



Philippines National Recommendations for the 11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour

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

4 September 2018, Hotel Jen, Manila, Philippines

The National Preparatory Meeting for the 11th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (11th AFML) was convened on 04 September 2018 in Manila, Philippines, with the theme **“Digitalization to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN.”**

It was attended by 51 participants representing government agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), employers group, workers group, academe and private recruitment agencies.

During the workshop the following sub-themes and corresponding recommendations were discussed and agreed upon, respectively:

Sub-theme 1: Digitalization of migrant labor management

The consultation meeting/workshop examined the initiatives in the AMS **to leverage technology in managing migrant labour, such as e-governance systems for migration management, digital tools for law enforcement and regulating occupational safety and health.**

The discussion yielded the following recommendations:

1. Sharing of country experiences on digitization of information, migration management, practices and standards;
2. For DOLE to ensure that all bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) shall include the a provision allowing OFWs free use and handling of their own cellular phones and to keep their passports, similar to the Philippines-Kuwait BLA;
3. Map existing digital tools, identify common points, and connect existing migrant support mechanisms, including migrant support group apps, to government platforms. These mechanisms/platforms shall be enhanced to be able to validate migrant worker concerns;
4. For governments to commit to the use of technology for labor governance and enhancing worker protection and intensify information dissemination of existing tools and platforms that provide assistance to migrant worker concerns;
5. To utilize digitalization as part of future of work which would result in more efficiency and productivity;
6. Uphold the potential of ICT to change mindsets for the benefit of workers;
7. For governments to use ICT as a rational justification to go paperless and to contribute to the greening of employment and disaster risk reduction;
8. For government agencies to enhance interconnectivity of existing digital platforms which would share workers’ basic information for easy reference and data management;
9. Use of ICT to enhance social protection; and
10. AMS need to strengthen programs using technology.

Group 1 Workshop Output:

1. *Map the existing digital tools and identify common points.*
2. *All BLAs should include the provision in the Philippines-Kuwait BLA regarding the free use and handling of cell phone and passports of the OFWs.*
3. *Government agencies to identify a common entry point which will contain the workers basic information and filters which information reaches a certain agency.*
4. *Connect existing migrant support groups to the government platforms.*
5. *Intensify information dissemination of the existing tools/platforms.*
6. *Strengthen the mechanisms on validating the concerns of migrant workers.*

Sub-theme 2: Digital services to migrant workers

The consultation meeting/workshop focused on efforts in the AMS to enable migrant workers' access to digital support services, including comparing and making informed decision on choice of recruitment and remittance channels.

The discussion yielded the following recommendations:

1. To maximize and develop appropriate and migrant worker friendly Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to better protect migrant workers' rights and their families by improving the efficiency of services and enhancing the protection of migrant workers in labour migration management;
2. Engage public-private partnerships (i.e. partnership with telephone companies), in developing a one-stop mobile application/or OFW sim card with user-friendly and simplified interface that provides basic information on government services, helplines/help desks, payment and remittance functions, etc.;
3. Migrant workers should have right to information and communication. They shall be allowed to possess their own mobile phones and other ICT gadgets.
4. ASEAN Member States need to acknowledge that workers should not pay for the cost of digitization;
5. Ensure user-friendliness of services and allow feedback from users;
6. To enable workers to use [the power of] digitalization to access employment, re-skilling, up-skilling and ASEAN standard certification programs; should not lead to loss of employment;
7. AMS take to safeguard the use of ICT and respect worker's data privacy and misuse of data to restrict mobility, rights, etc.;
8. ICT to enable worker financial literacy and economic inclusion and mapping investment opportunities for migrant workers.

Group 2 Workshop Output:

1. *Each app addresses different issues and systems hence there is a need to integrate the reporting mechanism*
2. *The interagency network and coherence of rules*
3. *Making aware of the guidelines to the workers through technology*
4. *Utilization rate of apps similar to the utilization of FB*
5. *One-stop app that houses all migrant issues and concerns and directly linked it to the concerned offices/agencies*

6. *User-friendly, practical, and simplified interface*
7. *Collaboration with telcos on the design and implementation of one-stop shop app while representing employee-employer governance*
8. *The database linkage with POEA, POLO, BI and LGUs*
9. *Verify and accuracy of data against trolls, fake news*
10. *ChatBots*
11. *Financial inclusion that accepts payment and remittances*