



# Decent Work for All

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## A trafficker falls, nightmare ends for trafficked sisters

By Robert Larga, Going back – Moving on:  
Economic and Social Empowerment of Migrants Project Coordinator

Determined to augment their parents' income, Anna and Marie (not their real names) flew to Malaysia to work as food servers. They were easily convinced upon learning that they can earn Php12,000, which means a lot for their family struggling to make both ends meet. However, things did not happen as expected. They were sold and forced to work as domestic helpers without getting any pay for several months. Anna and Marie were just two among the 2.5 million people around the world stuck in forced labour situation as a result of trafficking.

In February 2011, the recruiters of Anna and Marie were convicted for violating Republic Act No. 9208 or the Philippine Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 and Republic Act No. 8042 Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. A trial court in Zamboanga City imposed a penalty of 28 years of imprisonment and a fine of Php 1.25 million against the accused, making it the first ever conviction on trafficking for forced labour in the country.

"Migrants are less vulnerable when they are not moving out of necessity but out of choice," said Director Lawrence Jeff Johnson of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office for the Philippines. "Special attention is required to vulnerable migrants such as those in irregular status and women who often face discrimination and abuse. Radical measures must be made to arrest recruitment malpractices. Protection and support services must be available and accessible. Reintegration is also crucial but often overlooked. It is important to ensure that migrant workers can return safely and happily to their families," said Director Johnson.

The ILO condemns trafficking and forced labour, and sees the importance of addressing the issue through respect for labour standards, reducing vulnerabilities and tackling recruitment malpractices. While the Philippines has made significant progress in investigating and prosecuting trafficking for sexual exploitation, little headway is made with respect to trafficking

A domestic helper tells her story about being a victim of human trafficking. The ILO works with partners and advocates to combat forced labour and human trafficking, including factors and conditions that give rise to it. (Photo by ILO/J. Fortin)

for labour exploitation such as forced labour, involuntary servitude and debt bondage, as in the case of sisters Anna and Marie. Many of similar cases are viewed largely as contractual violations which could result only in civil and not criminal liabilities. The ILO is collaborating with Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) in crafting guidelines that will further clarify the labour exploitation aspects of trafficking. The said guidelines aim to help law enforcers and prosecutors identify trafficking for labour exploitation and distinguish it from other offenses.

The ILO also previously extended support to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), co-chair of the IACAT, in developing a national referral system to coordinate and facilitate service delivery and an anti-trafficking database that keeps track of reintegration assistance to victims and survivors. The database also monitors the progress of investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases.

## Child labour monitoring system in Bukidnon

By Sol Ebarle, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour Provincial Coordinator for Bukidnon

Local government, farm workers, sugar millers and planters organizations agreed to establish a child labour monitoring system in Bukidnon. An estimated 50,000 hectares of sugar farms in Bukidnon provide employment to thousands of families in the province.

The child labour monitoring system will cover plantation areas and small farms in Bukidnon. It will help identify child labourers in sugar farms and refer them to agencies assisting child labourers. Monitoring will include finding and identifying child labourers and providing alternatives to save them from abuses and hazards at work.

The agreement was based on the discussion of representatives from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Sugar Industry Foundation, Inc. (SIFI), Crystal Employees Union, District Tripartite Council, Bukidnon Sugar Company, Crystal, Sugarcane Growers Association and Bukidnon Integrated Planters Association to monitor child labour in Bukidnon.



A child labourer in a sugar cane plantation in the Philippines. (Photo by ILO/J. Fortin)

It was part of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) workshop held on 21-24 February 2011 in Cagayan de Oro City.

There are 649 children working in sugar farms based on a recent IPEC survey covering 13 barangays, two municipalities and two cities, there are 649 children working in sugar farms. The child labour monitoring system will provide an effective way to monitor sugar farms, considering that DOLE has limited number of inspectors.

The child labour monitoring system will provide an opportunity to regularly share information including required level of management among organizations, child labour advocates and IPEC project partners. It will also help develop a sustainable mechanism to check child labour cases.

Information based on direct and on-the-spot observations will be used to document child labour trends in the sugar industry. Policy makers can also use available information to identify root cause and to take appropriate action. This includes the Sugar Mill District Tripartite Council, National Sugar Tripartite Council and the Sugar Industry Foundation.

## ILO and EU join hands for overseas Filipino nurses

By Robert Larga, Going back – Moving on: Economic and Social Empowerment of Migrants Project Coordinator

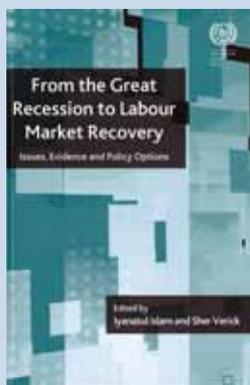
The International Labour Organization (ILO) will implement a three-year technical cooperation project, “Promoting Decent Work Across Borders: A Pilot Project for Migrant Health Professionals and Skilled Workers”. The project will be funded by the European Union through its thematic programme on migration and asylum.

The project aims to assist migrant health professionals. It will develop pilot schemes on online registration, skills testing and certification, preparation and counseling, placement for European employment, and their re-employment upon return. It will also help improve data collection and analysis of labour market information on the demand and supply of professionals and skilled personnel

in health care in the EU, alternative destination countries and the employment prospects among participating countries. Moreover, it will foster policy dialogues to determine ways of ensuring effective implementation for the mutual benefit of both sending and receiving countries.

The project will be implemented in the Philippines and India, being among the Asian countries with high number of health professionals migrating for work in the EU. There are also plans to replicate the project in Viet Nam towards the later stage. The ILO, through the new project, will work with labour ministries and other institutions dealing with nursing and healthcare profession.

### Must reads



**From the Great Recession to Labour Market Recovery. Issues, evidence and policy options**

5 April 2011

The book, co-published with Palgrave Macmillan, provides a global overview, interpreting the causes, consequences and policy responses to the Great Recession from the perspective of both developing and developed countries.

5 April 2011

7-8 April 2011

[www.ilo.org/publications](http://www.ilo.org/publications)

### Calendar

**Child Labour Press Conference and National Child Labour Committee (NCLC) Meeting, Quezon City**

**Roundtable on Greening of the Labor and Employment Agenda 2011-2016 and the Philippine Jobs Pact**  
Quezon City

**Freedom of Association for Women in Export Processing Zone, Makati City**

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**ILO Country Office for the Philippines**

19th Floor, Yuchengco Tower RCBC Plaza 6819 Ayala Avenue  
1200 Makati City, Philippines • Tel: +63 2 580 9900 • Fax: +63 2 856 7597  
Email: [manila@ilo.org](mailto:manila@ilo.org) • Website: [www.ilo.org/manila](http://www.ilo.org/manila)