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Session 4.1: Building Alliances: Business Engaging with other Civil Society Actors

A POLICY FRAMEWORK ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: A TRADE UNION AND CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE ON BUILDING ALLIANCES WITH BUSINESS

International Labour Organization (ILO)¹

Introduction: Context and Challenges

International migration today is primarily a decent work and labour market issue. The large majority of international migrants represent those migrating for employment and their families and dependants. The UN Population Division now estimates that the number of international migrants in the world will reach 214 million in 2010. The ILO estimates that about 50% of this total are engaged in the world of work, employed, self-employed or in other remunerative activity, while another 40% of the total represent family members of these migrant workers.

Most migration today is driven by employment needs and market forces. The main pull factor is employer demand for skills and labour, while the lack of decent work opportunities at home in many countries acts as a major push factor. Migration provides responses to fast-changing needs for skills and personnel resulting from technological advances, changes in market conditions and

¹ **DISCLAIMER:** The analysis presented in this paper does not necessarily reflect the views of the CSD Organizing Committee or the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation.

industrial transformations. In countries of ageing populations, migration replenishes declining work forces through injecting younger workers. Private sector employers in destination countries, whether multinational companies, large corporations, small and medium enterprises or informal sector enterprises are increasingly dependent on foreign as well as national workers to meet needs.

Under globalization, migrant workers are increasingly in demand for highly skilled jobs in various sectors in advanced countries seeking to maintain global competitiveness and increase productivity. At the same time, agriculture, cleaning and maintenance, construction, domestic service, and care services depend on lower skilled migrant workers to survive and remain viable, especially as native workers increasingly shun these jobs. .

However, the protection of migrant workers leaves much to be desired. Major issues of concern are abuse and exploitation of migrant workers in destination countries. Despite the positive experiences of some migrant workers, a significant number face undue hardships and abuse in the form of low wages, poor working conditions, virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as social exclusion.² Women migrant workers, trafficked persons and migrant workers in irregular status are among the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. At times, there seems to be tacit tolerance of the presence of migrant workers in irregular status to sustain certain economic sectors in some countries, while public discourse continues to focus on 'fighting' irregular migration. Employers are especially concerned when they are blamed for hiring migrants in irregular status in violation of law.

Migrant workers, those in irregular as well as regular situations, contribute significantly to the prosperity of their destination countries, although these contributions are far from adequately acknowledged. Migration also makes a huge impact on origin countries. Migrant remittances sent home to support families and communities in developing countries were estimated at US\$240 billion in 2007. These remitted earnings build better houses, provide health care, enable children to attend school and improve food security in origin countries. Returning migrant workers bring back financial and social capital and skills while diaspora communities settled abroad contribute to both host and home economies through exchange of skills, technology and investments as well as by generating businesses and markets for products from origin countries.

² ILO (2004c). *A fair deal for migrant workers in the global economy*, Report VI, International Labour Conference 2004, 92nd Session. Geneva, International Labour Office.
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc92/pdf/rep-vi.pdf>

However, far too little is done to facilitate and enhance these migrant contributions to development.

In sum, the challenge is to build alliances around common and shared objectives and concerns of business, trade unions and CSOs. Employers want policies that respond to economic and labour market needs while trade unions and civil society have a stake in ensuring protection and social inclusion of migrants. Governments are keen on enhancing the development benefits of migration through remittances, skill transfers and engaging diaspora communities. This paper elaborates on shared objectives and concerns which can pave the way for win-win situations for all parties including migrants.

Common Objectives and Shared Concerns for Alliance Building

Both business and civil society actors have recognized that a regulatory policy framework is required to address the business and human dimensions of migration, at national and international levels. All parties have issues with existing gaps in policy and regulatory frameworks in meeting the demand for labour and in ensuring protection of rights. Employer groups and civil society organizations including trade unions also have acknowledged that wider cooperation would be key to build a consensus and political force broad enough to overcome resistance and inertia impeding policy change. “The challenge now is to create the broad alliance in making the work of millions of migrant workers decent – getting their fair share of their labour in a context where they have rights and dignity.”³

There is an emerging consensus on the need for a broad, inter-sectoral alliance between employers and civil society actors to elaborate a migration policy and strategy that benefits business, migrant workers and the concerned societies. Such an alliance would be needed to generate sufficient political will on the part of governments, and acceptance on the part of the general public.

