



## Lao PDR National Recommendations for the 13th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour

23 October 2020

*Supporting migrant workers during the pandemic for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community*

### **Sub-theme 1: Impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers and responses in ASEAN**

- Extend healthcare benefits to all migrant workers, including migrant workers migrate within and outside the country as well as the migrant worker with irregular status.
- All relevant sectors to disseminate accessible information to all migrant workers to know about legislation, regulations and method on self-protection; there must be harmony between the migrant workers information service and the law enforcement.
- Draft and develop a gender inclusive crisis preparedness and response plan for migrant workers, covering support to stranded regular and irregular migrant workers in origin and destination countries.
- Extend social protection/support for migrant workers, including regular and irregular migrants and workers in informal sectors or jobs and enable portability of social protection benefits.
- Ensure migrant workers are able to access to social protection schemes on return to their country, in order to link the country of origin and destination.
- Encourage job retention, remote/flexible arrangements, alternative employment, job creation, and renewal/extensions of contracts, visas, work permits. Allow workers to change jobs without losing visa/immigration status.
- Ensure access to justice and social services. Coordinate support through civil society organizations and encourage complaints resolution, including for unpaid wages.
- Reduce remittance costs and increase access to services, facilitate money transfer services, including digital services.



- Implement reintegration programmes that support productive investment of savings, reskilling and up skilling, and finding local employment.
- Consider ceasing arrest and detention of migrant workers who violated the law in a minimal, non-criminal manner and prohibiting fines in the country of origin and country of destination.
- Consider repayment of, or moratorium of, loan repayments/debt from migration.
- Increase and improve safe and regular migration channels and fair recruitment, especially through recruitment agencies.

## **Sub-theme 2: Inclusive and responsive labour migration policy for future preparedness in ASEAN**

- Collect and analyse data and ensure the information on migrant workers is sex, age, education level and location-disaggregated, and data is comprehensive and confidential. Consider that official data may not reflect irregular migration and especially the risks faced by irregular migrant workers.
- Ensure workplaces and migrant workers' housing follow labour standards and OSH and WHO safety guidance, including for live-in domestic workers.
- Extend and improve the network on health care and social protection coverage to all migrant workers, regardless of the sector of work in both countries of origin and destination.
- Support increasing accessibility of health services with reliable providers at the community level, so that medical certificates can be provided without the need to repeat the examination, in order to reduce the cost of health checks for migrant workers.
- Establish regional cooperation agreements, bilateral cooperation or multilateral cooperation, cooperation agreements or the signing of memoranda of understanding on the transfer of social protection migrant workers.
- Institute a preparedness plan on emergency and epidemic response in ASEAN for migrant workers and their families. Ensure all migrant workers have access to health care especially in the time of crisis.



- Provide health check for returned migrant workers, including access to health screen for STIs/AIDS.
- Strengthen employment opportunities that are compatible with skills, skills recognition, skills training and skills upgrades, and trainings.
- Ensure access to justice, including cross-border mechanisms to ensure compensation for migrant workers, especially non-payment of wages.
- Strengthen repatriation/reintegration policies, programs, and services.
- Encourage private recruitment agencies and governments to take necessary steps to legislate and ensure implementation of fair recruitment, including zero recruitment fees for migrant workers.
- Consider increasing the identification of victims of trafficking, labor exploitation, during repatriation.
- Increase monitoring by the competent authorities of the country of origin on the welfare of migrant workers in the destination country, to ensure that the workers' rights and interests are protected accordance to the policies of the destination country.
- Propose destination countries to provide access to proper registration for undocumented migrant workers that return to work in the destination.

The meeting was held on 23 October 2020 at Vientiane, Lao PDR, and online.