Introduction to the 11th AFML theme

“Digitalisation to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN”

11th AFML Preparatory meeting
TRIANGLE in ASEAN
ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
11th AFML: Overview & Objectives

• 11th AFML; 29 – 30 October 2018; Singapore;

• Theme: “Digitalisation to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN”
  – Sub-theme 1: Digitalisation of migrant labour management,
  – Sub-theme 2: Digital services to migrant workers

• Singapore 2018 ASEAN Chairmanship theme “Resilience and Innovation”
Digitalization: Great opportunities

- In 2016, the Asia Pacific region was home to more than half of the world's internet users.
  - 44 % of the population use internet.
  - 58 % of websites accessed through mobile phones.

- Online networks can provide continuous access to support and peer-to-peer advice.

- Programmes created (by government and non-government) to strengthen migration management.

- Services provided to migrant workers through information, communication, and technology.
Digitalization: Challenges

• Technological gains are not distributed equally!

• There are many migrant workers, and prospective migrant workers, who have **no access to technology**, or who **cannot use it in a meaningful way** to protect themselves.

• **Sectoral and gender differences** in access to technology, for example:

  – **Migrant domestic workers** in Thailand and Malaysia rely heavily on mobile phones for information and contact with the outside world, but employers may restrict their use of phones (ILO, 2016).

  – Many **migrant construction workers** in Thailand have access to internet and smart phones with applications such as Line and Viber. However, many women mentioned that only their husbands or sons knew how to use the technology. (ILO, 2016.)
Digitalization: Challenges

• Ensuring **quality of online services and information** requires oversight.

• Laws are not clear on collection and use of **migrant workers personal information and bio data**. Accountability and responsibility?

• **Contracting private firms to manage systems for public service** involves risks that need to be regulated.

• **Costs** of new digital services should not be borne by migrant workers.

✓ **It is important for the AFML to discuss how to best manage digitalization so that it benefits all migrant workers.**

✓ **Note:** Most migrant workers in ASEAN still rely on offline information and services provided through informal channels!
Sub-theme 1: Digitalisation of migrant labour management

Initiatives in AMS that leverage technology in managing migrant labour, such as:

• e-governance systems for migration management;
• digital tools for law enforcement;
• regulating occupational safety and health.
Examples: E-governance of migration

• Systems can include **online migration management systems**; pre-departure orientation; repositories for contracts; systems for welfare fund contributions; online complaints mechanisms; etc.

• For example, Philippines Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Electronic Case Registry and Response System (e-CARES)
Examples: The Philippines OWWA e-CARES

Philippines Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)
Electronic Case Registry and Response System (e-CARES)
Examples: Enforcement, referrals, re-hiring

• **Platform to register and monitor recruitment agencies:** Identify where issues with recruiters and where such recruiters have (or have had) sanctions against them; Operationalized black lists for recruiters;

• **Connecting service providers:** Apps that map and connect service providers, providing ability for service providers to identify and connect with each other to ease referral of services – emergency, health, shelter etc.

• **Online recruitment platforms** that connect migrant workers and potential employers.
  – For example, *“We are Caring”* online recruitment platform for domestic workers in Hong Kong; transparent e-systems for documentation; no loans or salary deduction.
Sub-theme 2: Digital services to migrant workers

Efforts in AMS to enable migrant workers access to digital support services including:

• comparing and making informed decision on choice of recruitment agencies;
• support and information through connecting migrant workers;
• direct services and advice, including on financial issues, remittances, complaints;
Examples: Compare services

- Platforms that enable migrant workers **compare costs** of services to make informed decisions.

- For example, **SaverAsia** supported by ILO’s TRIANGLE in ASEAN.

- Helps migrant workers **compare remittance costs** to find best rates and money saving options.

- Database of **financial services** such as savings, payments, credit, and, insurance products, and **local support organizations**.
Examples: Rate and review

- Platforms that provide the ability to provide **reviews, and/or ratings of migration experiences** and/or actors, including recruiters and employers.

- For example, **ITUC Recruitment Adviser Platform**.

- Lists thousands of agencies in Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, etc.

- Allows workers to comment on their experiences, rate recruitment agencies and learn about their rights.
Examples: Connecting and membership

**OFWWatch, The Philippines**
- App using Facebook login to create profiles;
- Connects Filipino workers with nearby OFWs, and alerts them of anyone in trouble.

**HomeNet, Thailand**
- Member organization that runs a network of informal and domestic workers;
- Uses the Line as a platform to facilitate peer-to-peer networking.
Some questions for consideration

• How to maximize the benefits and potential of digitalization for protection of migrant workers?
  
  – How to promote women and men migrant workers’ access to technology and ability to meaningfully use technology to protect themselves in all economic sectors?
  
  – What digital services and management systems can enhance protection of women and men migrant workers’ rights in ASEAN?

• How to manage and regulate the risks related to digitalization?

  – How to regulate online services to ensure quality and transparency?
  
  – How to regulate collection, storage and use of migrant workers personal information and bio data to ensure protection of their privacy?
Thank you!

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