



**Spotlight  
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# **Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of experiences and progress under the Bali Declaration with a specific focus on women migrant workers**

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**3 – 4 December 2019**

Pullman King Power Hotel  
Bangkok, Thailand



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE	ASEAN Confederation of Employers
ADD	Abu Dhabi Dialogue
ADLSA	Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (Qatar)
AFML	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour
APRM	Asia Pacific Regional Meeting
ArabTUC	Arab Trade Union Confederation
ATUC	ASEAN Trade Union Council
BLA	Bilateral agreement
BWI	Building and Wood Workers International
CCRM	Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CP	Colombo Process
CSO	Civil society organization
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment (Philippines)
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team
ECOT	Employers' Confederation of Thailand
EU	European Union
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FENASOL	National Federation of Employees and Workers' Unions in Lebanon
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GEFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GFBTU	General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GLMM	Gulf Labour Markets and Migration
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MFA	Migrant Forum in Asia
MOL	Ministry of Labour (Thailand)
MOM	Ministry of Manpower (Singapore)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Migrant Resource Center
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health

PAM	Public Authority of Manpower (Kuwait)
PROMISE	Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand
QVC	Qatar Visa Center
REFRAME	Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROAS	Regional Office for the Arab States
SAFE	South Asian Forum of Employers
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SARTUC	South Asian Trade Union Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TESDA	Technical Education, Skills and Development Authority
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

## Background of the meeting, objectives and follow-up

Following on the international frameworks on labour migration, the recent policy dialogues supporting a fair migration agenda, and more specifically, the recommendations under the 2016 Bali Declaration, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) through its Safe and Fair Programme and other ILO projects at the global, regional and national levels, and the national projects in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, organized an inter-regional meeting engaging labour migration actors from Asia, Middle East and Africa. The inter-regional meeting is aligned with activities under Output 3.1 of the Safe and Fair Programme that seeks to share research, data, and good practices on safe and fair labour migration, especially for women migrant workers, and to ensure that they are used to inform the development of policies and programmes.

The meeting also reaffirmed the human-centred approach in the ILO's Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, adopted in June 2019 which reiterates two important perspectives: 1) that the ILO will direct its efforts to deepen and scale-up work on international labour migration in response to constituents' needs; and 2) that this will be achieved while taking a leadership role in decent work in labour migration.

The purpose of the meeting was for governments, trade unions and employers' organizations, women's organizations, migration non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other labour migration actors, including recruitment agencies, in key migration corridors between Asia and Arab States – with attention also to the growing labour migration from Africa to the Middle East – to share knowledge and experiences and review progress made under the Bali Declaration on fair migration with specific attention to the experiences of women migrant workers.<sup>1</sup>

Participants of the meeting included tripartite participants from eight countries in Asia and eight Arab States.<sup>2</sup> In addition, one delegation from Africa<sup>3</sup> attended the meeting as an observer. Representatives from the European Delegation (EU) to Thailand as well as regional experts from ILO, UN Women, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) also took part in the meeting. In total, 111 persons participated in the inter-regional meeting.

Important developments have taken place since the adoption of the Bali Declaration in both countries of origin and destination as far as policies, laws and mechanisms are concerned. The meeting took stock of progress and good practices and identified key actions to meet remaining targets and actions as identified in the Bali Declaration in key thematic areas.

The meeting explored key issues and proposals around four areas giving specific attention to women migrant workers: **1) fair recruitment 2) protection of all migrant workers, including**

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<sup>1</sup> The inter-regional consultation was guided by issues and potential ideas for actions going forward raised in the Background Paper prepared for the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Participants were from Bahrain, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Qatar, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uganda and Viet Nam.

<sup>3</sup> Three governments from Africa were invited in total, however, two could not join.



through improved access to justice, occupational safety and health (OSH), and better portability of skills and social security benefits, with particular reference to the challenges faced by women migrant workers in these areas, 3) progress made in redressing employer-employee relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement and 4) partnerships.

It was recommended that constituents integrate the lessons learned, and suggested actions or recommendations from various discussions from the inter-regional meeting in their operations. Governments, social partners and civil society organizations (CSOs) should incorporate the suggestions at the national and regional levels. The ILO will include the takeaways of the meeting into its workplan and deepen and broaden the inter-regional dialogue in the Arab States, Asia and Africa. More importantly, the ILO will accelerate its efforts towards eliminating discrimination, violence and harassment against women by promoting the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and incorporating the efforts into the different ILO projects and programmes. For example, integrating these specific issues into the counselling and services provided by Migrant Resource Centers (MRCs) will be essential. In addition, this report will also feed into the planning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) anticipated to take place in December 2020.

