

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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ITUC Statement: International Migrants Day

Brussels, 18 December 2015 (ITUC OnLine): Migration is as old as humanity itself, yet the current scale of migration is unprecedented. Millions of people are seeking the economic and social opportunities denied to them due to poverty and lack of development, with women migrating in equal numbers to men in search of work. Millions more are fleeing war, political repression and the accelerating impacts of climate change. Women and children make up three-quarters of the global refugee population.

On International Migrants Day 2015, we celebrate the anniversaries of two key human rights instruments: 25 years of the UN Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm> > and 40 years of the ILO Migrant Workers Convention 143 <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTUMENT_ID:312288>.

These instruments provide a broad framework in international law for the protection of the human and labour rights of migrant workers and provide guidance to States on how to respect the rights of migrants while developing and implementing labour migration policies.

This celebration is, however, tempered by hostility towards refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. While many governments fail the test of humanity and solidarity, and xenophobia is prevalent in many places, ordinary people are opening their homes to refugees, providing food, shelter and clothing to the dispossessed, and joining public protests against the intolerance of some politicians and sections of the media.

Trade unions are at the forefront of this solidarity, calling for the right to work and social protection for refugees, equal treatment for migrant workers, opening up of regular migration channels, an end to abusive recruitment practices, fair representation of the multiple dimensions of migration in the media; and denouncing expressions of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Journalists too are standing up for the rights of migrants <<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/policy-areas/guidance-for-journalists/awarding-excellence/lang--en/index.htm> >

In the year that we celebrate these two instruments, we're calling for real leadership from our politicians:

- Stop anti-immigration and xenophobic rhetoric and highlight benefits of migration.
- Recognise the essential role that migrants play in today's globalised economy.
- Ensure the right to work and social protection for refugees.
- Integrate migrant workers and refugees in national labour markets, through active labour market policies.

- Respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all workers, including migrant workers, as laid out in international labour and human rights treaties.
- Ratify and implement the 1990 UN Convention and the ILO Convention 143.

To read more on the economic and social contribution of migrants: <[URL
http://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf)>

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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