In fact, a shared policy framework --as well as cooperation - on migration policy and practice has been articulated between employers and trade unions worldwide. The International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2004 was a watershed in defining a joint employer-trade union analysis of international migration issues and agreement on a shared policy framework for regulating

³ Cited in presentation of Tos Q. Añonuevo, “The Role of the Trade Union Movement in Migration and Development: a Contribution from the Building and Wood Workers International (BWI)”, *International Migration Dialogue, Workshop on Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development*, IOM, Geneva, 2006

international labour migration from a “rights-based approach.”⁴ That outcome reflected the high degree of convergence among representatives of employer and worker organizations along with governments from the 178 ILO member States. Box 1 summarizes the concerns of employers and workers contained in the Resolutions and Conclusions adopted by the Conference. It highlights the need for cooperation with employers to integrate migrants in multicultural workplaces in particular.

Box 1: Interfacing employers and workers in regard to labour migration

Para 14. Employers confront numerous policy and practical challenges in employment of foreign workers, including: identifying, recruiting and ensuring entry of foreign workers through regular channels; complying with complex and lengthy administrative procedures; addressing document control; facing risks of sanctions for employing migrant workers without authorization; managing relations in multi-ethnic workplaces; and assuring proper training and workplace protection in multilingual contexts.

Para 15: For workers’ organizations, labour migration poses particular concerns, notably: reaching migrant workers and organizing them into trade unions; ensuring solidarity between foreign and national workers, cooperating with employers to integrate migrants in multicultural workplaces; and obtaining access to policy forums to ensure that the views of men and women migrant workers are taken into account. Workers’ organizations in countries of origin can assist migrant workers in obtaining accurate and comprehensive information about employment opportunities and workers’ rights in destination countries.

Source: Resolution concerning a fair deal for migrant workers in a global economy, 92nd Session, International Labour conference, June 2004.

The elaboration of the ILO “Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Principles and guidelines for a rights based approach to Labour Migration” through tripartite negotiations was the next most important milestone in cooperation between employers and workers.⁵ A number of other civil society organizations around the world also contributed to finding common ground in the ILC

⁴ ILO: Resolution on a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy. 92nd Session, International Labour Conference 2004

⁵ Multilateral Framework for Labour Migration. ILO. Geneva. 2006. Available on line at: www.ilo.org/migrant/download/tmmflm-en.pdf also in French /tmmflm-fr and Spanish /tmmflm-sp

Discussion and to subsequent elaboration of the Multilateral Framework.

Alliances are often built and sustained on the basis of identifying common concerns to be taken up, and the means to address them. The strength of alliances usually is derived from the mutual benefits accruing to each party.

In building up the case for further alliance building, this paper first highlights main concerns and interests articulated by trade unions and civil society, followed by a discussion on employer concerns and interests in migration and labour mobility. Next the paper highlights examples of employer-trade union-civil society initiatives on migration, and ends with conclusions and way forward.

1. Employer interests: catalysts for promoting alliances

In the last few years, employers individually and through their organizations have identified concerns with international labour mobility and regulation of migration. Manifestations of concern have been reflected in all world regions. Tripartite consultations focusing on labour migration in Africa, Asia, the CIS, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere served as forums for employers to articulate common positions on migration policy, and to recognize convergences with other stakeholders, notably trade unions and national governments.⁶

The employers group played a particularly dynamic role in expressing the concerns of 'private sector' organizations around the world at the General Discussion on Migrant Workers at the International Labour Conference in Geneva in 2004.

Regional business organizations in Africa and Europe (Pan-African Employers Confederation, Business Europe) have specific activities and membership working groups addressing migration issues; the International Organization of Employers has conducted activity programmatic focus on migration issues for nearly a decade; for example it recently co-facilitated a conference on migration among employers from the 14 SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) member countries.⁷

⁶ Among these were tripartite regional consultations on labour migration policy held under ILO auspices in Southern Africa, Pretoria, December 2002; Central Africa, Douala, March 2003; East Africa Community, Arusha, December 2004; Maghreb countries, Algiers, March 2005; Africa-EU in Brussels, May 2006; Central Asia, Issyk-kul, December 2008. OSCE-IOM-ILO tripartite consultations on their joint Handbook on Labour Migration in Moscow for CIS countries in December, 2006 and in Rabat in December 2007 also served as platforms to articulate employer concerns on migration policy.

