



THE 4th ASEAN FORUM ON MIGRANT LABOUR

24-25 OCTOBER 2011, BALI, INDONESIA

The 4th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour was held on 24-25 October 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. Representatives of the governments, employers' and workers' organisations, and civil society organisations of ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Women, and the Task Force on ASEAN Migrant Workers (TFAMW) participated in the Forum.

The Forum provided a platform for information sharing and exchange of views on two enduring challenges identified in the ASEAN Declaration of the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, i.e. promoting understanding, rights and dignity of migrant workers in the receiving countries, and increasing return and reintegration support, as well as development of sustainable alternatives for migrant workers in the sending countries. Towards this end, the Forum also reviewed the implementation of the Recommendations of the 3rd ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour held on 19-20 July 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

The 4th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour was convened as an implementation of the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Programme 2010-2015 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint (Action Line C.2.ii) which called for a regular ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour as a platform for broad-based discussions on migrant labour issues under the auspices of the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW) which reports to the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM).

The participants agreed to recommend concerted actions to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers in the sending, transit, and receiving countries, which shall be gender sensitive, implemented in close cooperation among tripartite partners and civil society organisations, and applied to all migrant workers, as follows:

(a) Promotion of positive image, rights and dignity of migrant workers

1. Deliver comprehensive pre-departure education in sending countries, not only about culture and social norms, but also working and living conditions, reality of migration including financial implication, laws and procedures, rights of migrant workers, among others;

2. Conduct post-arrival orientation programmes in receiving countries, performed by the government, employers, trade unions, civil society, that adopts a rights based approach in orientating both migrant workers, employers and government – to understand what their rights and responsibilities are;
3. Raise awareness and build capacity of public and private recruitment agencies, local authorities and all stakeholders in sending and receiving countries in the delivery and monitoring of recruitment and placement services, and different forms of direct hiring of migrant workers to ensure greater protection of migrant workers' rights;
4. Collect and disseminate factual information through the media and other channels on the contributions of migrant workers to the economy and society in host countries (e.g. individual stories, economic and employment data, statistics on social impact) with the long term objective of promoting a positive image of migrant workers;
5. Carry out joint efforts in ASEAN Member States to present a positive image of migrant workers with various stakeholders e.g. migrant workers and their associations, academia, youth and student groups, tripartite parties, by using various means such as TV, commercials, exhibitions, radio talk shows, cultural performances, and the commemoration of International Migrants Day;

(b) Promotion of strategies for effective return and reintegration, as well as sustainable alternatives for migrant workers

6. Undertake a regional study on the programmes of skills trainings, pre-departure and post-arrival orientations, and return and/or reintegration support offered by ASEAN Member States;
7. Improve the availability of employment services to the returned migrant workers, including voluntary psychosocial counselling (before and upon return), gender sensitive reintegration, access to resources, and legal aid. Such services should also include information, advice, training, loans, placement, health, and interpretation/ translation service. These services should be made available/ extended to the family members of migrant workers left behind;
8. Provide incentives to the returned migrant workers, e.g. the absence of penalty for the irregular migrants, tax exemption of import duties for tools and equipment to be used by migrant workers;
9. Ensure as much as possible that mass/group deportation will not take place;
10. In case of mass returns of migrant workers in emergencies, contingency plans should be prepared at company and embassy levels with the participation of migrant workers. For this purpose,

assistance/contingency funds which cover repatriation costs need to be set up at national level. Formulation of national disaster preparedness plans shall be in consultation with and with the participation of migrant workers and migrant organisations;

11. Ensure that sustainable economic reintegration policies and strategies are evidence-based, market-demand/need based and gender sensitive;
12. Ensure that return and repatriation programmes are effective, sustainable, and rights based, and with the involvement of tripartite partners and civil society organisations;
13. Encourage a speedy development of an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers that includes the family members of all migrant workers in its coverage. The instrument shall comply with the international human rights and labour standards and be legally binding;
14. Set up of ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration;
15. Develop bilateral and multilateral agreements for portability of the social security benefits and better implementation of existing schemes;
16. Provide access to legal support and essential services, including consular services, for migrant workers and members of their families;
17. Recommend the following specific responsibilities and roles with respect to return and reintegration and sustainable alternatives for migrant workers:
 - (a) Responsibilities of sending countries:
 - Policies and strategies should be established to look after the return of migrant workers, e.g. "State Policy on the Reintegration of Migrant Workers";
 - Provide comprehensive training to migrant workers for preparation before return as a part of pre-departure orientation; and
 - Follow up/monitoring system of the returnees, particularly on their livelihood and reintegration.
 - (b) Responsibilities of receiving countries:
 - Prior to the return of migrant workers, receiving countries should have specific programmes for the returnee, e.g. training and introduction of entrepreneurship to migrant workers who are interested, counselling, among others;
 - Provision of proof of employment by the employers; and
 - Ensure that migrant workers receive decent wage and no unlawful wage deduction, decent and safe working condition and workplace environment, and compliance with international human rights and labour standards.

The participants agreed that the progress of implementation of these recommendations will be reported to the 5th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour in 2012. For this purpose, the tripartite partners and civil society organisations from each ASEAN Member State should make preparation for the reporting prior to the Forum.

The participants extended their appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for the excellent arrangements of the Forum and warm hospitality accorded to them.

The participants also congratulated the Government of Cambodia for its role as the incoming ASEAN Chair for 2012 and host of the 5th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour in 2012.
