



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”
Cambodia recommendations
21 August 2025

Subtheme 1: Safe and Secure Environments Free from Forced Labour

1. ASEAN member states should amend their policy frameworks, laws or regulations to allow migrant workers to change employers and have choices about where to live, while respecting workers' privacy, by prohibiting employers from retaining workers' mobile phones, passports and other personal documents.
2. Ensure that all migrant workers receive the same protection and promotion of labour rights, decent working conditions, social protection schemes, access to information (especially for women and people with diverse gender identities, disabilities), and support services as being foreign workers in the countries of destination.
3. Ensure that all migrant workers, regardless of their status, including children and their families in the context of migration, receive basic protection, social assistance, and education.
4. Ensure that all migrant workers have the right to join trade unions, associations, and participate in collective bargaining.
5. ASEAN Member States should establish policy/legal frameworks to prevent, regulate, and suppress all acts of fraudulent recruitment and placement of migrant workers.
6. ASEAN member states should strengthen mechanisms for labour supervision/inspection in hard-to-reach workplaces, such as establishing a diverse communication system and tools (language and means of communication) for migrant workers for report and assistance.
7. Identified workers that are forced to work in fraudulent places and scams, they should have the right and permit to stay and work.
8. ASEAN Member States should explore the visibility of, and consider ratifying, the ILO's Optional Protocol on Forced Labour.



9. Strengthen the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms on occupational safety and health (OSH) in sectors where migrant workers work by:
 - Establish a management and guidance system on occupational safety and health (OSH)
 - Incorporate this guidance and system into the pre-departure orientation training programme and ensure delivering the programme for workers before they departure.
 - Ensure comprehensive policies and strong enforcement to prevent forced labour practices in all sectors, including strengthening the labour inspection system, increasing penalties for violations and promoting stricter oversight of recruitment agencies and placement sites.
10. Empower migrant workers by connecting them to support services: Increase outreach to support services and receive workers' complaints more widely.
 - Establish and strengthen reporting systems, through anonymous online and digital channels, for reporting complaints of exploitation, labour rights violations and other challenges in ways that are transparent, confidential, safe and accessible. Provide victims with comprehensive protection, legal assistance and rehabilitation services to restore dignity and support reintegration.
11. Raise awareness among workers about their rights, health and safety at work (OSH): Raising awareness about their labour rights, the risks of forced labour, and mechanisms for seeking help and empowering workers with knowledge is a key factor in preventing exploitation.
12. Ensure that all migrant workers have access to health care insurance.
13. Promote multi-stakeholder cooperation: Encourage partnerships between government authorities, employers, trade unions, civil society organizations and international institutions to coordinate efforts against forced labour and promote decent and safe working conditions for all migrant workers.
14. Establishing and organising migrant workers, families, and communities with the purpose to maintain solidarity, represent, support each other's, and exchange migration information.
15. Remove restrictions in law and practice on the freedom of association and collective bargaining of migrant workers to allow them to form, join and lead unions.



16. Support and encourage the organization of migrant workers through various media platforms, employment contracts and/or workplace signage to local workers/migrant workers, unions, employers and local government officials that all workers, regardless of their nationalities, have the right to organize and bargain collectively and that union closures or any discrimination against union leaders or members should not be tolerated.

Sub-theme 2: Reduce recruitment and remittance costs

17. ASEAN Member States should work together to prohibit the charging of recruitment fees and related costs to migrant workers in line with international labour standards and employer-paid model best practices.
18. Employers should be responsible for the recruitment fees. Set clear and transparent fees for local recruitment agencies that can be charged to employers, and or companies in the countries of destination. To help this, the government should reduce the cost of documents for migration (visas, passports, health certificates, etc.).
19. Promote online money transfers and digital money transfers (e-wallets, Bakong, Bank transfers...) with low fees charge.
20. Provide information about transparent, low-cost, and secure money transfer fees, promoting the use of bank accounts for wage payments
21. Provide financial literacy and know how to deposit and transfer money into bank accounts, promote digital literacy including the use of mobile applications for migrant workers.
22. Foster cooperation among relevant institutions in facilitating easy, low-fee, and secure money transfer systems, including integration of information on deposit fees and financial and digital literacy in the Pre-Departure Orientation Programme and sessions and deliver it for migrant workers before leaving to work abroad.



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”

**Lao People's Democratic Republic recommendations
29 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. Based on SDGs, there is a need for workers to have access to skills development, increased income, and improved security and quality of life. In this context, recognize the value of care work performed by migrant workers and their families as an essential component of social and economic development, and promote its inclusion in ASEAN policy frameworks.
2. Disaggregate all data to measure SDG progress by migratory status, gender and other relevant variables to enable monitoring of and reporting on development impacts on women and men migrant workers.
3. Revise and Improve labour migration policies to reduce migrant workers' dependency on their employers and vulnerability to forced labour by allowing migrant workers to change employers (employer can be changed through an agreement between both worker and employer) and to live outside their workplace. Prohibit the withholding of migrant workers' mobile phones, passports, and other personal documents, as well as the installation of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) or other surveillance cameras in private areas
4. 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, decent working hours and wages, effective access to information and support services, and right to organize and bargain collectively. If a worker agrees to forego a weekly rest day or a day off on official national holidays, the employer must provide compensation in accordance with the labour law of the host country.
5. Manage deceptive and fraudulent recruitment, including such leading to forced labour and forced criminality, Breaches of contract, through strictly regulating recruitment activities and agencies and enforcing these rules, including through monitoring of online recruitment. Workers compelled to perform illegal activities must not be subject to criminal penalties. Attention should be given to labour inspection, the monitoring of working conditions, and the effective, efficient, and accessible implementation of grievance mechanisms for all workers, ensuring accessibility regardless of gender or the diverse circumstances of migrant workers.