⁷ Piyasiri Wickramasekara, *International labour Migration: ILO Perspectives*, Keynote address delivered to the East, Central and Southern Africa Employers' Organization (ECSAEO) Conference 2009: Labour

A growing number of research surveys have also identified business needs and concerns regarding migration policy. For example, a Canadian study on the role of employers in migration found that “[E]mployers have a positive attitude towards immigrants and immigration.⁸ Employers see many positives and few negatives in hiring recent immigrants and welcome the opportunity to participate in strategies that seek to better integrate immigrants into the workforce.”

A private consultancy, Business for Social Responsibility, produced an extensive study and employer’s guide to “Promoting Responsible International Labor Migration: A Role for the Private Sector”⁹ in 2008, with support from the MacArthur Foundation. A European Task Force on Employers and Migrant Integration¹⁰ highlighted the challenges and the role of employers in promoting migrant integration. The European Policy Centre published the Task Force findings and recommendations.¹¹

A *business roundtable* on “The Private Sector and International Migration Policy” held in August 2009 in Athens provided a most recent articulation of needs, interests and expectations of employers and businesses on mobility and migration.¹² As the report noted, “*Business wants to be involved in the solutions for the ethical movement of people and is willing to pay for some of the costs. But it wants government to work on an intelligent regulatory framework for legal movement.*”

Drawing on these employer consultations, studies and tripartite meeting conclusions, main employer concerns and interests on migration include:

- 1) Obtaining labour and skills where needed, in the context of demographic trends and technological change resulting in reduced local or national availability. Access to needed skills and labour is seen as essential to maintain competitiveness and productivity.
- 2) Flexible and efficient access to labour and skills when and as needed, meaning quick, non-bureaucratic procedures for international recruitment, admissions authorizations and

Migration: Harnessing Africa’s Talent for the Continent’s Economic Development, 6 April 2009.

⁸ The Public Policy Forum (2004). *Bringing employers into the migration debate: survey and conference*. Ottawa, The Public Policy Forum. A summary presentation can be found at:

http://www.toronto.ca/metropolis/metropolitortonto2005/pdf/lopesetal_audc.pdf

⁹ See www.bsr.com

¹⁰ Former Executive Director, ILO’s Employment Sector.

¹¹ European Policy Centre, *Making migration work: the role of employers in migrant integration*, EPC Working Paper No.30, Report prepared for the EU Integration and Citizenship Programme, May 2008. http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/608394341_EPC%20Working%20Paper%2030%20Making%20migration%20work.pdf

¹² See “The Private Sector and International Migration Policy.” Report on a business roundtable in Athens, 30-31 August 2009, organized by Migration Policy Institute, Hellenic Migration Policy Institute and MacArthur Foundation.

placement on the job.

- 3) Means of recognition of skills, qualifications and experience acquired elsewhere
- 4) Retaining employees –both higher and less skilled—once they have been hired, trained and gained experience. Interest in temporary and circular labour migration programmes notwithstanding, employers are acutely aware that “Temporary labor programs only work if the need for labor is truly temporary”¹³.
- 5) Data on emerging and predicted future skills and labour needs.
- 6) Knowledge and skills of ‘diversity management’ to attract and keep talent while ensuring cohesion and productivity at the workplace.
- 7) Risk avoidance in dealing with government, law enforcement and labour inspection. Some employers have objected to imposition of sanctions regimes that impose immigration control responsibilities they are unprepared and unqualified to perform and that require additional costs.

Employers have articulated recognition that a regulatory framework is necessary to govern migration in a way that also meets their needs. A number of individual employers and corporations have requested assistance from ILO to develop appropriate company policies and practices to ensure minimum standards of treatment for migrant workers in their own employment and/or in their supply chains.

