



# MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN FOCUS:

*An ILO Newsletter*

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## The Global Migration Group discusses migrant domestic workers at the GFMD in Stockholm

### *An Overview*

**Stockholm, 13 May 2014**

The Global Migration Group (GMG) organized a side event on the margins of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The event was organised and chaired by the ILO and featured speakers from the UN system, governments, and civil society organizations. Panel members were invited to share concrete experiences and good practices that seek to address the discrimination experienced by migrant domestic workers.

To kick off the discussion, a video that was produced in the context of ILO’s EU-funded Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers was shown summarizing the experiences of MDWs in organizing themselves in various regions.

Mr. Francois Crépeau, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, observed that international human rights treaties apply to all migrants including undocumented and domestic workers. Ms. Allison Petrozziello, Gender and Migration Specialist at UN Women, emphasized the centrality of global care models to the migration-development nexus and presented UN Women’s new publication *Gender on the move: Working on the migration-development nexus from a gender perspective* which looks at the connection between global care models and development. Ms. Nidia Tarazone, Migration Focal Point of the Confederación General Del Trabajo (CGT) de Colombia, pointed

### INSIDE

GFMD in Stockholm .....	1
ILO Protocol on forced labour .....	2
Access to Justice Report .....	2
International Domestic Workers Day .....	3
GAP on Migrant Domestic Workers, Advisory Committee Meeting .....	4
Side event “Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers” .....	5
Argentina-Paraguay bi-national agreement.....	6
“Our Rights, Our recipes” .....	6

to the need for an examination of the situation of migrant domestic workers in the South. In that context, Ms. Najla Chahda, Director of the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center, presented the findings of the ILO-Caritas research on the access of 700 Ethiopian domestic workers to justice in Lebanon. Mr. Pietro Mona, Deputy Head of the Global Programme on Migration and Development of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, discussed the importance of the issue of migrant domestic workers to countries in the South and in the North alike underlining that migrant domestic work is a global issue and that everyone has a global responsibility to live up to the standards of C. 189. the situation of migrant domestic workers in the South. In that context, Ms. Najla Chahda, Director of the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center, presented the findings of the ILO-Caritas

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Questions from the floor addressed the report of the advisory committee on the ratification of C. 189 in the Netherlands, alternatives to the ban on the deployment of Nepalese domestic workers to the Gulf and Lebanon, the possibility of establishing rescue committees for domestic workers during times of crises in destination countries, and the access to justice of domestic workers who are in the employment of foreign diplomats. Among the participants were Respect European Network of Migrant Domestic Workers, Pourekhi (organization of returning women migrant workers in Nepal), India's national domestic workers' movement, the Information and Counselling Center for Female Migrants and Refugees in Cologne Germany and the Saudi Arabia Arab Organization of Human Rights. Workers, Pourekhi (organization of returning women migrant workers in Nepal), India's national domestic workers' movement, the Information and Counselling Center for Female Migrants and Refugees in Cologne Germany and the Saudi Arabia Arab Organization of Human Rights.



*103rd Session of the International Labour Conference, 28 May - 12 June 2014*

### **ILO adopts new Protocol to tackle modern forms of forced labour**

**Geneva, 11 June 2014**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted a new legally binding Protocol designed to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labour. This new legally binding ILO Protocol aims at advancing prevention, protection and compensation measures, as well as intensifying efforts to eliminate contemporary forms of slavery.

The Protocol, supported by a Recommendation, was adopted by government, employer and worker delegates to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), 28 May – 12 June 2014, with 437 votes for 27 abstentions and 8 against. It brings the existing ILO Convention 29 on Forced Labour, adopted in 1930, into the modern era to address practices such as human trafficking. The accompanying Recommendation provides technical guidance on its implementation.

The Protocol strengthens the international legal framework by creating new obligations to prevent forced labour, to protect victims and to provide access to remedy, such as compensation for material and physical harm.

It requires governments to take measures to better protect workers, in particular migrant labourers, from fraudulent and abusive recruitment practices and emphasizes the role of employers and workers in the fight against forced labour.

Related article and video: [Adoption of the ILO Protocol to tackle modern form of forced labour](#)

The content is also available in other languages: [العربية](#) [Deutsch](#) [Español](#) [Français](#) [Italiano](#) [Русский](#)

### **Launch of Access to Justice Report**

**Beirut, 13 June 2014**

The ILO and Caritas have published a new report on “Access to Justice of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon”, which suggests that for the estimated 200,000 migrant domestic workers in the country, achieving justice is far from being a reality.

