

6th thematic consultation on the GCM 12./13.10.2017

Intervention Südwind- Institute, Germany

By board member Dr Hildegard Hagemann, (German Commission for Justice and Peace)

Labour Inspection and Social Dialogue

Südwind Institute, a German ecumenical think-tank on justice in economy and globalisation is grateful for the opportunity to present a comment on the Global Compact on Migration.

We welcome the Issue Brief #6 as base for the Compact. In the following we would like to raise aspects which should be considered:

We talk about implementation of existing regulations, law enforcement but the reality shows that even the status quo in labour rights and decent work achievements cannot be maintained. Achievement like social dialogue or the state obligation 'labour inspection' are permanently threatened by economic paradigm of competition and division of labour. Labour inspection is not adequately equipped and fragmented leading to ineffectiveness to protect labour rights. Partly it is left to the private sector itself to inspect production and processing sites for safety standards. Thereby decent work is not fully recognized and reduced to Health and safety measures. Social dialogue is often undermined and arbitrary. Governments should be the initiator of social dialogue and it should be institutionalised. These shortcomings fall back to the disadvantage for the most vulnerable groups of workers- the migrants.

Undocumented migrants do not have a chance to work in the formal economy. But many economic sectors and Value Chains are supported by the informal economy. It is necessary to formalise working conditions step by step. A guide to this is the ILO recommendation 204 Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (2015). This would help to get an idea about regularisation of the status of migrants.

In many countries even internal migrant workers, often seasonal and casual workers in the informal economy are threatened by precarious working conditions and do not enjoy the same labour protection as local workers. The Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration is considered as a compact for all. Therefore we would like to highlight the link that acknowledging the right to decent work for migrant workers can strengthen the labour rights of internal migrants as well by improving e.g. the national labour laws and their enforcement. This is highly advisable.

Being a compact for all it is important to have solid complaint mechanism and safeguarding the fundamental rights to organise and freedom of opinion.

The consideration of the long-term assessment of social costs of migration is missing. As much as remittances are used for health and education purposes, as neglected are the costs for maintaining social cohesion programs, family assistance, social work for families affected by migration in countries of origin but also in countries of destination. A Compact has to raise awareness for the sustainability aspects and elaborate the links to the SDGs.

In this aspect coherence between trade, security, agriculture, financial regimes, health, education and Rural Development Programs has not lost any of its importance. The Global Compact has to recognize the relevance of migration for development politics and existing and future poverty reduction programs.

We are thankful for the broad consultation on international level and hope for a breakthrough in recognition of dialogue and fight against the shrinking space for civil society.

-

.