2. Trade Unions and Civil Society: Evolving engagement with migrant worker issues and concerns

Trade unions and civil society have a century-long history of activity on migration and in support of migrants. While earlier involvement was mainly by faith-based organizations and trade unions, engagement on migration is now ‘mainstreamed’ across a host of humanitarian, human rights, anti-racism and civil rights, women’s, and migrant and local community organizations. This activity has always addressed the human dimension of migration, with particular concern for protection of rights, dignity and well-being of migrants and refugees. This engagement has constantly been expressed in public policy debate and advocacy as well as through services, direct assistance and community sensitization.

Local and national civil society organizations and trade unions have long been involved in

¹³ Employer cited in “The Private Sector and International Migration Policy.” Op sit. Limits on temporary solutions to foreign labour needs also discussed in “Editorial: *Temporary Labour Migration: An Illusory Promise?*” International Migration Outlook, SOPEMI 2008, OECD, Paris.

providing concrete assistance to migrants and defending migrant rights in many countries.¹⁴ The only global survey of civil society activity in migration to date was conducted by the UN Commission on Population and Development in 1997.¹⁵ More than 100 organizations in all regions of the world provided information. The survey documented that there are civil society organizations in most countries of the world providing direct services to migrants, some complementing their service activities with public education activities and policy advocacy vis-à-vis local and national government. The report highlighted that CSOs working in the field of international migration provide a place for information, dialogue and cooperation between migrants –documented and undocumented-- refugees, citizens, employers and government agencies in countries of origin and destination.

Civil society activity around migration has grown exponentially since the early 1990s, both in extent and breadth. Notably, the trade union movement has expanded commitment and activity with migrant workers across Europe, as well as in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Arab States. National labour confederations in many countries now have organizing, protection and anti-discrimination activity focused on migrant workers and are active in policy advocacy. The unitary global International Trade Union Confederation set migration and protection of migrant workers as a major programmatic priority at its founding in 2005; migration will be a main theme of its global Congress in Vancouver in 2010.

Regional civil society migration formations focusing on migration have emerged in the last few years in Asia, Europe and in Central and South America. These include migrant-based coalitions such as the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), networks among trade unions, anti-racism groups, human rights and church-related bodies such as PICUM and ENAR in Europe, and broad associations of NGOs such as ARMIF in Central America.

The agenda of the Migrant Forum in Asia, comprising 290 organizations in 20 countries in Asia and the Middle East, emphasizes *personal dignity, health and well-being, basic human rights, access to relief and redress; capacity building and empowerment; advocating for rights-based policies and practices,*¹⁶ *just treatment and conditions, removing systemic barriers; and migrants and families as development partners.*

¹⁴ For an international overview of civil society activity on migration, see P. Taran, "Globalization/Migration: Imperatives for Civil Society And International Organizations" in Bogusz, B., Cholewinski, R., Cygan, A., Szyszczak, E. (eds.), *Irregular Migration and Human Rights: Theoretical, European and International Perspectives*, Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden/Boston, 2004

¹⁵ UN Commission on Population and Development: *Activities of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the area of international migration; Report of the Secretary General*. New York. 1997. UN document E/CN.9/1997/5

¹⁶ See MFA website at: <http://www.mfasia.org/mfaAbout/AboutMFA.html>

ENAR (European Network Against Racism) a network of more than 600 organizations in all EU countries and PICUM (Platform of International Cooperation on Undocumented Migration) counting more than 100 organizational members in 25 countries, have elaborated policy guidance addressing a major area of concern to both civil society and employers. For example, these networks together with other organizations propose *Reaffirmation of the principle of the uniqueness of labour law to uphold rights and forms of protection in the workplace. Labour law exists to protect the worker in an unequal position of power, which is especially the case for undocumented workers.* They specifically urge: *De-linking immigration status with workplace inspection, to ensure that undocumented workers can safely pursue a complaint against an abusive employer without being threatened with expulsion.*¹⁷

Major international federations and networks, such as among Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies and among church institutions, place emphasis on assisting and protecting migrants worldwide. While no broad global CSO coalition or alliance has been formalized, consultation and coordination has taken place among main actors for more than a decade.

There is today a high level of agreement across civil society and trade union organizations on the main lines of policy, legislation and practical measures for a comprehensive regulatory approach to migration.

