

# Trade Union Statement

ON THE 2022 INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM  
PROGRESS DECLARATION



CLIMATE-FRIENDLY JOBS  
WAGES  
RIGHTS  
SOCIAL PROTECTION  
EQUALITY  
INCLUSION

A New Social Contract



ITUC CSI IGB

**Governments fail to make a commitment to ensure freedom of association, the right to organise and collectively bargain. Trade Unions call for a rights-based governance of migration with labour standards at the forefront.**

Globally, out of 281 million migrants, 169 million are migrant workers, and more than two-thirds of them are concentrated in high-income countries. Regrettably, this Declaration misses a direct commitment on adherence to ILO core international labour standards for all migrants and all workers regardless of status. Governments fail to state a commitment to ensure freedom of association, the right to organise and collectively bargain even though these are indispensable pillars to protect migrant workers' rights and to ensure decent work for all.

**The role of social partners is not reflected when it comes to fair recruitment. Trade unions call for the respect of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.**

The Declaration recognises progress made by Member States, the private sector and other stakeholders in promoting fair and ethical recruitment but it fails to provide evidence. There is still a lack of concrete joint work on the ground among the relevant actors and this need to change for better and more effective outcomes. Governments, employers and recruiters need to work together with trade unions in ensuring workers go through a fair recruitment process that respects their rights and secures decent jobs for them. The ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment are the foundation for ensuring equity and safeguarding rights and standards for all.

**The Declaration includes the commitment to building on promising practices to harness the benefits of safe, orderly and regular migration. Trade unions call governments to scale up access to regular migration pathways with full workers' rights and non-discrimination and to combat xenophobia and racism.**

Governments need to redouble efforts to promote better regular pathways, including the call for regularisation of undocumented migrants and for family unification. This will be key for the formalisation of migrant workers' jobs. In addition, in the context of rapidly escalating mass human displacement, much of which is driven by the climate crisis but also due to conflicts, there is an imperative to increase resettlement commitments. Now is the time to emphasise and expand humanitarian pathways for climate migrants and others in ways that ensure full worker rights, facilitate social and family cohesion, and provide options for permanent residence and meaningful participation in civic life.

**Migrants, whatever their race, class, gender identity, immigration status or sector, must be part of social protection policies. Trade unions call for universal social protection for all.**

Only 46.9 per cent of the global population is effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining 53.1 per cent – as many as 4.1 billion people – are left wholly unprotected. Migrant workers should be covered by universal social protection systems and floors and not just upon return to their origin countries as noted in the UN declaration. Portability of rights is a core feature of a fair policy for labour mobility, and regional and bilateral labour agreements are key in this respect. The social partners should be involved from the start in the design and monitoring of these agreements as promoted by the UN Guidance on Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements.

**Trade unions strongly support the Declaration commitment on granting access to basic services to migrants in line with universal health coverage and call for occupational health and safety at the workplace as a fundamental right.**

Trade unions welcome the Declaration's commitment on providing all migrants safe access to basic services, regardless of their migration status, as well as continuity of care, COVID-19 vaccinations, testing and treatment in line with

universal health coverage, to ensure that no one is left behind in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, it fails to reflect occupational safety and health issues in the workplace as a way to ensure migrant workers are safe and protected as they continue to provide essential services to economies. Trade unions demand occupational health and safety to be a fundamental labour right.

**The UN declaration recognises systematic violations of migrant workers' rights, including rampant issues of wage theft. Trade unions call for universal minimum living wages to ensure decent jobs for migrant workers.**

Trade unions welcome the declaration's promotion of minimum living wage policies and recognition of the systematic violations of migrant workers' rights including rampant wage theft. The accompanying recommendation must however go further in calling for the development of justice mechanisms that allow migrants, whether still in the destination country or after return to their country of origin or a third country, to obtain remedies easily and fairly

for the systematic violations they face or have faced in the workplace.

**Governments commit to facilitating the mutual recognition of formally and informally acquired skills and competencies acquired by migrants. Trade unions call for the use of social dialogue to achieve mutual recognition of skills and qualifications in home and host countries.**

Trade unions welcome the commitment on mutual recognition of skills as well as skilling and reskilling of migrants and returning migrants, as part of lifelong learning systems, promoting decent work opportunities. Recognition systems for skills and competencies cannot be left to private standards or regulations but must be part of a public regulatory framework, accessible for free, on the basis of equal treatment with processes that prevent abuses and allow for remedies. Tripartite social dialogue is crucial to develop the public regulatory frameworks together with the policies and implementation and monitoring mechanisms that are the basis for building sustainability, trust and transparency.

## A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

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The UN progress declaration rightly recognises decent work as an important benchmark for regular pathways. However, States must also make the promotion of decent work the driving principle for addressing the root causes of migration and spurring sustainable development.

Workers demand globally a New Social Contract, rooted in a gender-transformative agenda, for recovery and resilience:

- **Jobs:** climate-friendly jobs with just transition. A global target for the creation of 575 million new jobs by 2030 and formalisation of at least one billion informal workers, representing half of the total global informal economy. Investments in the care economy are crucial in this respect, creating millions of new jobs, decent jobs, and offering the opportunity to formalise current informal care jobs.
- **Rights:** the promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration of rights and protections for all workers, irrespective of employment arrangements and including occupational health and safety.

- **Wages:** minimum living wages, established through statutory processes or collective bargaining, as set out in the ILO Centenary Declaration.
- **Universal social protection:** social protection for all, with a global social protection fund for the poorest countries.
- **Equality:** equality of incomes – with minimum income for those not in employment – and equality of gender and race. The elimination of gender-based violence and harassment is nonnegotiable in the context of achieving a gender-equal labour market.
- **Inclusion:** a peaceful world and a just, rights-based development model realised through the promise of the SDGs and multilateral reform.

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