

Global Social Protection Week

Achieving SDG 1.3 and Universal Social Protection (USP2030) in the Context of the Future of Work

Stream 2

Adapting social protection to a changing world

Technical session 2.2

Extending social protection to migrant workers

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

14:00pm – 15:15pm

BACKGROUND

Life transitions, economic and societal transformations along with increasing demands for labour from globalized labour markets influence migration pathways and affect migrant workers' access to social protection. Social protection policies and systems need to adapt to current and emerging labour migration trends and patterns and expand their scope to address the specific needs of migrant workers and their families.

Although “everyone as a member of society has the right to social security” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), art. 22), in reality, compared to nationals working their entire lives in one country, migrants face huge **challenges** in exercising their rights to social protection. This is partially due to legal restrictions pertaining to their particular circumstances (e.g. the length of their period of employment and residence, their nationality, migrant status etc.) but also to more practical obstacles including the lack of information or contributory capacity and the complexity of administrative procedures.

Though the challenges are significant, many policy options are available to policy-makers to extend social protection to migrant workers. The conclusion of **bilateral or multilateral social security agreements** is certainly one of the most effective instrument to extend social protection to migrant workers and their families. It can ensure the portability of social security rights and provide equality of treatment in respect of social security.

In addition, governments can ratify and apply **ILO Conventions and Recommendations** (e.g. the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157), Maintenance of Social Security Rights Recommendation, 1983 (No. 167), Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)) containing standards relevant to migrant workers and their social protection. This will imply that social security laws, regulating both social insurance and social assistance schemes, cover migrant workers.

Another important option to consider is the inclusion of **social security provisions in bilateral labour arrangements (BLAs)**. This is particularly relevant in the absence of social security agreements and can help ensure that at least some provisions such as the access to health care or work injury benefits are provided to migrant workers.

Furthermore, countries of origin or destination can adopt, on a unilateral basis, measures that will extend social protection to migrant workers and their families. These **unilateral measures** comprise the access of migrant workers to national social protection floors, the application of the equality of treatment principle and the exports of benefits, the establishment of voluntary or mandatory insurance mechanisms as well as welfare funds.

Finally, **complementary measures** aimed at improving migrants effective access to social protection and health care are worth considering including communication and information campaigns, interpretation services, translation of material in relevant languages, pre-departure briefings, free-of-charge services facilitating registration and access to appeal and complaint procedures, representation of migrant workers and more.

Many countries around the globe have tried to address the challenges faced by migrant workers in exercising their right to social security and applied some of the above-mentioned policy options. This session will bring together representative from governments, social partners, social security institutions and regional economic communities to discuss the challenges and opportunities of these policies/strategies based on their national/regional experiences and practices.

OBJECTIVES

Organized in the context of the Global Social Protection Week as part ILO Centenary celebrations, this technical session has the following objectives:

- To discuss the challenges faced by migrant workers and their families in accessing social protection as well as the opportunities linked to the extension of social protection to migrant workers.
- To present various country/regional strategies and practices in extending social protection to migrant workers.

FORMAT

This technical session will consist of a moderated discussion, where the moderator will ask one or two rounds of questions to the panel members. The panel members will not be required to deliver any power point presentation. However, information on the different social security agreements or unilateral measures will be displayed on a screen to avoid the speakers spending time explaining the agreements/measures.

Questions will focus on:

- Building comprehensive social protection strategies/policies that include migrant workers and their families.
- The different approaches/policy options available to policy-makers and their advantages /disadvantages.
- Adapting social protection systems to address the specific needs of migrant workers and their families.

MODERATOR AND PANELLISTS

Moderator: **Mariano Brener**, International Social Security Association (ISSA)

- **Ramesh Badal**, Vice President for Foreign Affairs from the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), Nepal
- **Steven Mac Andrew**, Director, Suriname Trade and Industry Association (STIA), Suriname
- **Salima Kharbouche**, Directrice de la Protection Sociale des Travailleurs, Ministère du Travail et de l'Insertion Professionnelle, Morocco
- **Genevieve Gencianos**, Migration Programme Coordinator, Public Services International

- **Kenichi HIROSE**, Senior Social Protection Specialist, International Labour Organisation, DWT/CO-Budapest
- **Andrew Allieu**, Project Manager, Extending access to social protection and portability of benefits to migrant workers and their families in selected RECs in Africa
- **Eduardo Basso**, General Coordinator for International Affairs, Special Secretary of Social Security and Labour, Brazil
- **Michelle Leighton**, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, International Labour Organisation, Geneva