

Recommendation of the Philippines for the 18th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML)

“Accelerating Actions Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Safe Migration and Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN”

Different government agencies of the Philippines, civil society organizations, employers and workers representatives, and stakeholders, putting forward the recommendations of the 18th AFML as follows:

Generic

1. Ensure that all national programmes towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address migrant workers' and their families' needs, and recognize migrant's own agency in advancing their development to ensure that no one is left behind.
2. Disaggregate all data to measure SDG progress by migration status, gender, disability and other relevant variables to enable monitoring of and reporting on development impacts on women and men migrant workers.
3. Recognize the interconnectedness of SDGs and importance of addressing labor migration in a holistic manner including sustaining previous efforts in the following areas:
 - o Ensure migrant workers access to sustainable, gender-responsive reintegration support anchored on social protection
 - o Advance protection of migrant care worker to implement the recommendations from the 17th AFML
 - o Address emerging issues and challenges (e.g. trafficking into cyber scamming)
 - o Continue and strengthen whole-of-society approach through partnerships
 - o Ensure that labor migration information are presented in a language and format that are understandable and accessible to migrant workers.

Eradicating forced labour (SDG 8.7)

4. Revise labour migration policies to reduce migrant workers' dependency on their employers and vulnerability to forced labour by allowing migrant workers to change employers, to live outside their workplace, and leave their workplace during their day off in the case of live-in domestic workers. Prohibit withholding of migrant workers' wages, mobile phones, passports and other personal documents, and CCTV surveillance on workers and strictly enforce these prohibitions.
5. Ensure that all migrant workers enjoy full labour rights and social protection at par with local workers, regardless of sector of employment, including minimum one day off per week (minimum consecutive 24 hours), decent

working hours, wages (including addressing gender-wage gap) and living conditions, effective access to information and support services, and right to organize and bargain collectively. Ensure that employment contract are signed before departure and in a language understandable to the migrant worker, and strictly prohibit contract substitution upon arrival.

6. Address deceptive recruitment, including such leading to forced labour and forced criminality, through strictly regulating recruitment activities and agencies and enforcing these rules, including through monitoring of online recruitment;
7. Make forced labor a criminal offense and strictly enforce sanctions and ensure victim's access to legal remedy, support, and compensation.
8. Empower migrant workers through accessible information dissemination, education, awareness and predeparture orientation to prevent forced labor in vulnerable sectors, and upskill workers to access higher skill level employment opportunities.

Occupational safety and health (SDG 8.8.1)

9. Strengthen enforcement of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in migrant dominated sectors and guarantee migrant workers' access to OSH training and protective equipment.
10. Ensure that migrant workers in all sectors are covered and enrolled in social security systems, including employment injury benefit schemes and have continuity of care and effective access to benefits, including across borders. Effectively implement ASEAN Declaration and Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits for Migrant Workers to ensure payment of benefits across borders.
11. Ensure job retention for migrant workers who acquire injury through reasonable accommodation (e.g. accessible workplace) and retraining as needed.
12. Empowering migrant workers through availability of information on how to access support services.
13. Make sure that OSH management systems adequately address the adverse effects of climate change.
14. Improve data collection SDG indicator 8.8.1 (fatal and no-fatal injuries) and disaggregate the data by migratory status. Address barriers to migrant workers' accidents being captured in the data collection, such as underreporting of accidents of migrant workers.
15. Ensure protection of health, disability-related and other personal data of migrant workers to prevent discrimination while facilitating effective data collection.

Freedom of Association and collective bargaining (SDG 8.8.2)

16. Remove limitations in law and practice on migrant workers', including migrant domestic workers, freedom of association and collective bargaining to allow them to form, join and lead trade unions.
17. Support and encourage organizing of migrant workers by announcing -through various media, worker contracts and/or workplace signage- to migrant and national workers, trade unions, employers and government officials at local levels that workers of all nationalities have the right to organize and collectively bargain. Ensure that union busting or any discrimination against union leaders or members will not be tolerated.

Recruitment costs (SDG 10.7.1)

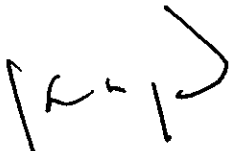
18. Prohibit charging of recruitment fees and related costs to migrant workers in line with International Labour Standards and good practice. Prevent recruitment agencies from charging or passing on excessive fees (e.g. training fees, medical check-ups) to migrant workers to circumvent placement fees regulations.
19. Reduce recruitment costs payable by employers by establishing clear and transparent cost structures and reducing costs of government documents required for migration (visas, passports, health clearances etc).
20. Integrate measurement of SDG indicator 10.7.1 (recruitment costs) into regular labour force surveys.
21. Agree on a joint ASEAN definition of "recruitment fee and related costs" in line with the ILO's definition of "recruitment fee and related costs."

Remittance costs (SDG 10.c)

22. Ensure migrant workers' financial inclusion and access to safe and affordable remittances services with transaction costs less than 3 per cent (in accordance with SDG 10.c), while aiming for lower using online and digital remittance channels.

Done on 4 September 2025, Pasig City.

Noted by:


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Secretary