



Oral Statement submitted for the Forced Labour Committee of the 103rd International Labour Conference by Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities)

Mr. President, Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of 164 Catholic Charities), strongly supports the adoption of new standards to achieve elimination of forced labour and prevention of human trafficking, namely the Protocol and Recommendations supplementing the Forced Labour Convention 1930 (29).

One of the priorities of Caritas members' work is to serve migrant communities and promote social justice for migrants. It works to advise and protect all migrants to prevent trafficking and abuse. Caritas Internationalis advocates for the rights of migrant workers – and for proper legal protection for all people who move to find work and security.

Caritas members and pastoral agents constantly witness the hardships and abuses that migrant workers suffer and highlight the lack of adequate mechanisms to protect them from labour exploitation. Abuses often go unpunished. Migrants should be offered real access to justice through effective redress mechanisms, independently of their migration status.

We would like to highlight the situation of seafarers and fishers, who are often migrants. They are invisible and because of the nature of their work easily become victims of exploitation and abuse. Their working environment makes it difficult for them to seek help and protection in situation of need. Though in the maritime sector there are specific laws and conventions, sometimes it is difficult to implement them.

We also draw attention to the situation of migrant domestic workers who may become victims of trafficking by unscrupulous recruitment agencies and end up in bonded labour. Their working conditions may be close to slavery, as their passport is confiscated and they are not allowed to leave their employer's home or communicate with their family. The inspection of work places is often not possible because many countries do not recognize domestic work as regular work and the need to protect their rights.

Due so, we welcome the Protocol, especially the provisions contained in art. 2 and 4, in particular the necessity of broadening the coverage of labour legislation to all workers of all sectors of economy, protecting workers who use recruitment services, and ensuring effective access to remedies.

In conclusion, Caritas Internationalis is confident that the adoption of the Protocol will be a significant achievement of the international community towards a more just and secure world also for migrants.

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