



# Migrant Workers and the ILO

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was founded in 1919. Its concern for migrant workers is reflected in its Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia adopted by the Conference of 1944, which now forms part of the Constitution. Its translation into action is done through the adoption and application of international standards, chiefly in the form of Conventions and Recommendations.

Five Conventions (Nos. 19, 48, 97, 118 and 143) and four Recommendations (Nos. 25, 86, 100 and 151) deal exclusively with migrant workers. These protect the rights and interests of migrant workers and lay down conditions for their employment and welfare.

A first group of standards (Conventions Nos. 19, 48 and 118 and Recommendation No. 25) were designed to secure equality of treatment in respect of social security, beginning with accident compensation and the maintenance of migrant workers' pension rights. Later, international labour standards relating to migrant workers were extended to other fields, and were principally aimed at protecting a wide range of human rights for migrant workers and for encouraging enlightened government policies – with the active participation of employers' and workers' organisations – in all matters relating to migrant workers, from recruitment to resettlement.

The most recent standards, Convention No. 143 and Recommendation No. 151, adopted in 1975, which supplement those adopted in 1949 (Convention No. 97 and Recommendation No. 86), deal with the obligation to respect the basic human rights of migrant workers, including trade union rights; the

suppression of clandestine traffic in such workers, and their employment in standard conditions; and certain principles of social policy which would contribute to the welfare of migrant workers and their families.

While standard setting and tripartite discussion form the foundation of ILO activity, other means of action include research, publications, technical cooperation and workers' education.

Copies of compilation of texts can be obtained from the International Migration for Employment Branch of the ILO.

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**Source:** *Trade unions and migrant workers, A workers' education guide* by Harold Dunning, International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland, 1985.