6. Strengthen enforcement of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards in migrant-dominated sectors and guarantee migrant workers' periodic access to OSH training, reflecting new tools and protective equipment. Ensure that migrant workers in all sectors are enrolled in employment injury benefit schemes covering occupational disabilities, with effective access to benefits across borders, or alternatively through subsidies under the host country's social security system. OSH management systems must also adequately address the adverse effects of climate change.
7. 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 and record data on assistance provided of such cases.
8. Remove limitations in law and practice on migrant workers' freedom of association and collective bargaining to allow them to form, join and lead trade unions. Eliminate gender-based discrimination and ensure the freedom to form mutual aid groups, in case where there is no legal recognition in the host country. Governments must eliminate all gender-based discrimination against the migrant workers in the Labour law, In accordance with international conventions.
9. 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.

Subtheme 2. Reduced Recruitment and Remittance Costs

10. Prohibit charging of recruitment fees and related costs to migrant workers. The employer must bear all responsibility in line with International Labour Standards and good practices.
11. Reduce recruitment costs payable by employers by establishing clear and transparent ceilings for fees that recruitment agencies can charge to employers and reducing costs of government documents required for migration (visas, passports, health clearances etc).
12. Include measurement of SDG indicator 10.7.1 (recruitment costs), and also consider including monitoring of SDG indicators under SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) in regular labour force surveys.



13. Ensure migrant workers' financial inclusion and access to safe and affordable remittances services with transaction less than 3 per cent (in accordance with SDG 10.c), while aiming for lower using online and digital remittance channels. Integrate financial literacy curricula into training provided by Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers, recruitment agencies, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that serve migrant workers

- Provide free financial management knowledge and skills (financial literacy) to migrant workers before and after migration.
- Implement policies to ensure migrant workers have access to low-interest loans to cover preparation and travel expenses.
- Governments must strengthen cooperation between countries of origin and destination to protect migrant workers and ensure regular migration. Such cooperation should avoid encouraging irregular migration channels, ensuring remittances are sent through legal means to the home country.

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”
Myanmar recommendations
28 August 2025

Subtheme 1. Safe and Secure Environments Free from Forced Labour

1. ASEAN Member States should implement the 5 June 2025 [Resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar](#) and strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to eliminate forced labour, ensuring gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches.
2. Destination countries must guarantee migrant workers’ rights to retain their identity documents, access safe accommodation, access means of communication, and receive protection from practices that may lead to exploitation or isolation.
3. Return and repatriation processes of migrant workers must be voluntary, safe, dignified, and consistent with international human rights standards, including the principle of non-refoulement.
4. Establish accessible, safe, independent, and gender-responsive grievance mechanisms, free from interference by state or non-state actors, with strong protection against retaliation.
5. Governments should ensure equal pay for work of equal value and address wage disparities, especially in border regions and women-dominated sectors such as domestic work and other forms of care work.
6. ASEAN Member States must fully respect and implement International Labour Standards, particularly on fundamental rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, ensuring that migrant workers have the legal right to form, lead and join trade unions.
7. Ensure meaningful engagement with civil society organizations, trade unions, grassroots groups, and women migrant workers’ associations in policy development, monitoring, and implementation.
8. Employers and governments should strengthen occupational safety and health (OSH) through training, enforcement of OSH standards, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), and effective labour inspections.
9. All migrant workers, regardless of legal status, should have access to social protection, health services, and portable social security benefits across ASEAN.
10. Governments should improve labour migration data collection, analysis, and sharing through systems such as the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS), ensuring accuracy, accountability, and transparency for evidence-based policymaking.

Myanmar recommendations

Subtheme 2: Reduced Recruitment and Remittance Costs

11. ASEAN should promote and implement zero-recruitment fee policies in line with ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, ensuring that employers and licensed agencies bear the costs of recruitment, training, language courses, and pre-departure orientation.
12. Governments must strengthen monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies, publicly disclose non-compliant actors through accessible digital platforms, and provide migrant workers with transparent information to make informed choices.
13. ASEAN Member States should reduce remittance transfer costs to below 3% in line with SDG 10.c, and expand safe, accessible, and affordable digital transfer channels, including in rural and border areas.
14. Migrant workers must have access to inclusive and gender-responsive financial services that protect their savings, enhance financial resilience, and support investment in their communities.
15. Governments, employers, and financial institutions should expand financial literacy and digital financial skills training for migrant workers and their families, enabling them to use emerging technologies safely, reduce risks of fraud, and strengthen household financial security.

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”

Philippines recommendations 4 September 2025

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:
 - Ensure migrant workers access to sustainable, gender-responsive reintegration support anchored on social protection
 - Advance protection of migrant care worker to implement the recommendations from the 17th AFML
 - Address emerging issues and challenges (e.g. trafficking into cyber scamming)
 - Continue and strengthen whole-of-society approach through partnerships
 - 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.

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.