

CSW62 - High-level side event  
**How to fight migrant exploitation and trafficking  
by supporting workers' rights in the rural economy.  
The Italian Law against *Caporalato*.**

*Wednesday 14 March, 11:00-12.30 am  
Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations  
885 Second Avenue, 49<sup>th</sup> floor*



**Moderator:**

- ◆ Ms. Cornelia Richter, Vice President, IFAD

**Welcoming remarks:**

- ◆ H.E. Teresa Bellanova, Deputy Minister for Economic Development, Italy
- ◆ H.E. Khadija Abba Ibrahim, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Federal Republic of Nigeria
- ◆ Ms. Diyana Videva, Board member of the Alliance for Protection against Gender-based Violence, Bulgaria

**Panelists:**

- ◆ Ms. Chidi King, Director of the Equality Department, ITUC
- ◆ Ms. Alette Van Leur, Director of Sectoral Policies, ILO
- ◆ Mrs. Adwoa Sakyi, Regional Women's Coordinator International Union of Food and Agriculture Workers Africa (IUF)

**Q&A**

**Conclusions:**

- ◆ Susanna Camusso, Secretary-General CGIL, Italian General Confederation of Labour

## Concept paper

As highlighted in the Report by the Secretary-General, the challenges and opportunities faced by rural women and girls must be “*addressed in terms of realizing their rights to an adequate standard of living, to a life free of violence and harmful practices and to land and productive assets, food security and nutrition, education and health, inclusive of sexual and reproductive health and rights*”. The reality shows that millions of women worldwide, especially rural women, are subject to massive forms of exploitation and forced labour; are often trafficked and systematically denied their basic human and labour rights, including freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Italy has taken a crucial and exemplary step to crack down on the widespread exploitation of farm workers through the “*Caporalato system*” (Gangmasters), a widespread phenomenon characterised by a lack of contractual protection, exploitative working hours, harsh treatment and deplorable housing and working conditions.

In the Italian agriculture sector, around 430,000 workers every year are being employed through illegal intermediaries (*caporali*) and at least a quarter of these workers suffer from severe exploitation. The vast majority of them are migrant workers from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, India and Pakistan. Signing up for a “*caporale*” is often the only means of survival for a migrant worker who is then charged for access to work, transportation, accommodation, food, phone credits and so on. Living conditions can be dire with workers living in abandoned buildings or slums, lacking basic services. Remuneration is between 22 and 30 euros for a 10-12 hour day - less than half the legal minimum wage.

Italy banned the *Caporalato* system in 2011. Lawmakers were then pushed to tighten regulations in the sector after several workers lost their lives on farms in the summer of 2015, and especially thanks to the huge pressure put forward by trade unions who have always been at the frontline on this issue. On 18 October 2016, the new bill against gangmasters was finally approved by the Italian Parliament. The new legislation introduces innovative measures to eradicate the phenomenon, including sanctions imposed on employers, arrests in case of flagrante delicto, land requisition, enhanced protections for the victims, organised labour inspections and an integrated approach to punish and eradicate exploitation.

The Italian trade union organisations from CGIL, CISL and UIL have worked hard to achieve this extraordinary result that restores dignity to agricultural work and to those whose rights have been ignored and trampled upon in recent years. It is now crucial to monitor the correct implementation of this new legislation.

This Italian law against *Caporalato* represents a unique normative tool in the international panorama and, because of its peculiarity, many international organisations and institutions have shown their interest in it, especially in the aspects relating to the protection of migrant workers' rights and the fight against forced labour.

This side event will address the above-mentioned topics, presenting the most significant aspects of the Law and opening a debate with other stakeholders about human and workers' rights protection in the labour market. It will especially focus on the agricultural sector and on universal human and labour rights as essential conditions to achieve decent life and work for everyone, as well as democracy and peace worldwide.

The debate will be guided by the following questions:

1. *Can the Italian Law on Caporalato contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global review of SDG progress and inspire other countries to do the same?*
2. *How can a tripartite role of trade unions, employers and public institutions advance us toward the realization of the right to development, with a view to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development, in keeping with the Agenda 2030 objectives?*
3. *What are the possible actions to help victims?*