



Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)

25 Matiyaga Street, Central District, Diliman, Quezon City 1100, Philippines

Telefax: (632) 2779484 • Mobile: (63921) 5405063 • E-mail: mfa@mfasia.org • Web: www.mfasia.org

STANDING MEMBERS

BANGLADESH

Association for Community Development (ACD); Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK); Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU); WARBE Development Foundation

BURMA

Federation of Trade Unions - Myanmar (FTUM)

CAMBODIA

Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD); CARAM Cambodia; Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW)

HONG KONG

Asian Migrant Centre (AMC); Coalition for Migrants Rights (CMR); Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU)

INDIA

Center for Education and Communication (CEC); Migrant Forum India (MFI); Center for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS); National Centre for Labour (NCL); Migrants Rights Council (MRC)

INDONESIA

Center for Indonesian Migrant Workers (CIMWI); Jamas Pekabumi; KOPBUMI; Migrant Care; Solidaritas Perempuan; Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI)

ISRAEL

Kav LaOved

JAPAN

Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan (SMJ)

KOREA

Joint Committee with Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK)

MALAYSIA

Migration Working Group Malaysia

MONGOLIA

Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)

NEPAL

All Nepal's Women Association (ANWA); Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC);

Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC); POURAKHI; Youth Action Nepal (YOAC); Migrants Center of

Asian Human Rights and Culture Development Forum (AHRCDF)

PAKISTAN

Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization

PHILIPPINES

Batis Center for Women; Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA-Phil); Kapisanan ng mga

Kamag-anakan ng Migranteng Mangagawang Pilipino (KAKAMMPI);

Karlungan Center Foundation, Inc. (KCFI); Unlad Kabayan Migrants

Services Foundation, Inc.; Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities

Initiative

SRI LANKA

Action Network for Migrant Workers (ACTFORM);

Migrant Services Centre (MSC); Women and Media Collective (WMC)

SINGAPORE

St. Francis of Assisi Workers' Center (SFA); Humanitarian Organization for

Migration Economics (HOME); Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2)

TAIWAN

Hope Workers' Center (HWC)

Hsinchu Migrants and Immigrants Services Center (HMISC)

THAILAND

Human Rights Development Foundation (HRDF)

Migrant Workers Rights Network (MWRN)

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Third Informal Thematic Session: International Cooperation and Governance of Migration in all its dimensions including at borders, on transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration Geneva, June 19-20, 2017 Palais des Nations Room XXIX

Ellene A. Sana

Migrant Forum in Asia

Intervention in Panel 1

(Texts in bold were portions read out in the oral intervention. The final paragraph however was not recorded as the time was up.)

Good morning Excellencies, other representatives from governments, civil society and observers.

Greetings from Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) - a regional advocacy network that works for the rights and dignity of all migrant workers from Asia and in Asia. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the discussions today on international cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions. My response will be in the context of Asian labor migration.

Men and women migrant workers are workers regardless of the jobs they fill in in the countries of destination - skilled, low or semi-skilled. It is the migrant workers who guarantee that economic activities in production and services go uninterrupted in the countries of destination. Migrant Workers contribute to economies of both countries of origin and destination

Workers do not cross international borders just because they are unemployed and underemployed in the countries of origin. For it to happen, it requires an equally strong pull from the countries of destination -such as acute shortage of local workers in certain sections of the economy, the changing demographics, the need for post-disaster rehabilitation; the need to build infrastructures for the hosting of games and sports etc and then satisfying the requirements for admission. Regrettably, these push-pull factors are exploited by unscrupulous recruiters, traffickers and smugglers to prey on the workers who are desperate for jobs. There is a strong presence of recruitment agencies in both the countries of origin and destination in Asia. Labor migration has become a multi-million dollar business in the region.

There were 77M Asian emigrants around the globe in 2013, it was up by 50% from 2000 figures. 16 Million lived in the Middle East, 14 M in North America and 13 M in Europe.

Asian migrant workers travel far and wide but the majority of them are in Asia. In 2014, 72% of new hired migrant workers from 7 countries of origin in Asia were deployed to the Gulf countries. This was 2% higher than in 2013. Majority of Asian migrant workers are in low-waged, semi or low-skilled jobs . Women, who are just as many as the men, remain concentrated in the service sector such as domestic work and carework.

Most Asian migrant workers stay in the countries of destination on per contract basis as temporary workers and are expected to return home to their countries of origin when the contract expires. They are not automatically eligible to permanent residency status, or provided with options for pathways to citizenship, that may somehow allow them freer mobility to change employers and to have a more secure legal status.

B. International cooperation, cooperation of States and partnerships with non-State stakeholders is crucial in effective governance of migration

Given the precarious profile of migrant workers in Asia, many countries of origin, like my country the Philippines, have put in place policies and programs to extend protection to their migrant workers. But these unilateral efforts are not enough, especially when the workers are still onsite.

In recent years, we have taken note of positive developments in the countries of destination as they start to openly acknowledge the valuable contribution of migrants to their economies and societies. In the region, bilateral and multilateral platforms such as the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue -the latter being an initiative of the UAE government, a major country of destination, are set up for exchange of information, sharing of knowledge, consultations and simply trust building. Even sub-regional forums like the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have opened up spaces for dialogue on labor migration.

Bigger than the regional platforms is the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) which came to Asia twice already in 2008 in Manila and last year in Dhaka and the High Level Dialogue on International Labor Migration.

While we welcome, value and recognize these governance platforms by States, we also take note that the living and working conditions of migrant workers and their families, especially the more vulnerable amongst them like the migrant domestic workers, the undocumented migrants, the children in the context of migration, have not changed that much through the years.

Perhaps this is because 1) the policies and programs for migrant protection are not effectively implemented; 2) nor are these coherent and aligned with each other; and, 3) where mechanisms

for monitoring and evaluation of the impact are absent or lacking; and, 4) many rights at work are violated particularly against migrant domestic workers.

Migrant Forum in Asia believes that States' interventions alone will not be enough too sufficiently and effectively respond to the issues even as we recognize their primordial role in the governance of migration because they are the primary duty bearers, and also because the process involves the crossing of international borders, **non-State actors like the migrant workers and their families, civil society organization, trade unions, the private sector, local government units among others have an important role to play too.** The role of UN and ILO agencies must be maximised too.

MFA is pleased to inform this body of the various initiatives of Asian civil society organizations in enhancing the capacities of migrants and their organizations and support groups which resonate strongly with efforts of governments such as Monitoring of and engagements where possible in the regional processes (ASEAN Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, SAARC); mainstreaming migration in local communities and government units with support from the UNDP Joint Migration and Development Initiatives; Campaign for decent work for domestic workers including the call for ratification of ILO C189; campaign for fair ethical recruitment including the call for the ratification of ILO C181 and ILO 2014 Protocol 29 against modern slavery and advocating for fair recruitment, with the participation of the private sector; Campaign for migrants rights and the call for ratification of the UN Migrant Workers Convention; Campaign on Access to Justice and assistance to distressed migrants; Rights-based Capacity Building for Migrants Rights Advocates to cite a few of these on-going advocacy campaigns. And of course in the GFMD, HLD and now the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Global Compact Processes even as **we continue and consistently engage with our respective national and local governments in the region.**

The concerns of migrant workers are multifaceted and therefore will require multiple and varied responses from governments and other stakeholders.

Let us stop working in parallels. Instead, let us work together, with a lot of good faith and readiness to allocate resources, so that the governance of migration will be one that will promote, protect and fulfil the rights and dignity of all migrant workers and their families. Thank you.