The findings of the joint report have been presented at a workshop in Beirut on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Representatives of Lebanon's Ministries of Labour, Justice, EU delegation to Lebanon as well as government representatives from migrant domestic worker countries of origin and social partners and NGOs providing legal redress to migrant workers have attended the workshop. The workshop has also covered recommendations from the study and possible avenues for their implementation.

Based on an analysis of more than 730 domestic worker cases supported by Caritas in Lebanon, the report explains the complex road to justice for migrant domestic workers fraught with many barriers, ranging from the difficulty of establishing proof of the conditions of work, marginalisation of unskilled foreign workers exerted by various stakeholders, and a lack of awareness of



labour laws among domestic workers and other foreign worker. Having the right to file a complaint in front of the judge or the police, and the right to a fair trial, like any other Lebanese citizen, migrant domestic workers are still struggling to achieve justice as very few cases are ever resolved through the judicial system and the report tried to unveil the reasons.



Related articles: [Edging closer to justice: The journey of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. Story of a migrant domestic worker fighting “kafala” and achieving a measure of justice.](#)

[Migrant domestic workers lack adequate access to justice in Lebanon.](#)

Related video: [Access to Justice](#)

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## International Domestic Workers Day

16 June 2014

International Domestic Workers Day this year was marked in celebration around the world, highlighting its third anniversary of the Domestic Workers Convention No. 189. Various events brought attention to the call for action to address the existing exclusions of domestic workers from labour and social protection. Spreading the message that domestic workers make important contributions to the functioning of households and labour markets. However they often are not covered by labour law and lack basic protection.

### Geneva

The ILO Headquarters contributed to this powerful day by kicking off an internal advocacy campaign, encouraging decent working conditions in their own homes. Spreading the message that when we employ domestic workers, we take on the responsibility to ensure their rights are respected in their workplace. While this could be intuitive for some, sometimes it is

difficult for regular house holders to know what those rights are and how to guarantee them. We must all inform ourselves on local and national laws in force.

*Is your home a decent workplace?*

Do you employ someone who cleans your house, cooks for you or irons your clothes?  
Do you employ someone who looks after your children or elderly parents?  
Do you employ someone who looks after your garden?

► If YES, is your home a decent workplace?

**CHECKLIST**

I grant the domestic worker(s) I employ...

- sufficient daily and/or weekly rest
- a salary no lower than the minimum wage
- paid annual leave
- compensation for overtime work
- social security contributions

Three years ago, on 16 June 2011, the International Labour Conference adopted the Domestic Workers Convention No. 189. The Convention lays down basic rights and principles to make decent work a reality for domestic workers.

**Did you check all the boxes on the list? If not, you can do better!**

I pledge to improve the working conditions of domestic employees in my household by ...

### Thailand

The Asian region has surely taken the spotlight for initiatives supporting domestic workers and here are just a few. For this year's International Domestic Workers day, Thailand promoted an initiative that called on Thai employers to implement the rights available to Domestic Workers in their homes, under the Thai law and in C189, was another yet another successful effort seen through the distribution of thousands of postcards in Thai language. The artistic influence of these postcards was a contribution by a local artisan and one of the examples is below:



In addition to the innovative post card campaign, an impressive opinion editorial by Yoshiteru Uramoto was circulated about the ILO protocol and its protection of domestic workers, specifically highlighting the heroic Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, an Indonesian domestic worker and her battle for decent work. You can find the full article [HERE](#).

Another contribution influenced by the Saphan Siang Campaign: Domestic work at a Glance was in the creation of an infographic that helps to promote greater understanding between Thais and migrant workers.



[Click Here for the full Infographic](#)

## Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers, Advisory Committee Meeting

Kiev, 25 July 2014

The first Advisory Committee meeting was held on July 25, 2014 in the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine premises. The meeting was opened by Sergiy Savchuk, the ILO National Coordinator for Ukraine, by stressing the importance of the Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers.

Previously the Global AP on Migrant Domestic Workers was presented by Maria Elena Valenzuela, ILO, MIGRANT, at the Conference “Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its

Skills Dimensions” in Kiev on June 24, 2014, gathering 60 participants, among which governmental officers, workers and employers representatives, academic community, civil society organizations and UN agencies. The presentation was held with a view to build on achievements and address the specific needs of migrant Ukrainian domestic workers and included the strategy and main components of the Global action Programme, linking this work to the recent the report of the DG to 2014 ILC on ILO’s Agenda for Fair Migration. The outline of the project was received with interest by the audience and generated a constructive dialogue on further steps to be taken by the state to guarantee the right and integration of migrants into the Ukrainian society.