Civil society groups were increasingly active in articulating joint views on migration at World Conferences held from the early 1990s to earlier this decade. The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 was also the occasion for founding the first global organization specifically focused on protection of migrants human rights. Joint NGO parallel activities and advocacy on migration concerns took place also at the International Conference on Social Development, in Copenhagen and the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, both in 1995. In 2001 at the at the International Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia in Durban, the more than 60 organizations present that were concerned with migration issues came together in the *Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Caucus* and agreed on a unified statement. Subsequently, nearly all of the Caucus recommendations were integrated into the final

¹⁷ See joint inter-organizational statement "Employers' Sanctions Directive: will migrant workers pay the price for their exploitation?" sponsored by ENAR, PICUM, Solidar, and 11 other European/international CSOs, issued 18 April, 2008 in Brussels, available at:

<http://www.picum.org/data/Publications/ENAR%20PICUM%20ENAR%20Solidar%20Common%20Position%2015.4.2008%20FINAL.pdf>.

Durban outcome documents as a result of unitary advocacy.¹⁸

Global Social Forums on Migration in Spain in 2007 and recently in Brazil, and the parallel trade union and civil society forums to the Global Forums on Migration and Development in Brussels and Manila have provided opportunities for further identifying common concerns across broader groupings of civil society.

Civil society forums around the Global Forums on Migration and Development have echoed similar concerns. The official CSD at Manila reiterated among its recommendations that, for example: *governments ratify and enforce core UN human rights treaties providing for equal treatment and the protection of migrants; governments and society as a whole should recognize and promote the contributions of migrants to destination countries; all migrant workers have the right to labour law protections and should be able to access and seek redress to any transgression* Ongoing regularization programs should be in place for undocumented citizens to become documented on the basis of fair and transparent criteria.¹⁹

Drawing on joint NGO statements at UN International Conferences in Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and Durban, at regional conferences in Asia, the Americas, and Europe, and parallel events to the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the major areas of common concern can be summarized as:

- 1) Protection of the human rights and dignity of the persons involved –all migrants, regardless of status, must be upheld by governments under the rule of law, and in workplaces. Virtually all collective civil society statements on migration include a call for ratification of the 1990 International Convention on rights of migrant workers and ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on migration for employment by governments.
- 2) Equality of treatment and non-discrimination are universal rights, and need to be upheld for all migrants, particularly in relation to employment
- 3) All migrants are entitled to basic health services, and all migrant children to schooling. Many civil society organizations are themselves involved in providing complementary services to migrant members, or constituents.
- 4) Access to regularization procedures for migrants established in destination countries but remaining in irregular or undocumented situations

¹⁸ See reference to Caucus work and accomplishments in UN *NGLS Roundup 82*, November 2001, page 3 at <http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/pdf/82durban.PDF>

¹⁹ GFMD Phillipines 2008 – *Civil Society Dialogue* (available at http://www.gfmd2008.org/component/option,com_remository/Itemid,38/func.startdown/id,5/)

- 5) Many CSOs understand mobility as a right, and express positions that freer or ultimately, unrestricted international mobility should be an eventual objective of evolving international law and policy on migration.
- 6) Many CSOs understand migration as a consequence of injustices, political conflict and violations of rights in homelands, and insist that migration policy include dimensions addressing human rights and democratisation, conflict resolution, decent work, development and environmental protection in countries of origin of migrants.

There are varying degrees of shared concerns among CSOs on a host of other aspects, including treatment of migrants, migration policy and roles of social partners. Some trade unions and other civil society organizations insist on means to (i) recognize qualifications of foreign workers and on (ii) extension of social protection and social security to migrant workers. On many occasions, trade unions have drawn attention to the multiple disadvantages faced by temporary workers and migrant domestic workers, notably lack of rights and exclusion from social security benefits.

In sum, there is a well-established understanding among civil society and trade union organizations of the need for a regulatory policy framework for international migration, and on need for combining forces to promote that framework, convince governments to adopt it, and obtain public support to sustain its implementation.

3. Points of Convergence

Certain points of convergence in respective agendas articulated by employers and business interests on the one hand and concerned civil society organizations on the other appear quite evident.

