



11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour

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

National Tripartite Preparatory Workshop

4 September 2018; Hotel Jen, Manila, Philippines

A. Background

The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) is an open platform for the review, discussion and exchange of good practices and ideas between governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and civil society on key issues facing migrant workers in Southeast Asia. Each year the forum develops recommendations to advance the implementation of the principles of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

The 11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour will be held on 29-30 October 2018 in Singapore. It will be hosted by the Government of Singapore as the current chair of the ASEAN and the *ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers* (ACMW).

In line with Singapore’s 2018 ASEAN Chairmanship theme of “Resilience and Innovation,” the 11th AFML will focus on **digitalisation to promote decent work for migrant workers in ASEAN**. To ensure that discussions will be focused and targeted, the 11th AFML will be further scoped into two sub-themes:

- Theme 1: Digitalisation of migrant labour management
- Theme 2: Digital services to migrant workers

National tripartite preparatory workshops for the 11th AFML will be held in several ASEAN Member States (AMS) to take stock on the progress of stakeholders in implementing the previous AFML recommendations and to discuss the themes of the 11th AFML. These meetings are supported by the ILO’s TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme, which is a partnership between the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the GAC and the ILO.

B. Rationale

The 11th AFML with the theme “*Digitalisation to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN*,” is being organized to support the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of Rights of Migrant Workers (Cebu Declaration).

Digital technology continues to expand and integrate the world in new and innovative ways. It can also play a significant role in advancing decent work and the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. Used properly, technology can enhance migrant workers’ agency to make more



informed decisions and better understand their rights. For instance, digital technology can be used to: provide online platforms for reviewing and rating recruitment agencies or employers; connect workers to each other to enable sharing information or advocating collectively; increase information and access to resources and services, including legal redress; as well as improve and increase transparency of data and information for migrants, employers, and other stakeholders.¹ Many governments are also setting up digital platforms for migration management and providing services. Such services may include online pre-departure training to migrant workers, as well as issuance of smart cards that provide social insurance and other services and benefits to migrants upon departure, in country of destination, and upon return. In addition, helpful apps are being developed to allow workers to seek assistance or report workplace safety breaches, and to aid the work of labour inspectors.

While technology can provide many advantages, there are also risks and limitations. Digital technology brings challenges with confidentiality, privacy, and data protection. Additionally, access to digital technology may be limited in some areas, for instance in countries facing low internet connectivity or less-advanced financial systems, or for specific populations, for example based on income-level or gender. Migrant workers may also face unique challenges, such as barriers to keeping mobile phones in work environments or less access to technology and the internet in destination countries.

Leveraging digitalisation to protect the rights of migrant workers and promote decent work requires an improved understanding of digital technology as well as an improved understanding of the rapidly changing world of work and the future of work.

C. Objectives

The AFML national tripartite preparatory workshops will be organized in order to:

1. Take stock of stakeholders' progress in implementing the recommendations of previous AFMLs;
2. Discuss the 11th AFML theme and sub-themes as well as prepare national recommendations on how to utilize digitalisation to promote decent work for migrant workers in ASEAN as duly endorsed by national tripartite partners
3. Develop a report or set of positions that the AFML delegates can use at the 11th AFML

D. Participants

Each AFML preparatory workshop should include representatives from:

- Government ministries responsible for labour migration and domestic work
- Employers' organizations, including affiliates of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers
- Workers' organizations, including affiliates of the ASEAN Trade Union Council
- Civil society organizations, including the Task Force for ASEAN Migrant Workers
- International organizations, including ILO, IOM and UN Women
- Other participants as deemed appropriate

¹ Farbenblum, B.; Berg, L.; Kintominas, A. 2018. *Transformative Technology for Migrant Workers: Discussion Paper for Global Convening, 13-14 February 2018*. (Sydney, Open Society Foundations, UNSE Sydney, University of Technology Sydney).