## Opening remarks

Opening remarks of the meeting were delivered by Tomoko Nishimoto, ILO's Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), Frank Hagemann, Deputy Regional Director for the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS), Anna-Karin Jatfors, Deputy Regional Director of the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and H.E. Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of the EU to Thailand.

Tomoko Nishimoto emphasized the contributions of women migrant workers to themselves, their families and communities, and indicated some of the remaining challenges, such as the lack of adequate labour protection in domestic work. Women migrant workers in different sectors experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, abuse and violence. To maximize the benefits of labour migration for all, working towards building a safe and fair migration agenda is crucial. Given that migration is a complex phenomenon, collective efforts in the form of multilateral and bilateral responses are key in addressing the different dimensions of labour migration. Tomoko Nishimoto also congratulated ILO constituents on the adoption of ILO Convention No. 190, which is the first international human rights instrument addressing violence and harassment in the workplace. Together with the Bali Declaration, ILO Convention No. 190 is a crucial step towards a future that is inclusive and based on the dignity, respect and human rights of all workers.

Frank Hagemann stressed the importance of an inter-regional dialogue between Asia and the Arab States in the governance of sizeable labour migration flows in the corridor. The Arab States-Asia labour mobility corridor can act as a testing ground for innovation in the context of legislation, policies and good practices. Considering the increasing number of African migrant workers in the Arab States, there is also a need for an inter-regional dialogue between African countries and the Arab States. Particularly, in terms of the recommendations of the Bali Declaration on the portability of social protection, more attention needs to be placed on social protection policies and systems in countries of origin and destination so that they can address the specific needs of migrant workers. Moreover, redressing asymmetric employer-

employee relationships as set forth in the Bali Declaration is central for the protection of migrant workers in the Asia-Arab States labour mobility corridor.

Anna-Karin Jatfors highlighted the need to ensure that labour migration is safe and fair for all women migrant workers. Inter-regional dialogue is crucial in facilitating the protection and support for women migrant workers throughout the migration cycle. Women migrant workers are often found in vulnerable and isolated working conditions where they lack access to passports and communication. As a result, women migrant workers are often subject to harassment, exploitation and abuse. Policies and laws need to be gender-responsive and cater to specific needs of women. Gender-based migration bans that aim to protect women from exploitation only push women to migrate through irregular channels in which risks are multiplied. Therefore, high-quality gender-responsive support systems provided by governments, CSOs, recruitment agencies, employers' and workers' organizations have to be available for women migrant workers.

Speaking on behalf of the EU in Thailand, H.E. the Ambassador Mr. Pirkka Tapiola emphasized that the EU is globally committed to making migration sustainable and beneficial for everyone. The EU's commitments are aligned with the European Consensus on Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). H.E. Ambassador also underlined the ability of the Safe and Fair programme to act as an opportunity for governments, employers and workers' organizations to collaborate in the protection of the rights of women migrant workers. It is vital that correct support frameworks are in place to alleviate the abuse of women migrant workers everywhere.

## Session 1. Introduction

The first session focused on the ILO's Global Programme on Migration and Mobility and presentation of the background paper of the meeting. Speakers of the session were Michelle Leighton, ILO's Chief of Labour Migration Branch, Senior Migration Specialists Nilim Baruah from ILO ROAP and Ryszard Cholewinski from ILO ROAS. Assistant Permanent Secretary Patana Bhandhufalck from the Ministry of Labour (MOL), Thailand moderated the session.

### ILO's Global Programme on Migration and Mobility and priorities

Michelle Leighton introduced the ILO's Fair Migration Agenda and discussed some of the global priorities of the ILO.

Although the number of migrant workers globally has increased over recent years, policies to govern labour migration flows are not always human-centered and rights-based. There are also serious deficits in the implementation and enforcement of labour migration policies. It is essential that countries adopt fair migration frameworks that effectively link migration policies to policies related to employment and embody the equal treatment of women and men migrant workers. Fair migration frameworks would also help to promote the rights of migrant workers while meeting labour market needs.

Although bilateral agreements (BLAs) and multilateral agreements are crucial in the governance of labour migration, they also have to incorporate international labour standards (ILS) and be able to adequately address the different needs of women and men migrant workers. Further, national migration policies and BLAs have not successfully engaged workers' and employers' organizations in their drafting and review processes.