At a minimum, in broad terms, these would include:

- 1) Facilitating freer mobility of persons/workers across borders to meet overall as well as specific sectoral and occupational demand for labour.
- 2) Ensuring the availability of legal migration channels for emigration, immigration, voluntary return, and circular migration.
- 3) Ensuring decent treatment of all migrants in workplaces, in society, and in relation to applicable laws.
- 4) Providing for recognition of skills, talents, experience, so that migrants can realize their potential and obtain work according to skills and abilities.
- 5) Reinforcing equality of treatment and opportunity for migrants in host societies, and particularly in access to employment, and in workplace treatment.

- 6) Implementing a coherent and comprehensive regulatory framework at national and international level, based on relevant international Conventions and labour standards

As noted earlier, social partners have agreed globally on an international policy framework for labour migration – namely the non-binding *ILO Multilateral Framework on labour Migration*. This framework echoed and elaborated on a number of policy concerns articulated in the report of the Global Commission on International Migration and the International Agenda on Migration Management resulting from the Berne Initiative. As such, it constitutes a viable tool for formulating policies that respond to trade unions, civil society and business.

This ILO Multilateral Framework in fact articulates the points of convergence between employer and civil society interests. It is already widely used and referred to by employer organizations, trade unions and civil society groups in all regions. Two principles are of particular relevance:

- Principle 6: Social dialogue is essential to the development of sound labour migration policy and should be promoted and implemented.
- Principle 7: Governments and social partners should consult with civil society and migrant associations on labour migration policy.

Its content explicitly reflects tripartite agreement on:

- Importance of international standards
- Promoting access to employment
- Involving employment stakeholders in policy consultations
- Basing admissions on assessed labour market needs
- Ensuring recognition of skills, qualifications and experience of migrants
- Providing orientation and social support
- Ensuring equality of treatment, non-discrimination and integration for migrants
- Facilitating return and reintegration at home.

In sum, an extensive model framework for regulatory policy, legislation and practical measures has already been agreed between employers and trade unions worldwide, and it has gained wide support from many civil society partners.

The question of alliance building also needs to focus on the process. Important questions include: How to initiate dialogue? Among whom? How to identify a shared agenda and programme of action?

4. Joint approaches by civil society, trade unions and employers

The elements noted above have by and large already been agreed to in a number of international regional forums involving employers and trade unions, and in some cases other civil society bodies. In particular, conclusions and recommendations from a number of regional and inter-governmental migration policy conferences held from the beginning in the late 1990s, some with participation of employer and trade union federations in participating countries, arrived at consensus on general lines of agreement. Similar points were echoed and expanded on in the outcomes and recommendations of all of the tripartite consultations held on migration in the various sub-regions in Africa, in Central Asia, in other CIS countries, and in dialogues involving employers' organizations and trade unions in Europe.²⁰

Workers and employers agreed in these forums that exploitation of migrant workers undermines fair competition; they generally concurred on the importance of principles of international labour standards. In the ILO context, the workers and employers groups have agreed to call on governments to use International Labour Standards as a basis for national legislation to provide necessary protection for migrant workers, as well as conditions to minimize irregular migration. Both employers and trade unions have characterized 'brain drain' as permanent loss of critically skilled workers and entrepreneurs for many developing countries.

A number of trade unions and trade union federations have negotiated specific agreements with employers regarding migrant workers. For example, BWI, the global union federation for building and construction sectors, signed an accord with the Confederation of International Contractors Association in Dubai in 2006 which stipulated the commitment to social requirements like workers transportation, health and safety as well as decent living facilities.²¹

In the tripartite plus context of social and economic councils in many countries, and at regional levels, employers organizations and trade unions have already made common cause on elaborating and promoting improved regulation of migration and protection of migrant workers. Many national Social and Economic councils also include civil society representatives as members, as does the European Union's European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). Since 2001, the EESC has issued 138 opinions, statements and resolutions covering all aspects of EU internal and external migration policies; many of these suggest specific guidelines applicable to member

²⁰ Indicative list in footnote 8

²¹ Cited in presentation of Tos Q. Añonuevo, "The Role of the Trade Union Movement in Migration and Development: a Contribution from the Building and Wood Workers International (BWI)", *International Migration Dialogue, Workshop on Making Global Labour Mobility a Catalyst for Development*, IOM, Geneva, 2006

state national policies.²²

Extensive and specific statements on migration policy, anti-discrimination and integration have already been incorporated into national social partner agreements in a number of countries. A good practice example is incorporation of main sections on migration and non-discrimination and integration in the Ireland national social partnership framework agreements among all employer and trade union federations. For example, one of the main goals established in the Agreed Objective of the Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016 is *Deepening capabilities, achieving higher social and economic participation rates and more successfully handling diversity, including immigration*²³ Specific measures to reach this goal are subsequently spelled out in the agreement; some are now being implemented.

