



International
Labour
Organization



Migrant workers are essential in care infrastructure around the world – especially in home-based and long-term care



Demographic, technological and environmental changes are transforming care systems – driving rapid growth in demand for care workers



By 2050, demand for long-term care will increase in the OECD countries by 1/3¹

Care systems face growing labour shortages

...partly driven by poor working conditions. Care workers remain largely undervalued, underpaid and under protected.



Domestic workers are care workers

At least

25%



of all care work is performed by domestic workers in private households²

80%



work in informal conditions

36%



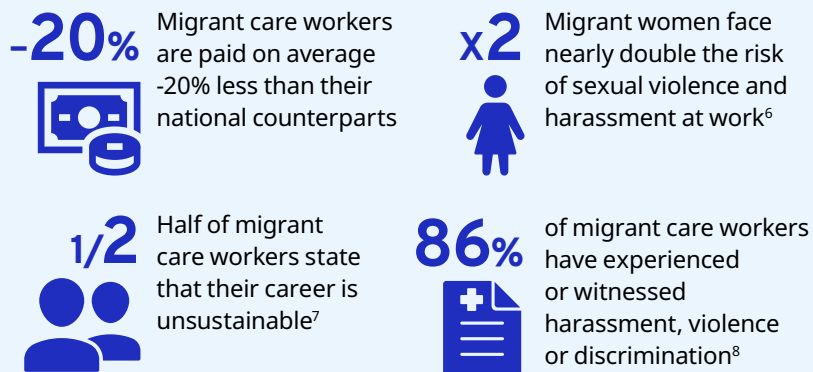
remain wholly excluded from labour laws

As shortages grow, reliance on migrant workers is increasing across countries, driving international recruitment



Protection gaps persist

Migrant care workers face discrimination, limited access to social protection, barriers to skills recognition, and high recruitment costs. Their migration often leaves care gaps in their families and communities of origin.



Systems are not fit for current or future needs

...but with the right investments – including in well-managed labour migration to match rising care demand with workers – the care economy can drive inclusive growth and job creation.



Sustainable care systems depend on decent work for care workers, including migrant workers. Building care systems for the future requires:



Legal and social recognition of care workers as essential to care infrastructure



Promotion of fair recruitment and rights-based labour migration governance



Expansion of labour and social protections for **all** care workers



Improving skills recognition, labour market matching and compensation



Strengthening the role of social partners and the inclusiveness of social dialogue mechanisms

1 OECD, 2024, *Is Care Affordable for Older People?*

2 ILO, 2021, *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects since the adoption of ILO Convention No. 189*

3 ILO, 2024, *ILO global estimates on international migrants in the labour force*

4 Calculated as foreign-born or foreign-trained. WHO, 2020, *State of the world's nursing*

5 ILO, 2024, *ILO global estimates on international migrants in the labour force*

6 ILO, 2022, *Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey*

7 UNI Global Union, 2025, *Fixing the care crisis: Stopping the staff exodus, building resilient care systems: A global survey of institutional health and care workers*

8 UNI Global Union, 2025, *Fixing the care crisis: Stopping the staff exodus, building resilient care systems: A global survey of institutional health and care workers*