*ILO National Coordinator for Ukraine, Mr Sergiy Savchuk, ILO MIGRANT, M.E. Valenzuela*

According to Segiy Savchuk, the project is very timely for Ukraine, since there is a growing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to the military interventions in the east of Ukraine. As to date, there is 80,000 IDPs in Ukraine according to the UNHCR data. The number of appeals for Shengen visa has increased immensely, which means that IDPs may wish to migrate to EU countries, including to Poland, which is a neighboring country to Ukraine. As most of the IDPs are women with children, there is a concern of their smooth reintegration. The project does not include the IDPs as the target group, but since they are potential migrants to the EU countries, the project will adopt its interventions and will embrace the IDPs as a target group. With this regard, Hrygoriy Seleschuk, Caritas Ukraine representative, informed there are currently 6 centers to support IDPs set up by Caritas in the west of Ukraine, namely in Novo-Volynsk, Soka, Lviv, Ivano Frankisk, Kolomyya, Drogobychi. They provide support to 1,200 persons daily and these people report to have motivations to further migrate to EU countries, thus may be treated as potential migrant workers. Most of the IDPs are women with children, thus have potential to be employed as MDWs in EU countries. He mentioned that these centers provide support to various minority groups, including Crimean Tatars, who are more self-organized than others.





*1<sup>st</sup> Advisory Committee meeting, 25 July 2014*

During the meeting Tetyana Minenko, the Project Consultant, provided a detailed overview of the Project objectives and expected results. She focused on the Ukraine –Poland corridor and outlined the planned activities including various stakeholders but with more focus on Trade Unions. Taras Simak, the Ministry of Social Policy representative, mentioned the need for the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to meet with the relevant Polish representatives to discuss the issues of MDWs and potential ratification of Convention 189 by both countries. Also, he mentioned importance of private employment agencies to recruit the MDWs. However, according to him, the number of officially registered PrEAs are decreasing, since they prefer to work in shadow. As of now, he reports 600 PrEAs to be formally registered against 3,000 PrEAs operating in Ukraine de facto. The Ministry is currently working on legal framework on PrEAs activities to be developed within the Law on Employment of Population.

As for the advocacy to ratify Convention 189, the project proved to be very relevant since the main stakeholders can diversify between the terms “domestic workers” and “workers on the household”. Moreover, within the programme framework the bilateral agreement to protect migrant workers between TUs of Poland and Ukraine would be potentially signed during the upcoming bi-national workshop.

Related article (ENG): [Ukraine to Improve Its Migration Governance](#)

## **The side event “Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers” of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

**Geneva, 4 September 2014**

The side event “Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers” of the 21 session of The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families co-hosted by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was held on 4<sup>th</sup> of September at the Palais Wilson in Geneva. This event was organized in the framework of the EU funded project “Global Action programme on Migrant Domestic Workers” and was designed as a forum to raise awareness on the human rights challenges faced by migrant domestic workers, including the discrimination they often face, to ensure the design and effective implementation of protective legislation and redress mechanisms, and to improve their organizational capacities.



*The side event “Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers” of the 21 session of The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Geneva, Palais Wilson, 4th September 2014*

The panel was moderated by Michelle Leighton, Chief of the Labour Migration Branch at the ILO. Marco Ferri, from the EU Delegation to the UN, provided the opening to the side event. The following speakers were present at the panel: Pablo Ceriani, member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers, Marilina Armellini, First Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the UN, Barbro Budin, Project and Gender Equality Coordinator, from the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) and Robert J. Vitillo, Head of Caritas Internationalis Delegation to the UN in Geneva. Jyoti Sanghera, Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section Chief at the OHCHR, delivered the closing remarks.

A special attention was dedicated to a discussion of the key international instruments for the protection of human rights of migrants, including ILO Convention 189 and the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), as well as ILO Conventions 97 and 143. The participants agreed on the importance on raising awareness about migrant domestic workers from an interdisciplinary perspective, including different approaches of women's rights, workers' rights and human rights. On this regard, participants raised concerns about gender equality, labour protection, discrimination, xenophobia, vulnerability and isolation of migrant domestic workers.

The interactive format of the event allowed a lively discussion between the panellists and the public. Through the dialogue the attendees had the possibility to share further experiences and identify good practices on empowering migrants for improved protection of rights and social development outcomes. The event proved to be a good platform for moving the agenda on decent work forward and to further dialogue on the protection of the human rights of migrant domestic workers.

