



# MIGRATION, COVID-19 AND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

Tuesday, 1 June 2021, 3 PM CEST

## ACTION POINTS

- **Need for a social contract**

Many people lost their job or are in higher need of employment-related support. They are not under any type of social safety net, and therefore they have become heavily reliant on their jobs, and they become more vulnerable to exploitation as a result of it. It seems that “vulnerability is constructed to limit people’s choices”. There is a need of recognising the power structure and where migrant workers sit in it. Governments need to deviate from the immigration control system.

- **Need for a social protection**

There is a need for “Global Social Protection for Migrants”, and to push towards a living wage and not minimum wage. The webinar called for a “New Social Contract with a floor of a Universal Labour Guarantee”, thereby attempting to ensure decent jobs for all workers with minimum living wages, universal social protection, access to justice/remedy, and social dialogues.

- **Migrant domestic workers**

The right of migrant domestic workers to organise and join trade unions must be recognized, and they should be made aware of their rights. Domestic workers are behind on the new social contract. Data should be collected on countries who allow or not allow migrant workers, particularly, migrant domestic workers to join trade unions. Data should be collected and linked to GCM’s objective 1. This is the deficit. Domestic workers convention (ILO C189) may be very far from where we have planned to be. The progress of the 11 countries originally targeted should be assessed, and a full assessment of the convention should be made as 10 years have passed since its adoption. Domestic workers play a key role looking after families. They should not only be seen as essential workers but as regular workers under the labour code.

- **Addressing temporary labour migration**

A quintessential temporary migration regime exists therefore there is a high need to make it fairer by rethinking the paradigm on temporary labour migration. There is a need of reassessing temporary labour migration as these programmes are prone to being fundamentally flawed in terms of protection of rights, and hence there is a need for stocktaking of temporary labour migration programmes.

- **Amplifying workers' voice**

There is a need for migrant workers to organise and build power globally so that a new global migrant movement can be built up. Further, migrant domestic workers should be given the rights to association and freedom to speak. The need for a multilateral approach should be pressed with the help of multilateral agencies to resolve the issues of migrant workers. Migrant workers are being seen as beneficiaries and not as powers.

- **Compensation fund**

Non-payment of wages is theft. Governments should provide a compensation fund and pay what is owed to workers whose wages have not been paid from that fund. Companies should contribute to the fund, and sanctions should be imposed on those who do not pay their workers. The rule of law must be considered in a new way. A new social contract requires a new investment.

- **Action-oriented policy recommendations**

There is a need for data which can provide details about the countries which allow migrant workers to join unions so that pressure can be asserted on those countries which have been neglecting it for so long.

As there is an absence of social dialogue, there is a need for a 'social contract' not only involving governments and employers but also including migrant organisations and CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of the migration programmes, thereby involving these stakeholders in shaping these policies.

There is a need to implement emergency measures such as a temporary emergency standard to put in place for protection for workers during the pandemic. Migrant workers are being seen as beneficiaries and not as powers. Hence, there is a need for migrant workers to organise and build power globally so that a new global migrant movement can be built up.

Further, we should advocate for a labour migration model based on a value system that prioritises experiences, the voices and the dignity of migrant workers.

- **Changing narratives**

The "narrative of inclusion" needs to be prioritised where issues like low wage leading to social tensions where migrants are accused of stealing jobs need to be resolved.