

108th Sessions of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, June 2019

Statement of the International Working Group of Catholic-Inspired Organizations Engaged in the Promotion of Decent Work during the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Committee "Violence and Harassment in the world of work"

Thank you chair for giving us the opportunity to contribute to the discussion in the Standard Setting Committee: violence and harassment in the world of work. We appreciate the work done by the office to compile and transfer the concerns of workers affected by violence into an international standard. Following the reports prepared to guide the discussion we particularly acknowledge the inclusive language with regard to informal workers, migrant workers and women workers.

In order to direct you further discussion on particular concerns of young workers finding themselves in precarious situations we would like to share with you two testimonies. They illustrate the reality that people around the world are facing.

The first testimony comes from Peru:

"At the age of 14, I did a practical training in a beauty salon. My boss was a 35 years old man. In the beginning, he always took my hand when we were doing an treatment together, later he always tried to be alone with me in order to intend to kiss and touch me. During all this time he abused me sexually and emotionally. I did not tell anyone, only my mother many years later."

The second testimony is from Jemma, 28 years old and a Filipina, working as a domestic worker in Hong Kong: "I left my family to help my husband and support our children in our financial needs and their education. In my first contract, I did not have my own room and I had to sleep in the living room. A few months later I experienced sexual harassment from my male employer and broke my contract with them. I asked for the help of my agency to send me back to the Philippines. The agency did not help me at all. I had to find my own way and I was lucky that I got the support of friends."

We need to follow up the ILO Convention 1975, No. 143 on the migrant workers, the signing and implementation in the states through intensive technical cooperation by the ILO. We reiterate that migrant workers should be protected in the same way as any other worker in a vulnerable situation.

In the same way, the testimony tells about the need for efficient labour inspectorates and strong complaint mechanisms protecting the violated workers. These mechanisms are imperative to ensure the Convention's implementation.

These are outlined in the draft of the Convention and supported under Chapter III 14-22 in the recommendation. We urge you not to water down the suggested wording. Sexual harassment and violence does not belong into the world of work and not anywhere. It is not a game or excusable attitude towards your fellow-men and woman. It brings harm, humiliation and with this destroys the deepest values of work: joy, fulfilment, creativity and human development. This is in the interest of social partners and societies.

We are hoping for a convincing adoption process at the end of this important anniversary ILC and reaffirm our commitment to engage in advocacy work for ratification of the Convention in the countries of our outreach, in particular on the protection of migrant workers and complaints mechanisms. As a Catholic-inspired Organization Group we will mobilise our members and affiliates to advocate on that commitment according to the spirit of “The Future of Work, Labour after Laudato Si” initiative we are all involved in. This initiative brings together different actors, from international movements to local communities, employers and workers organizations and organizations from other religious traditions. It is the continuation of six years of collaboration at the global level, related to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, Decent Work Agenda, and it also aims at contributing to the ILO Centenary and the Future of Work Initiative.

Thank you, Mr./Madame President and delegates in the committee.

This statement has been developed in collaboration with the following non-government and faith-based organizations:

| International Catholic Migration Commission - ICMC

| International young Christian Workers -IYCW/ JOCI

| International Coordination of Young Christian Workers - ICYCW/CIJOC

| KOLPING INTERNATIONAL

| World Movement of Christian workers - MMTC

| PAX ROMANA - ICMICA

| MIJARC

| Caritas Internationalis

| UNIAPAC