

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

Round Table 2: Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, with particular reference to women and children, as well as to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons and to ensure orderly, regular and safe migration

Thursday, 3 October 2013: 15h00-18h00

Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Statement from the floor (4 minutes)

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman,

- The search for decent work and livelihoods is the primary driving force of international migration today and decent jobs are central to development.
- Unfortunately, the most vulnerable migrants can fall prey to smuggling and trafficking. Of course, there is a significant need for the regulation of recruitment, and the ILO has adopted standards for this purpose, and is developing new ones to address trafficking for labour exploitation. However, the key to prevention has to be addressed too. Constructing an international framework for migration, which adequately respects the safety and rights of migrant workers, is essential.
- About one half of the 232 million international migrants today are economically active and, together with their families, migrant workers comprise about 90 per cent of this total. Even those fleeing crises will need, after reaching safety, to seek new employment or a new livelihood.
- With global unemployment expected to reach over 208 million by 2015, and 900 million working poor living on less than US\$2/day, more people will be moving in search of jobs.
- The 410 billion dollars in remittances, which migrant workers send home to developing countries, can certainly translate into better livelihoods, education and security for their families. However, we must be mindful that a narrow focus on remittances risks treating migrant workers as commodities, diminishing their rights and well-being.

- We need to move beyond debates in terms of numbers, flows and remittances, and towards concrete measures that close the serious gaps in migration governance – with development that includes labour standards at the core.
- **What we need is nothing short of a consensus for global action that is truly respectful of the rights and interests of migrant workers:** development strategies that involve labour ministries, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and migrant workers – the key actors of the real economy; that includes decent work, equality of treatment, skills recognition and jobs matching, migrant workers’ investment in enterprises for job creation back home, and labour market institutions, such as minimum wages.
- The ILO *Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration*, which provides a set of non-binding principles and guidelines for action, can serve as a basis for development planning that puts migrant workers at the centre of development within a rights-based framework.
- This is serving as a potent tool at the country and regional levels to help governments and the social partners devise better protection strategies, labour market needs assessment, skills certification, jobs matching and portability of pensions, and regulate recruitment.
- As the ILO prepares to chair the Global Migration Group (GMG) in 2014, we will work with other GMG members to ensure a productive follow-up to this High-level Dialogue, and stimulate concrete directions for migrant workers’ protection in the post-2015 development agenda.