



International
Labour
Organization

Regional workers' preparatory meeting recommendations for the 13th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour

9 November 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

1. Support migrant workers stranded in their host or home countries or those with **unpaid claims or wages** from their employers. While awaiting their safe repatriation, migrant workers must have access to adequate food and safe housing, medical services, facilities to communicate with their families, and mechanisms of justice.
2. Adopt and apply a consistent regional approach and strengthen national health systems to ensure that migrant workers have **adequate and free access** to testing and screening, affordable public health services and medicines, and affordable vaccines once these are developed.
3. Enhance the operation of the ASEAN Bio Diaspora Virtual Centre to serve both as an early warning and as contact tracing mechanism on infectious diseases. The Centre should also be a transparent source of information on infectious diseases easily accessible to migrant workers, trade unions and concerned civil society organizations at no cost.
4. Ensure migrant workers easy access to justice and legal remedy, welfare assistance, income support and other forms of assistance in both their host and home countries.

Strengthen migrant workers' resource centers; establish accessible platform-based Help Desks; and capacitate and enable trade unions and civil society organizations to provide direct counselling and legal or other assistance to migrant workers through the resource centers.

5. Strengthen promotion of **fair recruitment practices including the elimination of recruitment costs**. These include effective monitoring of the job market; enforcement of applicable laws against illegal recruitment and other unfair practice; and establishing a governance framework for digital recruitment and placement.
6. Provide counselling and technical assistance on **re-integration programs**, including on options for training, re-training, re-employment, and livelihood, including comprehensive support to migrant workers and their families intending to transition toward business and entrepreneurship. These should include measures for financial inclusion, product development, use of and access to technology, linkage to markets, and facilitative governance.

7. 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.
8. Strengthen labour market information, pre-departure, monitoring, and enforcement systems. Provide reliable information on job opportunities that are open to migrant workers and effectively monitor recruitment and placement activities to prevent unfair and illegal practices.
9. Facilitate safe and secure cross-border mobility of migrant workers. Formulate and implement standardized health and immigration protocols and procedures, reasonable and humane quarantine regulations, and adequate, affordable and humane quarantine facilities whenever these are needed. Facilitate immediate repatriation of migrant workers regardless of status held at detention centres without any undue delay.
10. Ensure safety and security of workplaces. Formulate and implement holistic and gender-sensitive Safe Work and Safe Business Guidelines to prevent, minimize, contain, control and manage risks to workers' personal safety and health and avoid hostile working situation to prevent violence against women workers.

These should cover humane and reasonable accommodations within or near work premises; safe public transport systems to ensure workers' mobility in going to and from their workplace; preventive and protective measures within workplaces including redesign of production or work processes consistent with all health protocols issued by the proper authorities; accessible, affordable and reliable medical, psycho-social and related interventions, including testing, contact tracing, counselling and management of mental stress and health issues

11. Strengthen labour market information and job facilitation services and networks, including skills needs assessment and mapping in host countries and design of market responsive training and re-training curricula, with emphasis on digital and technology skills, with active involvement of the private sector.
12. Ensure implementation of all applicable labour standards, CLS and SDG 8 Decent work goals not only to migrant workers but also to all workers.
13. Strengthen Occupational Safety and Health networks (OSH-NET), particularly the use of digital platforms to promote transparent sharing of information and awareness on matters related to OSH. Promote ratification of C155 and C168 among ASEAN nations.

Sub-theme 2: Cohesive and responsive labour migration policy for future preparedness in ASEAN

To address sub-theme 2, the following should be part of the responses, which should be time-bound.

14. Institute a proper mechanism to prevent non-payment, reduction or substitution of wages and to recover the same.
15. Strengthen labour market information, pre-departure, monitoring, and enforcement systems. Provide reliable information on job opportunities that are open to migrant workers and effectively monitor recruitment and placement activities to prevent unfair and illegal practices, including increase of recruitment costs.
16. Accelerate, pursuant to the ASEAN Declaration on Social Protection and Action Framework, the effective realization of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) or health care systems** accessible to all migrant workers by
 - strengthening national capacities to assess and manage health systems to support UHC, as well as conduct of actual national assessments by experts with participation of stakeholders
 - implementing responsive and coordinated projects and activities toward UHC, with the involvement of other ASEAN sectoral bodies, including the ASEAN+3 Network on Universal Health Coverage
17. Accelerate, likewise pursuant to the ASEAN Declaration on Social Protection and Action Framework, the effective realization of **social protection for all** by
 - building on the **study on portability of social security rights** in ASEAN Member States, and
 - developing a **framework** on portable social security rights in ASEAN Member States through social dialogue and stakeholder participation
18. ASEAN emergency and pandemic preparedness plans and implementation of ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework should include protections for migrant workers
19. Strengthen reintegration programs, job-matching, skills recognition, reskilling and upskilling, and trainings and accelerate mutual recognition of skills and mobility frameworks.
20. Give effect to the principle of portability of trade union membership to enable migrant workers to have effective voice and representation in their host and home countries.
21. Strengthen governance of migrant workers and labour migration in the new normal, particularly using digital platforms.

The meeting was held online on 9 November 2020.