



Restoring Dignity,
Inspiring Change.

107th Sessions of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, 31st May 2018

Statement of the International Catholic Migration Commission during the plenary session of the International Labour Conference (ILC)

Mr. President, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) is honored to deliver this statement at the 107th Sessions of the International Labour Conference (ILC), in response to the report of the Director-General.

ICMC is a registered non-profit organization, providing direct humanitarian and other services to uprooted people and advocating for and with them. It coordinates a network of Catholic Bishops Conferences worldwide and has staff and programs in over fifty countries.

ICMC's mission is to protect and serve refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants - regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality. Furthermore, ICMC contributes to enhance sustainable development for refugees and migrants through vocational trainings and livelihood programs.

During its most recent Council Meeting, held in March 2018, ICMC reaffirmed its aim to protect and promote the empowerment of foreign workers, including domestic workers, and to ensure decent working conditions and prevent irregular status and trafficking. This will be done through the promotion of policies and programs that build labor and skills matching, skills recognition and portability, expand legal channels for rights-based labor migration and protect the rights of refugees and migrants in the workplace. ICMC wants to facilitate the cooperation among partner institutions, both public and private, which work together to train, certify and place migrant domestic workers.

ICMC plays a key advocacy role regarding refugee and migrant rights, which is increasingly recognized by States and International Organizations such as the ILO, IOM and UNHCR. For example, ICMC coordinates the global civil society contribution of 200 organizations to an important inter-governmental process called the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

Relevant issues, currently invading the world of work at the global level, are being discussed at the ILC this year, and we are particularly attentive to the following topics: cooperation for a sustainable development, violence and harassment at work, and gender-based violence (GBV).

ICMC believes that effective and positive cooperation with ILO, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), should be based on trust and collaboration from local to international level.

We would like to share an example of effective collaboration, which is a global project called "The Future of Work, Labour after *Laudato Si'*". This proposal brings together

different stakeholders, from international movements to local communities, as well as organizations from different religious traditions. This project is the continuation of a five-year collaboration at the global level related to the SDGs and the Decent Work Agenda, and it will also aim to contribute to the ILO Centenary and the Future of Work Initiative.

In Malaysia, Pakistan, and Jordan, ICMC supports local and refugee individuals and families who have experienced sexual or gender-based violence. As a case in point, since 2010, ICMC works within Burmese refugee communities to prevent and respond to sexual or gender-based violence, especially by improving access to emergency support services, safe shelter, medical and psychosocial care, and counseling for refugee women and children in Malaysia. Moreover, ICMC funds community-based organizations, including two support centers for Rohingya women, to implement different activities focused on raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence.

Since 1998, ICMC works in Pakistan to respond to the basic and most urgent needs of local and refugee communities affected by natural disasters and human crises in both urban and rural areas. Women and girl refugees and asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable and exposed to sexual or gender-based violence, but rarely denounce it. ICMC's protection activities are aimed at supporting impoverished communities and victims of sexual and gender-based violence through access to safe shelters, legal support, awareness workshops, literacy classes, medical care, and psychosocial support.

In the context of the ILC, ICMC considers the following aspects to be of particular relevance in the present situation in regard to violence and harassment at work, and gender-based violence:

1. We are keenly aware and deeply concerned that women, despite their equal dignity with men, regularly are confronted with inequitable, discriminatory, and stigmatizing policies and practices in the world of work and in other socio-economic arenas without access to legal protection and complaint mechanisms.
2. We expect that the efforts of the ILC conclude with the endorsement of an ILO Convention, accompanied by a Recommendation, with a strong focus on the gender dimension as a first step to change the narrative for women and men throughout the world.
3. We are convinced that women workers, especially those particularly vulnerable as migrant workers in the informal economy, should be placed at the center of sustainable development policies and should be the first concern in the reflection and debate on violence and harassment in the world of work.
4. We believe that, when it comes to global value chains, the responsibility of the business sector together with the advocacy of civil society organizations should be one of the main discussions. Companies have a responsibility to eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace in their own value chains, and governments should ensure that they enact and support programs to tackle violence against women and men.

Thank you, Mr. President.