



International Organization for Migration

Roundtable Discussion on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Dedicated to the Convention's 20th Anniversary

The Roundtable is organized within the Framework of the Global Campaign for the Ratification of the ICRMW

Monday, July 19, 2010, 14:00 – 16:00, UN Conference Hall

Press Briefing

More than 200 million persons across the world are migrants, representing nearly 3% of the world population. All countries are affected by migration either as origin, destination or transit countries and all states are thus confronted with the challenges of developing effective migration policies with human rights at their core.

Migration is an important social and economic phenomena affecting Armenia. It is estimated that immigrants represent 7.8% of the population and that the total number of Armenian emigrants is over 800000 individuals (26.9% of the population). Remittances constitute the largest source of foreign exchange and are important for Armenia's economy.

Although, for many, migration is a positive experience, many others migrate under duress and face severe hardships in their countries of destination. Migrant workers all over the world remain particular targets of abuse, discrimination and exploitation by traffickers, smugglers and employers. Yet an instrument is at the government's disposal to minimise this and to strengthen their legal protection.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) is one of the core United Nations human rights treaties and a main international migration law instrument.

The ICRMW recognises the specific vulnerabilities of migrant workers and promotes humane and lawful working and living conditions and the need for increased protection. It provides guidance on the elaboration of migration policies, which can only be effective if they are based on legal standards and the rule of law. It sets out provisions to combat exploitation of migrant workers and members of their families in countries of arrival, transit and departure of migrants

In addition to the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of migrants, the Convention includes a number of rights addressing specific protection needs arising from the particular vulnerability of migrant workers and members of their families, such as effective protection by the State against violence, physical injury, threats and intimidation; prohibition of confiscation

and destruction of identity and travel documents, safeguards related to measures of expulsion of migrants, recourse to protection and assistance of consular and diplomatic authorities of the State of origin; the right to transfer their earnings and savings and personal effects and belongings upon the termination of their stay in the State of employment; the right of migrants to be informed about the conditions of their admission and their rights and obligations under the law and practice of the State of employment.

The Convention provides guidelines for international cooperation in order to promote lawful, equitable and humane conditions of migration, and underscore that protection of rights of migrants is a shared responsibility of States of origin, transit and employment.

The ICRMW, in Article 79, includes explicit language safeguarding the prerogative of States to determine who may enter, remain, and/or work in their territories.

The ICRMW was adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1990 and entered into force on 1 July 2003. December 18th was proclaimed as International Migrants Day to recognize the efforts, contributions and rights of migrants worldwide.

The treaty has forty-three States parties. The following countries have ratified the Treaty as of July 2009: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uganda, Uruguay. Another fifteen states, Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Liberia, Montenegro, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Togo, have signed but not yet ratified the Treaty.

The Republic of Armenia is not a party to the Treaty yet.

On the occasion of the Convention's 20th anniversary, a global campaign has been launched calling on governments to ratify it.

The Roundtable is an event associated by the Global Campaign and is a forum for Government officials and the civil society to discuss the topic of the ratification of the ICRMW with a view to strengthening the protection of migrant workers' human rights. The Roundtable is organized under the high auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

The Global Camping Coalition hopes that on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Convention, on 18 December 2010, they can also celebrate its ratification by Armenia.

The campaign has been launched by the International Steering Committee, a unique network of UN agencies, international organizations and global civil society organizations. Steering Committee members include representatives of December 18, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Labour Office (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), Migrants Rights International (MRI), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Public Services International (PSI), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Council of Churches (WCC) and Amnesty International (AI) (observer).

To receive more information about the initiative, please contact Ms. Kristina Galstyan, the Head of Project Development and Implementation Unit and Media focal point for the IOM Mission in Armenia, at (+374 10) 585692, ext. 112 or kgalstyan@iom.int.