



ILO Tripartite Technical Meeting on the Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market, Geneva, Switzerland, 5-7 July 2016

Speech by Genevieve Gencianos, PSI Migration Programme Coordinator

PSI is the global federation of public service trade unions. We represent workers at the frontlines responding to disaster situations, including services in the reception services and inclusion of displaced persons, migrants and refugees into society.

PSI very much welcomes the convening of this ILO Tripartite Technical Meeting, which comes at a time when the international community is facing an escalation of forced human displacement worldwide, with an estimated 65.3 million persons displaced globally the end of 2015, according to the UN HCR.

With developing countries hosting the bulk of the worlds' refugees and displaced persons, implication on access to jobs falls heavily on them. For the Guidelines to achieve its full effect and benefit, all countries must equitably share in the responsibility towards receiving and addressing the situation of refugees and displaced populations and address the root causes. Our work on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Social Protection Floors becomes even more urgent.

We all have the responsibility to protect refugees, respect human rights and uphold our humanity. We fully agree that decent work is the bridge between moving from humanitarian response to achieving development. This is an area where the ILO provides its competence. It is therefore critical that the ILO, with its tripartite constituents, is able to arrive with strong and authoritative guidelines. These guidelines must be based on the rights-based normative framework enshrined in human rights norms and labour standards.

But along with this, we would like to see that access to decent work is premised on the ability of refugees and forcibly displaced persons to access quality public services, such as health, education, shelter, utilities and social services, as well as their inclusion in social protection. All these are necessary in building self-reliance, well-being, empowerment and sustainable integration in society. Ability to receive and protect refugees requires adequately funded public services, with frontline workers having the capacity to deliver these services in safety and decent working conditions.

Thank you for your attention.