

**First Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in  
the UNECE region**

**12 November Roundtable 2** (addressing GCM objectives 2, 5, 6, 12, 18)

Statement by Ms. Lieve Verboven, Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO)  
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*Your Excellency the Minister of Labour of Kazakhstan Mr Nurymbetov, Mme the IOE Regional Vice-President for Europe & Central Asia Ms Hornung-Draus, Professor Geddes, distinguished colleagues,*

- Thank you for inviting the ILO to participate in this first UNECE regional review of the Global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.
- The Global compact stresses the importance of providing decent work for migrants, whether in origin, transit or destination countries, and as central to improving labour migration governance.
- I would like to recall that many migrant workers are concentrated in sectors characterized by high levels of temporary, informal or unprotected work, as indicated during the UNECE informal stakeholders' consultation of November 9. In this context, adherence to international labour standards to protect migrant workers' rights and to implement decent work principles for all remains critical, especially to help ensure that migrant workers and their families receive a fair share of the benefits of labour mobility.
- It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic is having a dramatic impact on economies and societies, resulting in serious business disruptions. Migrant workers too are experiencing job losses and many are forced to return to even more fragile labour markets, putting their livelihood at great risk. In this context, bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation remains essential for promoting human and labour rights of migrant workers and to ensuring regular pathways. Cooperation can help to support regular admissions and effective work visa policies, social protection and skills portability to better respond to business and labour market needs.
- Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) that are rights-based and gender-responsive can effectively facilitate cooperation between origin and destination countries to both protect migrant workers and help them to contribute to and benefit from socioeconomic development in a fair and equitable manner. They can be even more beneficial if they are based on social dialogue. However, we can recognize that there are

some shortcomings in these agreements regarding their design, content, monitoring, implementation and impact.

- The ILO, together with IOM, are leading a multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Group under the UN Network on Migration to help support states in strengthening these agreements. The Working Group members are currently developing practical guidance to support member States in negotiating, designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating rights-based, gender-responsive BLMAs. It is expected that the guidance will be published early next year, and we will support their pilot testing with interested governments. We hope that countries in the ECE region will join this effort.
- While skills shortages and gaps are often among the main reasons for entering into such agreements, at the same time, they are often among the most overlooked aspects. To address this issue, the ILO has produced the [Guidelines for skills modules in BLMAs](#) (2020). The guidelines refer to the skills possessed by migrant workers that need to be recognized, matched and further developed with those in demand in the destination country's labour market. The gender perspective, the particular issues that woman migrant workers face regarding skills recognition and development, is also captured in the document.
- In the area of skills development and recognition for migrant workers, the ILO has joined forces with IOM, UNESCO, IOE and ITUC to forge a Global Skills Partnership (GSP). The GSP aims to mobilize technical expertise of the member organizations towards supporting governments, employers, workers and their organizations, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders to develop and recognize the skills of migrant workers with a particular focus on women and youth.
- ILO has a number of activities in the region to support labour migration governance. For example, :
  - The ILO, jointly with the IOM and UN Women, implements a [project](#) in Kyrgyzstan (2019-21) to empower women and girls most vulnerable to migration, by improving their participation in peacebuilding and inclusive community development, enhancing their access to socio-economic opportunities and building capacities of women and girls.
  - In Turkey, we are supporting the government in a range of activities to improve decent work opportunities for migrant workers driven by crisis and refugees, including on skills development, employability and innovative approaches to help businesses deliver social protection to these workers.
- And ILO has expanded its work with countries from which migrants to Europe originate, including the African region.
- The Global compact also recognizes the centrality to promoting fair recruitment, and the ILO has made significant progress in advancing its Fair Recruitment Initiative in order to eliminate recruitment fees and costs that can lead to debt bondage, forced labour and human trafficking.

- The [ILO Policy Brief on Ensuring Fair Recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) identifies positive practices in the European region in relevant areas such as regulation as well as industry led initiatives e.g. UNI Europa and WEC-Europe released Joint Recommendations of the sectoral social partners of the temporary agency work industry. The joint recommendations call on the temporary agency work sector to provide frontline workers with adequate health and safety protection; to ensure access to health and safety instructions and tailored training; to strengthen the labour market reallocation role of temporary work agencies; and to work collaboratively with other actors to contain the pandemic and protect workers.
- The Association of Labour Providers (ALP) has also set up the Spare Worker Availability Portal (SWAP) and Essential Workers Needed Portal (EWNP) to support displaced workers to be transferred to where work is available.
- As countries in the region seek to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to build back better, the ILO remains a dedicated partner in your efforts and to your continued commitments to implement the Global compact on migration.
- Thank you.