

# VGCL Policy and Action Plan

## **Background**

The Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly organized a workshop in Hanoi on 20-21 November 2011 to identify the role of the trade unions in the promotion and protection of the rights of Vietnamese migrant workers as well as foreign migrant workers in the country.

An estimated 500,000 Vietnamese are working in more than 40 countries and territories around the world. The Government of Vietnam has a clear policy to promote labour migration as an employment generation and poverty reduction strategy. The VGCL has a mandate to deal with labour issues and initiate the development of labour laws in order to protect the interest and rights of workers, including migrant workers.

The workshop was hosted by the Policy Division of the VGCL, with the participation of union representatives from 10 provinces across Vietnam, and with the support of the ILO TRIANGLE project and the ILO Senior Specialist on Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) based in Bangkok. The 'Four Pillars', outlined in the "ACTRAV Trade Union Manual: In Search of Decent Work – Migrant Workers' Rights", served as a framework for the VGCL Policy and Action Plan on the Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Pillar (Rights-based approach)**

1. Participate in regular stakeholders' meetings at central and local levels to review the law, policy and regulations to better protect migrant workers throughout the migration process and to enable their successful return and reintegration;
2. Propose revisions of laws, policies and regulations (e.g. the Constitution, the Trade Union Law and the Law on Vietnamese Guest Workers) to comply with international standards (ILO Conventions 97 and 143, Convention 189 on Domestic Work, and the 8 core conventions), in consultation with the VGCL.
3. Promote trade union rights and extend protections to foreign workers in Vietnam, in line with the draft Trade Union Law and international standards.
4. Monitor the activities of licensed recruitment agencies and other recruitment actors by placing union representatives in the agencies and through the existing VGCL network at all levels.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> pillar (networking)**

5. Establish and strengthen bilateral cooperation with trade unions in major destination countries and territories with a high number of Vietnamese migrant workers through the development of a MOU and carrying out follow up activities;
6. Appoint local trade union contact persons in the major destination countries and territories to network with Vietnamese workers, the Vietnamese Embassy and the VGCL. The honorarium of these contact persons will be paid through a joint fund of the VGCL/ILO;
7. Hold regular meetings with the Department of Overseas Employment (DOLAB) and the Vietnam Association of Manpower Support (VAMAS) at central level, and local authorities to monitor migration processes and the situation of migrant workers;

## **3<sup>rd</sup> pillar (organising)**

8. Disseminate contact details of the trade unions in Malaysia and other destination countries to migrant workers and potential migrants as a source of information and support;
9. Provide information and support services to Vietnamese migrant associations in destination countries;
10. Organize return migrant workers into VGCL affiliates or new unions;

**4<sup>th</sup> pillar (training and advocacy)**

11. Participate in the monitoring pre-departure training of recruitment agencies;
12. Provide inputs to training modules, with a focus on English language, vocational skills, labour law and rights at work;
13. Organize capacity-building workshops for VGCL staff at provincial level with the participation of employment promotion centre and local authorities;
14. Disseminate information to potential migrant workers on safe migration and rights at work at local levels and on the VGCL website;
15. Deliver training and employment services for return migrants to enable them to smoothly reintegrate into society.