



Statement by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC)

Delivered by Ms. Christine Nathan, President of ICMC, on Wednesday, 5 June 2024

*“The world needs renewed commitment for the care of creation
and for solidarity within the human community”*

Mr. President, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) is pleased to deliver this statement at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), in response to the report of the Director-General.

Since 1951, ICMC has served migrants and refugees worldwide through its extensive network of Catholic Bishops Conferences, other Catholic-inspired and civil society partners, global advocacy, and direct humanitarian and resettlement programming in countries with complex migration and refugee-related issues. We place respect for the rights and dignity of our beneficiaries at the center of our efforts, regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, or nationality.

We have voiced particular apprehension regarding global, regional, national, and local endeavors to establish autocratic regimes, curtail democracy and multilateralism, and promote religious, racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination and persecution in various parts of the world. There is no question that the most vulnerable persons bear the heaviest burdens, including forced migrants, refugees, and informal workers.

This year, the Director-General's report centers on revitalizing the social contract. It poses the question of how this contract can be renewed across all sectors to establish social justice as the cornerstone of sustainable peace, equal opportunities, and a fair transition to more sustainable societies. This framework aligns with our vision, and ICMC would like to highlight the following reflections nurturing a renewed social contract to the esteemed audience:

1. Migrants, refugees, and their families face significant hurdles in meeting basic needs. It is crucial to advocate for access to fundamental rights such as education, fair employment opportunities with just wages and protections, physical and mental healthcare, housing, and nutritious food. Migration cannot be solely labelled as an “emergency”. Whether it is involuntary or a deliberate choice, migration is deeply intertwined with the complexities of globalization, demography, human rights, and development. In many contexts, work can greatly contribute to the integration of migrants and their families, as well as to their active participation to the common good of the community. Migrants do contribute heavily to societies that welcome them.
2. For the last seven years, ICMC has convened the global initiative titled “The Future of Work, Labour after Laudato Si”¹ in close collaboration with a diverse network of Catholic-inspired organizations and other faith actors and grass-rooted organizations in all parts of the world. We wish to bring to the discussion the approach developed by its partners, known as “Care is Work, Work is Care”. We are convinced that work is to be at the core of a transformation to respond to the call to “care for our common home”. Furthermore, “care is a way of being, doing, and existing, which implies dignity, generosity, freedom, and responsibility. Care is a deeply spiritual human experience. It always is inspired by a concern for unity in the making, of becoming one both humanly and spiritually. Work, as a transforming activity, is therefore an essential component of care.”²

Let me also highlight that ICMC is a partner of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and pledges its support for and engagement with this multilateral platform.

To close this statement, let me turn to Pope Francis’ Message to the participants in the Consultation “Care is work, work is care” (8 May 2024):

“The world needs renewed commitment, a new social compact that can bind us together, older and younger generations, for the care of creation and for solidarity and mutual protection within the human community.”

Thank you, Mr. President.

¹ [The Future of Work, Labour After Laudato Si \(futureofwork-labourafterlaudatosi.net\)](https://futureofwork-labourafterlaudatosi.net)

² [Care is work, work is care – An explanatory note \(14 September 2023, Global\) – The Future of Work, Labour After Laudato Si \(futureofwork-labourafterlaudatosi.net\)](https://futureofwork-labourafterlaudatosi.net)