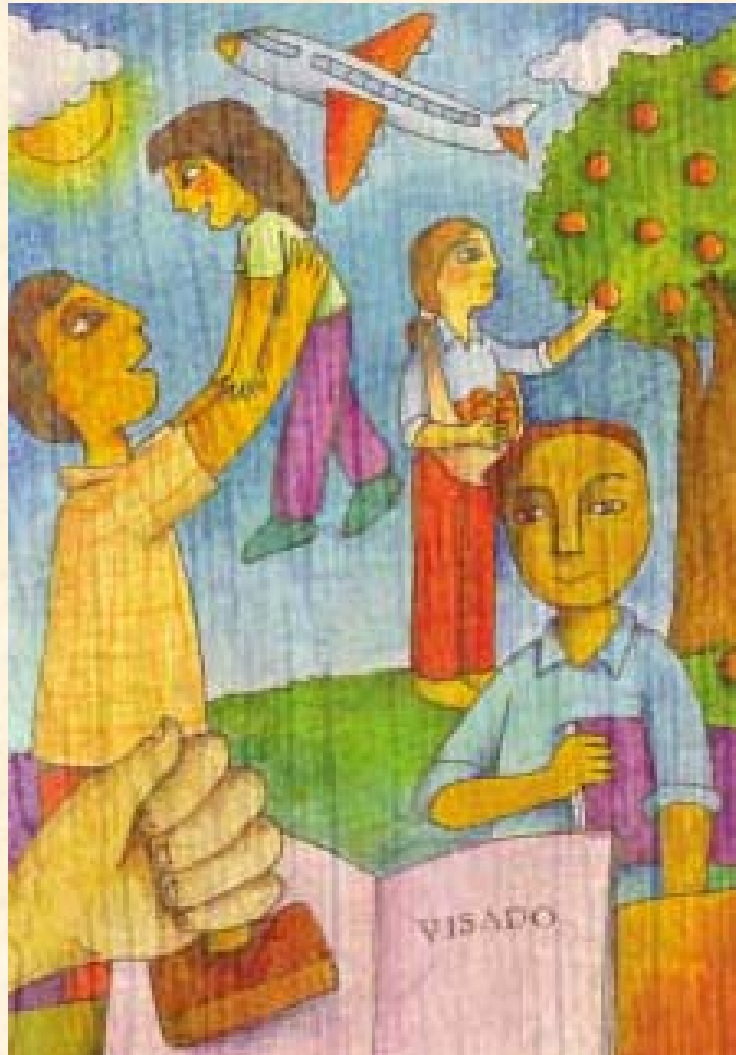




**What trade unions can do to prevent Forced Labour and Trafficking, and to assist worker victims?**



Building a Workers' Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking  
Torino, 24 October 2007



# The problem at stake

- Forced labour and Trade Unions
    - Part of the core labour standards
    - Part of workers basic rights
  - Migrant workers and trade unions
    - Growing number of migrant workers: up to 7 Millions Ukrainians work abroad
  - Why is it a challenge?
    - Temporary, seasonal work
    - Illegal situation of the victims: migrant workers, illegal residence and/or illegal employment
    - Coercion / violence from the employer: afraid to complain
- Most victims are not unionized
- » More vulnerable, out of reach





## **What trade unions can do?**

- Information dissemination / Advocacy
- Awareness raising: both individual worker and public opinion
- Policy, Social dialogue, National commission
- Legal assistance
- Outreach work, organizing workers



# Information dissemination / Advocacy

- Providing workers with reliable, accurate and updated information on conditions of work and risks of exploitation
- Provide free information and in languages spoken by migrant: leaflet by IG Bau (German union) for seasonal workers in agriculture in Romanian and Polish
- Going to the migrants: French unions go to the migrant workers with a caravan
- Focus on unprotected labour market : agriculture, textiles, domestic work...
- Focus on vulnerable workers: ethnic minorities, women, young people, poor...



# Policy making, Social dialogue

- The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has a tripartite governing board:
  - Secretary of Labour and Employment
  - Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
  - Association of private recruitment agencies



# Lobbying

- Trade unions can lobby for:
  - A standards-based policy on labour migration issue
    - Protecting basic rights of all migrants and combating exploitation and trafficking
    - A transparent labour migration admissions system
    - Tripartite procedures / social dialogue
  - Ratification and implementation of CLS Conventions
  - Gender-sensitive labour migration policies
  - A key consultative role by trade unions in all issues relating to assisting and supporting migrant workers.
  - Regulation of sub-contractors



# Cooperation with other stakeholders



Trade Unions can cooperate with:

- NGO's
- Law enforcement agencies: denouncing abuse, supporting investigations
- Government
- Employer: recruitment agencies
- Other:
  - *Information Resource Centre for Labour migrants opened in 2004 by IOM and the Government of Tajikistan*



# Cooperation with other trade unions (2)



- Trade Unions in source / destination country:
  - *UGT guide for foreign workers in Spain*
  - Cooperation agreement between trade unions:
    - Senegal and Mauritania
    - Costa Rica and Nicaragua
    - Jordan and Pakistan
    - Malaysia and Indonesian





# Example of good practices

- In the UK some 70 percent of seasonal workers are supplied by ‘gang masters’, in the agriculture sector some 3,000 gang masters are employing about 60,000 people.
- Gang masters bill the farmers for their services and pay the agricultural workers cash in hand for day to day work. They deduce transport costs, food and housing from the wages paid to workers. Many of these gang masters have ties to smuggling and trafficking rings.
- About 100,000 workers, mostly undocumented migrants are all dependent on a gang master for work.



# Gang masters in UK

→ Promoting decent work for migrant workers

- The UK Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) spearheaded a campaign called “legislation not exploitation” for:
  - the introduction of a licenses. These licences would be valid for two years and renewable as long as the gang master has not breached any obligation.
  - a gang master register, which inspectors could then consult.
- The Government passed the Gangmasters Licensing Act on July 8th, 2004, which makes it an offence to operate as a gangmaster without a license.



# Difficulties encountered in assisting victims

- Hidden /illegal nature of Forced labour and trafficking
- Many victims are undocumented migrants, illegal workers and not unionized
- Language problem
- Migrants distrust in unions as part of law enforcement authorities
- Temporary jobs: difficult to outreach workers



# A workers' Alliance against Forced Labour and Trafficking

- Building a network involved in a pre-migration stage (briefing workers before departure on their rights and on the existing trade unions in the destination country) and in the arrival stage
- Sharing good practices / activities and materials through a website

Example:

The trade union passport (UNI)  
network, advice, information, legal support





# The role of the ILO

- Facilitate social dialogue through national commissions
- Provide trainings and materials to trade unions: how to define forced labour and trafficking? how to identify a victim? International and national legal framework?
- Technical cooperation / funding activities
- Support networking / sharing good practices for trade unions, labour judges, labour inspectors, indigenous fellows...



**Thank you!**

Please visit our new  
website

[www.ilo.org/forcedlabour](http://www.ilo.org/forcedlabour)