

## The Challenge



The International Labour Organization (ILO) has long been discussing the need for specific attention to domestic workers. Since 1936 and onwards, the International Labour Conference (ILC) has regularly called for standard setting for this kind of atypical workers. Numerous laws and legislations for workers had been passed in several countries but they all excluded domestic workers since for domestic work was always perceived as not a real form of employment. Due to this global notion, domestic workers are not protected with labour standards.

The ILO estimates the number of domestic workers globally as reaching up to 53 million with ages between 15 years old and above. This number does not account child domestic workers since surveys do not cover young workers below 15 years old. Despite efforts by ILO and other organizations, domestic workers are still considered servants expected to deliver service on demand, they are on call whenever needed by their employers. They are not protected with social security nor medical insurance. Domestic workers are exposed to extreme vulnerabilities based on the very nature of their occupation. They are employed in private households, living with employers family, isolated from their own family and network and hidden from public scrutiny.

In the Philippines, there around 1.9 million domestic workers working under affluent, upper middle class, middle class, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), and even average income families.

## The Response

The ILO launched efforts to uphold the rights of domestic workers including the Philippines. The Mobilizing Action for the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking (DOMWORK) project blazed the trail leading the establishment of a network of ILO's partners including non-government organizations, civil society organizations, the academe, the informal economy workers group, and faith-based organizations.

DOMWORK was aimed to focus on five key areas of action: pushing for laws, especially for domestic workers to be passed; studying and teaching more for the situation of the domestic workers to be understood; reaching out to domestic workers and empower them; enabling government people, workers, and employers to help domestic workers; and aiming for services that will lessen cases of domestic workers that are forced into labour or are trafficked while helping those who were abused.

Up until now, the ILO Country Office for the Philippines (ILO CO-Manila) implements efforts to uphold the rights of domestic workers by campaigning for the passage of Kasambahay Bill and ratification of ILO Convention 189 by the Philippine Government.

### Key Statistics

- At least 1.9 million workers, aged 15 years old and above, engage in domestic worker as their primary occupation in 2010.
- In 2010, the average daily pay received by domestic workers was Php 132.6 per day across the country; Php 176.2 per day in the National Capital Region; and Php 158.3 per day in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (CALABARZON) Region.

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## Strategies

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As mandated by law, the ratification process of ILO Convention No. 189 is always led by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). With the support of the ILO and the Technical Working Group (TWG), DOLE came up with an action plan with the goals of having Convention 189 ratified by first Quarter of 2012 and the passage of Kasambahay Bill, which aims to improve the working conditions of domestic workers in the Philippines.

### Relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations

- Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

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## Updates

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- In 2009, the network established through DOMWORK was revived and formalized into a TWG tasked to promote and campaign for an international labour standard for domestic workers. With the support of ILO CO-Manila and chaired by the Visayan Forum Foundation, the TWG on Decent Work for Domestic Work mobilized efforts and energies to promote the adoption of an ILO Convention.
- During the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the ILC, an international labour standard for domestic workers was adopted overwhelmingly by members of the ILC in Geneva last June.
- In October 2011, the TWG was tasked by the International Domestic Workers' Network to organize the Asia Regional Conference on "Advocacy towards the Ratification and Implementation the ILO Convention No. 189 and Recommendation No. 201 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers" from 24-26 October 2011. The regional conference was held in the Philippines because of the key role of the Philippine Government, trade unions, domestic workers' organizations, and civil society groups played in pushing the adoption of ILO Convention 189. The Philippine Government also committed to work hard to be one of the first countries to ratify the Convention.



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### Partners

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- DOLE
- Philippine Commission on Women
- National Anti-poverty Commission– Workers in the Informal Sector
- Employers Confederation of the Philippines
- Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
- Federation of Free Workers
- Alliance of Progressive Labor
- Migrants Forum in Asia
- Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines
- Samahan at Ugnayang Manggagawa ng Pilipinas
- Visayan Forum