

**International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin
Labour Migration Academy**

Opening address

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International Labour Office, Geneva

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Onorevole Signore Fassino, Sindaco di Torino,
Mr Pastore, Director of FIERI,
Ms O'Donovan, Director of the Turin Centre,
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take great pleasure in welcoming you to the first Labour Migration Academy, a true milestone in the ILO's work in this field. The issue of labour migration has been important to the ILO for many years. Indeed, the first ILO Convention specifically addressing the question of Migration for Employment was adopted in 1949.

Most international migration today is linked to the world of work. In 2010, of the estimated total of 214 million international migrants, approximately one half were migrant workers – closer to 90 per cent if you include their dependants.

The fundamental principle behind the ILO's work on labour migration is that all workers – regardless of their contractual arrangements, whether in the formal or informal economy – are entitled to certain basic rights at work, and at least a minimum level of social protection. Migrant workers have the same needs as other workers, and the same aspirations for themselves and their families. They want to work in a safe and healthy environment, receive a decent wage, have access to health care, and ensure that their children are well nourished and have a good education. These needs and aspirations are not luxuries – they are the building blocks of everyday life, the future of families and the stability of communities and countries.

This is what motivates the ILO –

- to work to **protect** the interests of migrant workers,
- to work to improve the **governance** of international labour migration and promote effective regulatory policies in countries of origin, transit and destination, and
- to work on **labour migration and development**, going beyond the economic benefits of migrant worker remittances to look at the impact of skilled migration on countries of origin; on return migration and social and professional integration; and on the role of diasporas and transnational communities.

In Geneva, just two weeks ago, the 100th session of the International Labour Conference adopted a Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. This Convention marks another major step forward for equality as it will promote the protection of a particularly vulnerable group, namely migrant women *domestic* workers. The Conference also decided to consider a new ILO instrument on the extension of social protection to excluded populations, including migrant

workers. Both of these very recent developments underline the cross-cutting nature of labour migration and the priority which governments and workers' and employers' organizations are giving to these issues.

During the Academy, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the ILO's approach to labour migration, but also about the ILO's interaction with the work of other organizations. The Academy will give you ample opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices with resource persons and other participants from all over the world.

This Labour Migration Academy would not have been possible without the support of our partners. Here in Italy, our academic partners – FIERI in Turin and the European University Institute in Florence – are contributing their own expert staff and also supporting the participation of renowned experts in the field of labour migration. I am also delighted to note that representatives of the Global Migration Group – which

brings together 16 United Nations and other international agencies working on migration – will be joining us to share their invaluable perspectives, experience and expertise on labour migration.

Since over the next two weeks we will have the benefit of contributions by world-renowned experts on migration, and our participants will be bringing their own experiences from across the globe, this is a great opportunity for us all to learn from each other's knowledge, policies and practices.

A word here for Patricia O'Donovan, Director of the Turin Centre, and her predecessor François Eyraud – it is largely thanks to their inspired leadership and hard work that the Labour Migration Academy has come into being today. I know that with Patricia at the helm, the Centre will continue to go from strength to strength in a spirit of initiative and teamwork.

Though the Academy programme is intensive, I hope you will also find the time to establish friendships and valuable contacts to take home for your future work. And do be sure to enjoy this beautiful, historic city – after your daily sessions of course!

Finally, in the words of our Director-General, Mr Juan Somavia:

“Migrants are an asset to every country where they bring their labour. Let us give them the dignity they deserve as human beings and the respect they deserve as workers. They leave their country in search of Decent Work. This means work that will provide them with dignity, work that will provide stability for their family and work which will provide peace in their community.”

This is surely why you have all come here today. I wish you a truly fruitful Labour Migration Academy. Thank you for your attention.