the trainings for journalists and media experts which are part of the media engagement programmes at the country level (initial pilot countries include **Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines, Tunisia, Mexico, Mongolia, Niger**). The media engagement programmes further include editor round tables, partnerships with universities and schools of journalism and national media competitions.

Furthermore, each year the ILO hosts - in partnership with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Federation of Journalists, Equal Times, Solidarity Centre, and Migrant Forum in Asia - the **Global Media Competition on Labour Migration**. The competition aims to promote quality reporting on labour migration issues, as balanced and ethical reporting can play an important role in addressing stereotypes and misconceptions, and in highlighting the positive contribution migrant workers make in their origin and destination countries.

Ratifications of relevant ILO Conventions, including the Domestic Workers Convention, and latest ratifications

Latest ratifications of **ILO Convention No 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers**, include **Sweden and Madagascar (2019), Brazil, Peru and Grenada (2018), Guinea (2017) and Jamaica (2016)**. Latest ratifications of **ILO Convention No 143 Migrant Workers** (Supplementary Provisions) include **Mauritania and Madagascar (2019).** In 2019 **Morocco** ratified ILO **Convention No 97 - Migration for Employment** (Revised).

**Madagascar (2019) and Rwanda (2018)** ratified ILO Convention No 181 on **Private Employment Agencies**, which provides protection for migrant workers recruited or placed by private employment agencies. In **Madagascar**, the ILO has supported the government to ensure the provisions of the relevant Conventions are integrated into national law. The **Sierra Leone** Parliament has formally approved the ratification of ILO Conventions No.97 and No.143.

Protection of the human rights of women migrant workers, ensuring that all women are legally protected against violence and exploitation

Violence and harassment in the world of work deprives people of their dignity, is incompatible with decent work, and a threat to equal opportunities and to safe, healthy, and productive working environments. It remains a widespread phenomenon, present in all countries and disregarding sectors, occupations and work arrangements. The 2019 Centenary International Labour Conference has adopted **ILO Convention No 190 and Recommendation No. 206 on Violence and Harassment.** These new standards recognize that violence and harassment in the world of work “can constitute a human rights violation or abuse…is a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and incompatible with decent work” and call for legislative and other measures to protect migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers, regardless of migrant status, in origin, transit and destination countries, from violence and harassment in the world of work.

In December 2019, in Bangkok in Thailand, the ILO and UN Women hosted an **inter-regional meeting** on **‘Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of experiences and progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant workers’**. Governments, employers and workers representatives, development partners and other key stakeholders from Asia, the Arab States and Africa gathered to exchange experiences and good practices on labour migration governance. Focus was on safe and fair migration of women migrant workers in the Asia-Arab States migration corridor, and reflecting on the progress of duty bearers in relation to their commitments outlined in the Bali Declaration adopted at the ILO’s Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in 2016. The meetings showed how the migration of millions of women and men workers from Asia to the Arab States contribute immensely to development by amongst others: addressing labour market needs in critical sectors; generating billions of dollars in remittances; providing migrant workers to secure higher-wage employment; and enabling women to exercise agency.

Supporting programmes for the development and recognition of skills and integration into the labour force

Since the beginning of 2018, **Ethiopia Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** institutions have reviewed their training curricula for overseas placement in the care giving and domestic work sector and upscale facilities for quality skill training for potential migrants. ILO supported training of TVET teachers on the revised curricula and around 5,000 men and 8,000 women potential migrant workers attended skills training for overseas employment. The revised training curricula include soft skills components, including life skills, financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

With ILO support, since January 2019, staff of the Ethiopia Bureau of Labour & Social Affairs (BOLSA) received training and six **Migrant information centres (MIC’s)** have become functional providing effective and efficient services to migrants, returnees and their families. In December 2019, the **Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU)** established a migrant desk with the aim of providing advice and support, including on organizing, for migrant workers, returnees and domestic workers in Ethiopia as well as in countries of destination.

Under the ILO-UNWOMEN led programme **Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region**, Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs) have been implemented in **Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand**, providing opportunities for women migrant workers’ skills development and recognition.

Support to migrant workers in the context of mixed flows

To respond to the **Venezuela displacement situation**, in 2019 the ILO kick-started seed interventions related to the **socio-economic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru**. In addition, the ILO has taken on a coordination role in the area of intervention on Socioeconomic and Cultural Integration within the Platform for Inter-institutional Regional Coordination (R4V) of the United Nations System established in 2018, under the coordination of UNHCR and IOM.

In **Central America**, the ILO together with UNHCR has recently started interventions on ‘**Promoting Employment and Social Protection under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Central America and Mexico**’ for the period 2020-2022. This project builds on the country commitments made under the MIRPS to support host countries and communities in creating an expanding durable solutions to enhance institutional capacity, advocacy and awareness raising.

1. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/fair-recruitment/lang--en/index.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. REFRAME stands for Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration (2017-2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. FAIR II (2018-2021) builds on the results achieved under FAIR I (2015-2018) to expand impact [↑](#footnote-ref-3)