

Public Services International

106th Session of the International Labour Conference

Agenda Item IV – Addressing Governance Challenges in a Changing Labour Migration Landscape

Opening Statement

Public Services International (PSI), the global union federation bringing together more than 20 million working women and men delivering public services, represented by over 700 unions in 154 countries, welcomes the general discussion on “Addressing Governance Challenges in a Changing Labour Migration Landscape” in this 106th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Indeed, the general discussion comes at a very timely and critical moment, wherein, we are witnessing increasing and complex migratory movements intertwining with forced displacement, the deeply disturbing spread of xenophobic rhetoric and attack on migrant workers’ rights, rising inequality, high unemployment, decent work deficits, demographic change and development asymmetries that continue to drive migration and its governance challenges. Thus, the role of the ILO constituents in the protection of the human and labour rights of migrant workers and the contribution of the Office in the promotion of the rights-based normative framework, including in the Global Compact on Migration, are extremely important.

For PSI, we come to this general discussion highlighting key priorities that we wish to see reflected in the outcome and conclusions:

1. Reiteration of the rights-based normative framework by promoting ratification, adherence to, strengthening of, and effective implementation of the ILO Migrant Workers Convention C97 and C143 and their accompanying Recommendations, Recommendation No. 86 and Recommendation No. 151.
2. Multilateral and bilateral labour agreements are necessary in facilitating rights-based labour migration and social protection. However, these agreements must be transparent and are fully in line with international human rights norms and labour standards, with the direct involvement of social partners. In view of this, PSI unions bring the experience from our involvement in the Germany-Philippines Bilateral Labour Agreement (BLA) on the Deployment of Filipino Health Professionals to Germany that was signed in 2013. The agreement includes all the elements of protection, fair recruitment, non-discrimination, trade union rights and social security. It includes our engagement as trade unions, PSLINK in the Philippines and Ver.di in Germany, as part of the Joint Monitoring Committee within the agreement. As unions, we are involved in monitoring the implementation of the agreement, including through visits and dialogue in the Philippines and in Germany. Through this good practice example, we can show that social dialogue

and joint engagement in promoting workers' rights and addressing labour migration costs, is possible within a bilateral labour agreement.

3. We welcome the emphasis placed in this discussion on migrant workers' access to and portability of social protection and linking this to access to quality public services for all.
4. We welcome the emphasis on fair and ethical recruitment and advancing the 2016 ILO Guidelines and Principles on Fair Recruitment. As PSI, we strongly maintain the prohibition of the charging of recruitment fees on migrant workers. A new ILO instrument on Fair Recruitment should complement and reinforce the existing ILO Migrant Workers Conventions. Developing a new standard should contribute to strengthening the existing Conventions and must in no way legitimise temporary and circular migration as the norm in labour migration.
5. We emphasise that the State has the ultimate responsibility to govern and regulate international recruitment in line with international human rights norms and labour standards. On this, we support government-to-government recruitment, particularly on health worker migration. Again, government-regulated recruitment, such as the Germany-Philippines BLA on Nurses is a good example. We also emphasise the role of public employment agencies in implementing fair recruitment, ensuring transparency, anti-corruption and protection of whistle-blowers.
6. The mutual recognition of skills and qualifications is an important aspect of work, particularly in the health and care sectors. This must take into account fairness, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and treatment and protection of rights. With mutual recognition, must come mutual responsibility by States to ensure the sustainable development of the health workforce in both origin and destination countries.
7. Finally, we would like to see gender equality integrated in the general discussion. The discussion and outcomes must take into account addressing the vulnerabilities faced by women migrant workers, but likewise emphasising women's empowerment through trade union rights and gender sensitive policies and interventions.

Thank you.

Delivered by:

Ms. Annie Geron

PSI Vice President for the Asia Pacific

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