



Promoting Decent Work for Migrant Workers

Michelle Leighton
Chief, Labour Migration Branch ILO

*GFMD Thematic Meeting on Migration in the Post-2015 UN
Development Agenda,
5 February 2015, Geneva*



* Search for decent work is a core driver of international migration:

- Approx. 50 per cent of the 232 international migrants in the world today are economically active.
- Family members joining migrant workers may seek employment.
- Even those fleeing persecution, conflict, violence and environmental disasters may seek to enter the labour market.



Decent work, migration and
sustainable development



- * High economic and social **costs of labour migration** are impediments to sustainable development.

- * Labour migration costs must be seen in the broader context of **employment and labour markets** -- not merely through the lens of remittance transactions.

- * **High costs borne by migrants** are exploitive:
 - discrimination in wages and working conditions;
 - jobs/skills mismatch and contract substitution; and
 - high recruitment fees and trafficking in labour.

Reducing labour migration costs

Migrants face multiple forms of exploitation

- * Gap between wages promised migrants and real wages.

Republic of Moldova: 45.64 % of returned migrants reported working for little or no pay; 24.85 % received late payments.

Armenia and Georgia: Between 19.76-20.22% reported working for no little or no pay.

- * Nepalese workers: wage gap is USD 704 for security guards, USD 354 for factory operators, USD 454 for janitors and USD 304 for restaurant workers.





Lack of **coherence** between employment and labour migration policies

*Skills' mismatch:

- **25-45 per cent of workers in Europe are either over- or under-qualified for their job.** Among those most affected are foreign-born workers.
- mismatch between the declining labour force growth rates in developed economies and the growing number of young migrants resident in developing countries
- social dumping, particularly in wages, and increased labour market segmentation with low-skilled jobs becoming the exclusive domain of immigrants.



Restrictions on mobility:

- * Hinder labour market competition
 - * Affect migrant workers' earnings
 - * Prevent protection of rights
- Studies show greater mobility for migrants within the destination country - changing jobs/employers/better skills matching -may increase workers' real earnings by 10 per cent



High labour migration costs

Reducing remittance transaction costs

- * Halving remittance transaction costs from 10% - 5%:

Saves USD 250 for a low-skilled worker in a three-year \$200 a month contract who will remit USD 5,000 of his/her USD 7,200 in earnings.

e.g., transaction costs reduced from USD 500 to USD 250.

Reducing recruitment costs

- * Halving recruitment costs from USD 1000 or USD 500
- * Saves the migrant USD 500 or **twice the savings** compared to remittance costs.

Where recruitment fees are USD 2000, for some migrants leaving Asia or Africa:

- Savings are **USD 1000 or 4 x the amount.**

If recruitment fees are eliminated entirely, **as per ILO standards, the savings could be 8 times.**



Growing insecurities and absence of regular channels for migration:

- * Migrants pay between USD 1,000 - 10,000 depending on the route and amenities during the journey.
 - 20-meter fishing boats reportedly earn smugglers USD 1.5 million a trip (500 migrants/3,000 USD each) - est. smugglers have grossed more than USD 1 billion in 2014 alone.
- * Countries spend millions in sea rescue and border control:
 - Under the *Mare Nostrum* programme, Italy has spent the equivalent of USD 13 million a month in search-and-rescue operations.
 - Spain has spent EUR 289 million between 2007 and 2013 on strengthening border controls between the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla and Morocco.



The OWG outcome document on Sustainable Development Goals:

- Target 8.8 on “protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments of all workers, **including migrant workers**, particularly **women migrants**, and those in **precarious employment**”.

Post-2015 development:
decent work for migrant workers



*Proposed ILO indicators on:

- international labour standards;
- employment, wages and working conditions;
- social security coverage;
- skills and qualifications recognition;
- recruitment costs; and,
- social dialogue.

*Measuring target 8.8.

Tentative Indicators	How to measure?	Data sources
<p>1. Indicator on international labour standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of countries that have ratified relevant international labour standards and whose national legislation provides for equality of treatment in respect of employment (in particular wages, social security benefits and skills recognition). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The eight ILO fundamental Conventions and other key instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Information System on International Labour Standards (NORMLEX), ILO General Surveys, Official Gazettes.
<p>2. Indicator employment, wages and working conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage gap between employed migrants and employed nationals reduced by X per cent (by gender and sector); Share of migrant workers in regular employment (by gender). Share of migrant workers subject to occupational injuries (by gender). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earnings Structure Survey, ensuring that migrant workers are taken into account in the sample design; Labour Force Survey target population should cover migration population by suitably designed sample. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National surveys, conducted by the National Statistical Offices on employment, wages and working conditions; ILO international Labour Migration Module.

Tentative Indicators	How to measure?	Data sources
<p>3. Indicators on social security coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of social security agreements ensuring the portability of social security benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records made available by the relevant national authorities, e.g. National Social Security Institutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National social security authorities; Official Gazettes; ILO mapping of bilateral agreements, including on social security (KNOMAD research).
<p>4. Indicators on skills and qualifications recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of countries concluding bilateral agreements for the recognition of education/qualifications, skills/competencies; Share of migrant workers whose foreign qualifications are recognized by the national authorities (by gender); Number of countries having adopted procedures for recognition of prior learning; Number of persons who have received recognition of prior learning (by sector, profile and gender) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records made available by the relevant national authorities, and data is organized in an adequate way and made accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labour; National authorities in charge of qualification recognition.

Tentative Indicators	How to measure?	Data sources
<p>5. Indicator on reducing costs relating to recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of migrant workers in respect of whom recruitment costs are eliminated or are subject to reduced recruitment costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys on recruitment costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO-KNOMAD Thematic Working Group on Low-Skilled Labour Migration
<p>6. Indicators on social dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade union density (including numbers of migrant workers); Participation of workers' and employers' organizations in policymaking on labour migration; Number of sectors and/ or enterprises with collective bargaining agreements; Share of migrant workers among workers represented at the company level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records made available by trade unions, governments and associations, and data is organized in an adequate way and made accessible. Surveys' target population should cover migration population by suitably designed sample. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative records maintained by trade unions, government agencies, registrars of associations and collective agreements or the registers of other organizations such as bargaining councils. Surveys of enterprises or establishments on the number of workers belonging to a trade union and the number of workers covered by collective agreements.

The background of the slide is a stylized illustration. A large green tree trunk stands on a green hill. The canopy of the tree is composed of several large green gears of different sizes. A world map is integrated into the tree's structure, with red dots representing various countries and white dotted lines showing migration routes. The sky is a light green gradient with some faint clouds.

SETTING AN ILO AGENDA FOR FAIR MIGRATION

- Making migration a choice and not a necessity, by creating decent work in countries of origin.
- Respecting the human rights, including labour rights, of all migrants.
- Ensuring fair recruitment and equal treatment of migrant workers to prevent exploitation and level the playing field with nationals.
- Forging stronger linkages between employment and labour migration policies.
- Having Ministries of Labour, trade unions and employers' organisations involved in policy making on migration.
- Fostering genuine cooperation between countries and within regions.

Thank you
for your
attention!