

**THE STEERING FOR THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR RATIFICATION OF  
THE 1990 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON MIGRANTS' RIGHTS**

**Lunchtime Briefing for Delegates to the 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
Tuesday, 3 December 2002  
Palais des Nations**

Remarks by Moderator  
Patrick A. Taran, Senior Migration Specialist, ILO

On behalf of the Steering Committee for the Global Campaign on the International Convention on migrants rights, and the International Organization for Migration, co-hosts for this event, I am pleased to welcome you to this timely briefing on the content and significance of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

We have organized this briefing with three main purposes:

- 1) to present information and dialogue with delegates of States attending this IOM Council session regarding the content and importance of the International Convention on migrants rights;
- 2) to reinforce the understanding that international standards incorporated into national legislation provide the necessary foundation for 'managing' migration under the rule of law; and
- 3) to emphasize that the international community has consistently committed to and reinforced a comprehensive, standards based approach to international migration in a series of global policy conferences over the last ten years.

These include World Conferences on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, on Population and Development in Cairo and on Women in Beijing in 1994, on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, and recently on Racism and Xenophobia last year in Durban. The recommendations of all of these called for ratification of the 1990 Convention. An entire chapter of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population Program of Action laid out a comprehensive blueprint for national and global policy on international migration; these elements remain the best and broadest global approach to date.

The World Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia last year elaborated 40 paragraphs of declaration and recommendations on addressing refugees and migrants. These elements, taken together, offer a comprehensive and viable model for national programme of action to combat discrimination and xenophobia against migrants. Needless to say, these approaches insist on the need for application of international legal norms as a foundation for effective national action.

With 19 ratifications and 12 additional signatories –signature being a preliminary step to ratification—the 1990 Convention will imminently enter into force. I note that two ILO Conventions are in force and are ratified by a considerable number of countries. These are the Migration for Employment Convention No. 97 of 1949 and the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No. 143 of 1975. For ILO these two conventions together with the 1990 Convention, comprise an *International Charter on Migration*, covering not only human rights aspects, but reinforcing international intergovernmental consultation and cooperation on migration management.

We highlight that 69 different States have ratified or signed at least one of these three complementary instruments.<sup>1</sup> This means that their policies regarding migrant workers are at least in part shaped by international norms. This includes eleven of the fifteen European Union member States that have ratified at least one of the ILO labour migration conventions.

We are aware of pending action towards ratification in numerous other countries. Parliamentary consideration is underway in Armenia, Burkina Faso and Guatemala. Governmental discussion is taking place in Algeria and Peru, among other countries. National Human Rights Commissions in two western European countries are formulating recommendations to their governments.

National ratification campaigns are underway in some two dozen countries on all continents. Next week, national trade unions and church organizations together with IOM and ILO will launch a new national ratification campaign in Italy.

Now a brief word from the sponsor of this event. The Steering Committee is a unique alliance of United Nations and inter-governmental agencies together with international trade union, church, migrants', human rights and womens' organizations, dedicated to promotion of migrants' rights and dignity. It includes international organizations represented here at the podium and in the audience. The list of members can be found on the back cover of the Campaigner's Handbook distributed here in English, French and Spanish languages.

The purposes that bring this broad alliance together are:

--To advocate for the universal ratification of the 1990 International Convention for the protection of migrants rights;

--To place the Convention in the context of advancing human rights

--To project a broad profile of support for the Convention and the Global Campaign across the trade union movement, in churches, human rights organizations and in migrant communities, as well as by a range of concerned international organizations.

--To facilitate cooperation and information sharing among different actors in the Global Campaign, particularly in support of national and grass roots efforts, where much advocacy has already taken place.

This last word to conclude on just passed to me by a colleague from OHCHR: *The government of Timor Leste may announce its accession to this Convention on 10 December next, on the occasion of international human rights day. That would be the 20<sup>th</sup> ratification, bringing this convention into force!*

Panel Speakers:

--Ms. **Shyla Vorha**, Legal Officer, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

--**Ambassador Gustavo Albin**, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN in Geneva

--Ms. **Gabriela Rodriguez**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

--Mr. **Allesio Bruni**, Treaty Implementation Team Leader, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

--Ms. **Anna Biondi-Bird**, Deputy Representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in Geneva

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<sup>1</sup> The ILO Migration for Employment Convention No. 97 of 1949, ratified by 42 countries, the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No. 143 of 1975, ratified by 18 countries; and the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, ratified officially to date by 19 countries and signed by 12 others. Several countries have ratified two of these instruments.