

The 18th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour: “Accelerating Actions Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Safe Migration and Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN”

Thailand recommendations

18 August 2025

Subtheme 1. Safe and secure environments free from forced labour

1. Ensure that all national programmes towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) **address migrant workers’ and their families’ needs** and advance their development to ensure that no one is left behind Acknowledge migrant care workers at all levels including the semi-skilled level. Allow migrant care workers to do semi-skilled care work.
2. **Disaggregate** all data used to measure SDG progress **by migratory status, gender**, and other relevant variables. This will enable effective monitoring and reporting on development impacts for women and men migrant workers, while also ensuring that the data can be used to strengthen the protection of migrant workers and their families.
3. Revise labour migration policies to **reduce migrant workers’ dependency** on their employers and vulnerability to forced labour by allowing migrant workers to change employers and to live outside their workplace. Prohibit and enforce withholding of migrant workers mobile phones, passports and other personal documents and prohibit CCTV surveillance when it violates privacy of workers.
4. Ensure that **all migrant workers enjoy full labour rights** at par with local workers and social protection, regardless of sector of employment, including minimum one day off per week, decent working hours and wages, being insured under the Social Security Fund, effective access to information and support services, and right to organize and bargain collectively.
5. **Utilize digital technology** to ensure that migrant workers can **access information about their rights and entitlements**, including social security benefits. For example, enable migrant workers to use mobile applications—similar to those available for Thai workers—to check their social security status and other entitlements.
6. **Remove limitations in law and practice on migrant workers’ freedom of association**. Guarantee these rights to migrant workers without discrimination, whether they are employed under the MOU system or have had their status adjusted through Cabinet Resolutions. Ensure that they are able to form, join, and lead trade unions, and also recognize other forms of workers organization beyond trade unions.

7. **Devise labour migration policies**, particularly short-term policies governed by Cabinet Resolutions, that **ensure continuity of valid migration status and prevent disruptions to migrant workers' social entitlements and rights**, including access to health care, drivers' licenses, and banking services.
8. **Address deceptive recruitment practices**, including those that lead to forced labour and forced criminality by strictly regulating recruitment activities and agencies, and ensuring effective enforcement. This should also include regulation of online platform operators to monitor recruitment activities and tackle both domestic and cross-border deceptive online recruitment.
9. Improve **enforcement mechanism for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) legal frameworks** in sectors with a high concentration of migrant workers, such as agriculture and domestic work. Strengthen workers' capacity to assess and manage OSH risks, including understanding risks arising from climate change. Enhance OSH management systems to appropriately address the impacts of climate change.
10. **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, and that union busting or any discrimination against union leaders or members will not be tolerated.

Subtheme 2. Reduced recruitment and remittance costs

11. **Strictly enforce laws and policies regulating service fees and recruitment/registration costs**, and raise public awareness that fees charged by recruitment agencies in Thailand—whether for bringing in migrant workers or for registration/regularisation—should not be borne by migrant workers. Work towards prohibiting the charging of recruitment fees and related costs to migrant workers in line with international labour standards and good practice. For domestic workers, establish a dedicated migration channel that clearly recognizes domestic work as a formal occupation for migration by both origin and destination countries. This would also allow transparent regulation and effective monitoring of all related costs.
 - 11.1 **Reduce recruitment costs payable by employers** by focusing on lowering state-imposed fees and negotiating with countries of origin to reduce fees charged by them, such as passport fees. For regularization of migrant workers, a one-stop service model should be adopted to enhance convenience, reduce complexity and costs, and promote transparency.

- 11.2 Ensure migrant workers' financial inclusion and **access to safe and affordable remittances services** with transaction costs of less than 3 per cent, while aiming for lower using online and digital remittance channels.
 - 11.3 Reduce obstacles for migrant workers in conducting financial transactions, including opening bank accounts, and consider developing a guideline for bank staff when serving migrant workers as clients or consumers.
 - 11.4 Encourage banks to work together to reduce costs that affect transaction fees and to establish common standards for migrant workers' financial transactions.
12. Ensure that migrant workers have full freedom in deciding how to manage and send their remittances, and prohibit any mandatory remittance requirements imposed by any state actors.