

# Statement by Global Labour Movement on the Biennial Report of the United Nations Secretary General on the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration



On 5 December 2024, United Nations Secretary General (UNSG), Antonio Guterres presented, to the UN General Assembly his 3<sup>rd</sup> biennial report on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration. The report also includes [a limited set of indicators](#) to assist reviews of the Compact alongside a strategy for improving disaggregated migration data, and [recommendations on strengthening cooperation on missing migrants](#) and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in distress. The latter two were requested by member states with the [Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum](#) held in May 2022.

Despite a limited number of positive developments reported, the UNSG's report paints a worrying picture in terms of the implementation of the Global Compact's objectives aligned with its human-centered, rights-based and gender-sensitive guiding principles. As per the report, some of these negative trends also identified by the global labour movement, include:

- Prevalence of fear-driven, anti-migration narratives and their use to justify marginalization and exclusion of migrants from basic services and civic engagement;
- Increase in efforts to externalize migration governance and to intensify border controls, coupled with increasing securitization and deterrence measures that often expose migrants to risks of human rights violations,
- Available migration pathways not responding to the needs and instead pushing migrants to dangerous routes, laid bare by largest number of migrants having

been recorded dead or missing in 2023 since the data began to be recorded in 2014.

- Lack of a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach when designing and implementing labour migration pathways evidenced by:
  - Migrant workers facing formal and informal barriers to their fundamental right to freedom of association and collective bargaining;
  - Migration pathways that tie workers to a particular employer as these exacerbate power imbalances and deter migrant workers from reporting exploitation and joining unions;
  - Migrant workers being victims of forced labour three times more than national workers;
  - Illegal profits from international migrants in forced labour through the recruitment fees and costs, together with wage underpayment, reaching USD 37 billion annually;
  - Migrant workers' heightened exposure to heat stress and other climate-related occupational hazards in sectors such as construction and agriculture leading to avoidable workplace deaths;
  - Overrepresentation of migrants in irregular situations, in unregulated sectors without workplace protections;
  - Women and girls being pushed to labour migration pathways that offer insufficient protection or to dangerous irregular migration routes, as they have limited access

to regular migration pathways; LGBTIQ+ migrants experiencing higher rates of unemployment and poverty, facing significant disadvantage in the labour market and being more likely to work in the informal economy;

- Migrants being excluded from social protection and facing obstacles to access rights and services.

The global labour movement welcomes the UNSG's calls for responding to these negative trends with a focus on **human rights of migrants** irrespective of their status, including the importance of ensuring that **labour migration pathways** are not only regular, but "**rights-based** and underpinned by **decent work** for all." In this regard, implementing the following solutions, as provided in the report, will decisively steer us in the right direction:

- the importance of States **ratifying international labour standards** and the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families;
- the need to address formal and informal barriers migrant workers face **to their fundamental right to freedom of association and collective bargaining**;
- the need to **eliminate recruitment fees and related costs**;
- the importance of integrating social dialogue and consideration of work conditions in countries of origin and destination, and with a people-centered approach" in skills mobility partnerships;

- **regularization** schemes to alleviate the vulnerability of migrants in irregular situations to discrimination, exploitation and marginalization, while problematising that many of such schemes "grant only temporary stay with limited access to labour markets and basic services";
- the need for investment "in **community-led resilience-building** that empowers individuals and communities to prepare for and respond to challenges posed by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation"
- the need to ensure migrants **access to social protection** including measures enabling portability of social protection benefits;
- promoting the right to health of migrants and refugees as supported by the WHO 2019-2030 Global Action Plan on the health of migrants and refugees and prioritized in the WHO general programme of work;
- the exigency to address: \*limited access of **women and girls** to decent jobs, education and regular migration pathways, \*sexual and gender-based violence, and \*the specific vulnerabilities faced by migrant women domestic workers and LGBTIQ+ migrants.

In relation to whole-of-society approach, in the section on partnerships, the report calls for "strengthened partnerships with the private sector to mobilize innovative financing mechanisms and to leverage resources for skills development." Such partnerships must involve genuine social dialogue with trade unions and ensure public resources are not diverted for private profits.

The report also includes **an indicator framework to review progress** related to the Compact's implementation. The framework, which is developed by a dedicated workstream under the UN Network for Migration (UNNM) consisting of UN entities, academia and civil society, including the ILO and the ITUC, proposes core and additional indicators for each of GCM's 23 objectives.

Global labour movement welcomes the inclusion of a number of indicators related to international labour standards,<sup>1</sup> demonstrating that without investment in decent jobs and without protection and fulfilment of workers' rights regardless of migration status, there cannot be progress towards achieving the objectives of the GCM either.

As the 2nd International Migration Review Forum in 2026 is approaching, trade unions worldwide call for States to deliver a **human rights-based, gender-transformative and people-centred governance of labour migration with core labour standards and workers' agency at the forefront**. This requires States to:

- Enhance the **national implementation, follow-up and review of GCM objectives using the new GCM indicators framework** and involving non-state actors, including trade unions and migrant communities, in these efforts;

- Ratify and implement **international labour standards** for all migrants regardless of their status; including freedom of association and the right to organize and collectively bargain as indispensable pillars to ensure decent work;
- To address adverse drivers of migration including through **Just Transition** and **gender-transformative policies** including public investments for quality and universal public care services and rebuilding the social organization of care;<sup>2</sup>
- To ensure migrant workers are able to collectively demand and defend their rights and prevent exploitation and abuse;

Ensure **labour migration pathways are rights-based, gender-sensitive** and they **lead to decent work**, involving trade unions in their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as outlined in the [UN Guidance on Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements](#);

- **Ban recruitment fees** that, whether paid upfront or through deductions, can lead to debt bondage and forced labour, and accelerate the achievement of **fair and ethical recruitment** for migrant workers globally;

<sup>1</sup> These include: SDG indicators 8.8.2 "Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status"; 8.3.1 "Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex"; 8.5.2 "Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities"; 8.7.1 "Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age"; 8.8.1 "Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status"; 8.6.1 "Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training"; 1.3.1 "Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable"; IMISEM indicator: "Whether or not migrants can be members and participate in trade union associations and work-related negotiation bodies" and a new indicator "Whether or not the country establishes non-discriminatory national social protection systems, including social protection floors for nationals and migrants, in line with the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)"

<sup>2</sup> ILO [Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy](#), June 2024.

- Implement **universal minimum living wages**, which apply to all workers, including migrant workers;
- **Guarantee equal treatment and access to quality public services, including education, and social protection** for all migrant workers and their families, regardless of their status and free from any form of discrimination, including racism and xenophobia;
- Accelerate the **development and recognition of skills** and qualifications considering technological and green transitions;
- Ensure **effective access to justice** for all migrant workers, including remediation and prevention of wage theft and other rights violations, and protection from employer retaliation and all forms of intimidation;
- Ensure migrants are covered by **universal social protection systems and floors** in destination and origin countries, including through portability of social security benefits;
- Strengthen, deepen and consolidate **tripartism and social dialogue in all stages of the migration cycle** and in line with whole-of-society principle of the GCM.