Related article: [Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers side event](#)

## Bi-national agreement promoting a Decent Work for Migrant Domestic Workers in migration corridor Paraguay-Argentina

Santiago de Chile, 20-21 September 2014

A bi-national meeting entitled "Building a Labour Strategy for Decent Work of Migrant Domestic Workers" was conducted in Santiago de Chile on 20-21 of September. The meeting was organized under the Global Programme of Action on Migrant Domestic Workers, ILO, together with the CSA and the International Federation of Domestic Workers (FITH) and with the support of the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers (CONLACTRAHO). The event supported the exchange and development of strategies for cooperation between trade unions and organizations of domestic workers in Argentina and Paraguay.

Opening the workshop, Maria Elena Valenzuela, ILO, MIGRANT, has delivered a brief presentation of the project and the overall situation in the migration corridor Paraguay-Argentina. Several group work activities have been conducted in order to identify the main problems of the Paraguayan migrant domestic workers who work in Argentina and those challenges that unions of domestic workers are facing. Building the national and bi-national strategies to achieve the proposed solutions has been discussed and the action plan has been agreed upon, including activities, responsibilities, resources and deadlines.

The aim of the workshop was to establish a joint working agenda between Argentina and Paraguay and an action plan on migration in order to promote decent work for migrant domestic workers. In this context, the workshop was concentrating on organizational

strategies leading to the development of a bi-national trade union action plan for the migration corridor Paraguay-Argentina in order to promote decent work for migrant domestic workers.

The main outcome of the workshop was signing a bi-national agreement aiming at promotion of a decent work for migrant domestic workers coming from Paraguay to Argentina. Under this agreement an action plan for the next 15 months was established. It will be implemented in coordination with the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas and the International Federation of Domestic Workers with a support of the ILO. According to the action plan, a Union Network will be established via internet and communication strategy will be developed in order to promote the knowledge and exercise the rights of domestic workers and migrants. The strategy will also include the adoption of the CSA campaign "Work like no other, rights as any other" with an exchange of materials and information on domestic workers in Argentina and Paraguay, using the social network tools to facilitate communication. The agreement envisages as well the intention to strengthen the union of domestic workers and their alliances with the labour union confederations through trainings, bi-national meetings and exchanges of good practices.

*If you would like to receive detailed information on the outcomes of the workshop, please contact Ms Maria Elena Valenzuela – [valenzuela@ilo.org](mailto:valenzuela@ilo.org)*

## Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants



*Mercedes Miletti*

On the occasion of International Domestic Workers' Day, talented Mercedes Miletti wrote a blog introducing a very special cookbook called "Our Rights, Our recipes" that compiled the recipes by migrant domestic workers who live and work in Brussels. Besides offering savoury suggestions from their countries of origin, this cookbook also highlights their personal life stories and struggles to have their rights as workers recognized.

This positive project is a clear example of good practices that help to empower migrant domestic workers in Europe. You can read the blog written by Mercedes in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#).

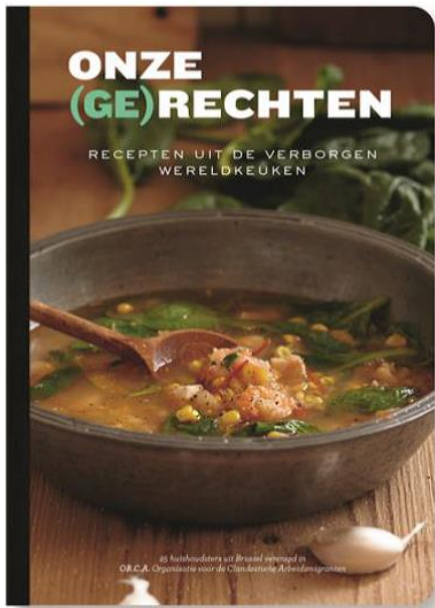


Photo ©Jeffrey Vanhoutte



## MEDIA SPOTLIGHTS ON MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORK

[Israeli High Court Orders Migrant Detention Center Closed](#)

[British government pledges £12m to tackle 'illegal immigration' from Calais](#)

[People smugglers blamed for Malta 'massacre'](#)

[Call for UN to investigate plight of migrant workers in the UAE](#)

[Qatar admits detaining British migrant rights workers](#)

[Greece's migrant fruit pickers: 'They kept firing. There was blood everywhere'](#)

[EU 'Frontex Plus' agency to replace Italy migrant sea rescue](#)

[Mexico clamps down on migrant freight train travel](#)

[Qatar World Cup: migrants wait a year to be paid for building offices](#)

### ***Migrant Domestic Workers in Focus***

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