

Side Event #:
#67
Side Event Title:
The nexus between migration and the Right to Food: the case of migrant agricultural workers. "Insights from worrisome realities calling for urgent and effective policy responses"
Key speakers/presenters:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martha Elena Federica Bárcena Coqui, Ambassador of Mexico to the UN Agencies in Rome • Hilal Elver, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food • Grazia Valentino, Consiglio per la Ricerca in Agricoltura e l'Analisi dell'Economia Agraria (CREA) • Patrick Konde, Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) • Isabel Alvarez Vispo, Urgenci, CSM Coordination Committee member
Main themes/issues discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights from worrisome realities on the situation of migrant workers; • Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on agricultural workers; • The Mexican case study; • The situation of migrant workers in Italy; • The peculiar situation of vulnerability of women migrant workers; • Call for a commitment of the institutions for effective actions to address the issue.
Summary (Total 500 words maximum) - Please use the sub-headings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a paradoxical situation for agricultural workers who are of outstanding importance for food production but at the same time among the most food insecure in the world; • Human rights are indivisible and interconnected: workers have rights in relation to labor conditions, mostly developed within ILO, and also enjoy human rights more broadly Those rights cannot be separated; • Agricultural workers, and particularly migrant workers, face several barriers in achieving their right to food: 1) lack of living wages, formal labor contracts, and decent employment; 2) agricultural sector is particularly dangerous when the work implies the use of chemicals and pesticides: 3) lack of social protection; 4) work in conditions that foster discrimination, violence and exploitation. • In addition, migrants and undocumented workers suffer often from social exclusion, unpaid labor, restrictive movement, lack of access to justice, less bargaining power. Some international instruments like the International Convention on Migrant Workers could be an effective tool to face these issues, nevertheless, many governments are hesitant to ratify or implement these instruments. • The nexus between migration and right to food has many aspects: migration often results from food insecurity; and migration can result in increasing food insecurity; and food insecure communities have received considerable support through remittances of migrants abroad. In this sense, the issue of migration is of high relevance to the CFS. • The case of Mexico: Migration is a vast topic for Mexico, which is country of origin, transit and destination. The number of migrants from Central American to Mexico is growing. These workers come from rural area where they have no food security, access to employment, social services. -It is essential to address the causes of migration, not the effects. In the past, there

was a circular migration: workers would migrate for a season to go back to their home country afterwards. This dimension has been weakened and limited. It is important to recover it and to establish policies and agreements between countries pushing in this direction.

- The Italian case: the majority of agricultural migrant workers are men and women, who left their countries as victims of war, conflict, and repression. Many of them have a contract, but this contract is not respected. Contracting firms should provide appropriate accommodation, decent salary, working conditions, transport and services. However, these duties are often not met, and public policies fail to ensure the implementation of workers' rights. The lack of official data worsens the situation, making it impossible to have a real mirror of the reality.
- Results of a CREA/Action Aid research on the conditions of women agricultural workers in Puglia (Italy), show that the number of female migrant workers has doubled in the last years. A gender analysis of available statistics together with the field research show that the issues affecting migrant workers are worse when the workers are women. Women are increasingly engaged in agriculture but with poor or no contracts. Given the nature of the contracts they are offered (contracts covering less than 51 days), they cannot access basic welfare services and are exposed to higher risk of poverty than men. Moreover, their invisibility exposes them to gender violence and discriminatory behaviors.

Key take away messages

- Migration is often an effect of food insecurity, can increase food insecurity, but also can contribute to food security through remittances.
- Migrant workers' rights are human rights. Lack of ratification and implementation of existing instruments represent a major obstacle to the realization of human rights for workers and migrants;
- Public policies based on a human rights-based approach should support and offer a normative framework to migration. This way, migration can highly benefit everybody, the society and the migrants themselves;
- Special attention should be given to women migrant workers and their rights as women;
- Need for better monitoring processes and mechanisms at national and global level to ensure that working contract terms are in line with international standards and respected;
- It is important to rediscover the concept of circular migration and to acknowledge that migration has been an inherent part of human history, society and progress in all centuries and continents.