A long-standing example of a broad and effective country-level approach is the National Immigration Forum in the USA²⁴; it has played a crucial role in national immigration and refugee policy debates for over 25 years. It has brought together on an affiliation basis diverse stakeholders, it counts national trade unions, business organizations and civil society groups as the mainstay of its participatory membership.²⁵

At the European regional level, Business Europe and the European Trade Union confederation issued a joint policy statement on migration as long ago as 1998.²⁶ In more recent times, they have actively contributed in parallel to European Union migration policy debate, for example through the European Economic and Social Committee mentioned above and in the Committee on Migration (CDMG) as well as Conferences of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Each of these regional networks of national constituent federations has permanent working groups addressing migration and integration issues.

Many voluntary agencies and service-oriented organizations have already a long history of making common cause with governments, through institutionalized cooperation, serving as implementing partners, and cooperating closely with legislators and government officials in drafting legislation and policy as well as in supporting and monitoring implementation of migration measures. National Refugee Councils and National Councils of Voluntary Agencies bring together from dozens to hundreds of local and national agencies in Western European and North American countries.

²² See EESC website opinion search page, use "migration" keyword for list with abstract and link to full text: http://www.eesc.europa.eu/documents/opinions/avis_en.asp?type=en

²³ Ireland: Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016.

²⁴ See National Immigration Forum website at: <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

²⁵ See website at: <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

²⁶ Reference citation to be added

Membership comprises immigrant and refugee service agencies that implement government funded immigrant reception, placement and orientation services, refugee resettlement, legal assistance, language training and other such activity. Entities such as Canadian, Danish, Dutch, UK and other national Refugee Councils²⁷ actively dialogue and lobby national administrations and parliaments to elaborate migration legislation and policy as well as a myriad of practical measures from determining refugee admissions to ensuring immigrant access to training programs and health care services.

5. Conclusions: the way forward

It is clear there is sufficient common interest and shared objectives on which to build alliances towards formulating a regulatory policy framework on international migration that meets the objectives of trade unions, civil society and business.

There is sufficient convergence on key policy elements to make common cause. The challenge is to devise processes to 'bring on board' all relevant stakeholders. This will be key to determine and carry out shared efforts of public education and advocacy to convince governments and populations to put a regulatory framework into law and practice.

There are, naturally, areas where the agendas of business and those of civil society diverge such as the role of international standards, extent and nature of labour market regulation, and rights of migrant workers, especially those under temporary schemes. These need to be signaled as topics where dialogue and negotiation will have to be especially carefully conducted. Finding common ground to act together also means not excluding partners by submerging or dismissing important components of their respective agendas.

The Civil Society discussion at the Global Forum on Migration and Development is an opportune place to highlight the need for this alliance building.

Alliances have to be built first at the national level, among actors willing to engage in dialogue and to work out sufficient agreement for common causes and common activities. Establishing national multi-stakeholder coalitions on migration policy will be an appropriate and important step in many

²⁷ For examples, see websites of Canadian Council for Refugees- <http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/engfront/frontpage.htm#> Danish Refugee Council- <http://www.drc.dk/about-drc/facts-about-drc/fo> . Dutch Refugee Council <http://www.opentext.com/download/livelinkdownload.html?path=/corporate/customer/casestudy/dutch-refugee-council-english.pdf> . Refugee Council (UK)- <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/about/>

contexts. The ILO tripartite forums exist in many countries. With regard to migration issues, they can be broadened to include civil society partners, especially migrants' associations. The National Migration Forum of the USA noted earlier shows how such a coalition, by finding common cause among its members on important issues can advance their common cause.

Strategic cooperation between business, trade unions and civil society might be the key to achieve in practice a migration policy regime that responds to needs of business and respects the rights and dignity of all migrants.