The ILO aims to accelerate and deepen its work in several priority areas including skills development and portability of social protection for migrant workers, tackling inequalities, releasing data on wage disparities between men and women migrant workers, promoting the implementation of ILO Convention No. 190 to end violence and harassment in the world of work and addressing violence against women in particular, and conducting research on addressing irregular migration, and freedom of association and collective bargaining of migrant workers.

### Presentation of the background paper

The background paper prepared for the inter-regional meeting was presented by Senior Migration Specialists Nilim Baruah, ILO ROAP and Ryszard Cholewinski, ILO ROAS.

According to the United Nations (UN) estimates (2019), there are around 271.6 million international migrants in the world. The UN estimates of 2017 indicated 258 million international migrants of which 164 million or 64 per cent are migrant workers. Of these migrant workers, women migrant workers constitute around 42 per cent. A considerable number of migrant workers from Asia can be found in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and in Jordan and Lebanon. Some 31 per cent of the migrant workers in this region (GCC countries plus Jordan and Lebanon) are women. A large portion of women migrant workers are located in so-called 'feminized' sectors of labour such as domestic and care work.

Furthermore, an increase in the outflows of African migrant workers to the GCC countries has also been observed. Although the overall number of migrant workers is high, recently there has been a decrease in the labour migration flows from Asia to the Arab States, which may be explained partly by falling oil prices, and periodic labour migration bans.

The background paper indicated some important developments that have taken place in line with the labour migration components of the recommendations of the Bali Declaration. These include the adoption of the Law 18/2017 on Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, the Royal Ordinance in Thailand prohibiting recruitment fees, and steps taken towards abolishing the sponsorship system in Qatar. However, particular areas of concern remain, including high recruitment costs in the Asia-Arab States migration corridor, lack of minimum wages for domestic workers, inefficient skills matching and skills recognition, limited access to justice and support services, and constraints on the mobility and freedom of movement of migrant workers. To improve protection for women migrant workers, specific challenges need to be addressed, namely the low ratification rate of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), lack of social security coverage, including maternity protections, health care and employment injuries benefits, gender-based discrimination in immigration laws, and lack of gender-responsive policies and support systems.

#### **Box 1. Issues and violence experienced by women migrant workers in the Asia-Arab states labour mobility corridor**

According to 2017 ILO estimates, the Arab States hosted around 23 million migrant workers – nearly 40 per cent of them being women migrant workers. The migration of women migrant workers has important implications for their families and communities, as well as for the economic development of countries of origin and destination. However, the migration experience for women differs greatly from the lived realities of men migrant workers. Women migrant workers are exposed to abuse at the hands of their employers, recruiters, partners and other parties involved in the migration cycle.

High recruitment fees and debt bondage exposes women to exploitation and violence. Women migrant workers also have fewer options for employment and limited access to decent work due to intersecting forms of discrimination. Gender-based migration bans put in place to protect women from exploitation lead women to migrate through irregular channels exposing them to increased risks of human trafficking, exploitation and violence. A large portion of women migrant workers can be found in ‘feminized’ sectors of employment, such as care and domestic work. These sectors are often informal and isolated with limited or non-existent labour protections, increasing women’s vulnerabilities. As a result, women migrants work long hours with low pay and with only a few days off.

Policy frameworks do not adequately address the specific needs of women migrant workers. Occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations rarely address sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Women migrant workers in both the informal and formal sectors are not granted sufficient maternity protections and often pregnancy is the cause for the termination of employment resulting in the deportation of the migrant worker. In addition, the lack of portability of social protection negatively affects the livelihoods of both women and men migrant workers.

When women migrant workers face violence, access to justice is not always guaranteed. Due to the fact that the workplace for domestic workers is the home of their employer, carrying out labour inspections to ensure that the workers’ rights are protected is challenging. Women migrant workers also hesitate to report claims of abuse to the police due to the fear of deportation. Social stigmas also restrict women migrant workers from coming forward with their claims since they are often blamed for the violence that happens to them. Language barriers also restrict women from seeking help. More often than not, migrant women are not aware of who to turn to whenever they need help.

Source: ILO (2019). Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of experiences and progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant workers. Background paper (forthcoming).

## Session 2. Fair recruitment with a focus on women migrant workers

The second session was moderated by Michelle Leighton, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO. The panellists included Umesh Dhungana, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Nepal; Laxman Bahadur Basnet, General Secretary, South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC); and Nick Forster, Co-Founder and Senior Vice President, FSI International. William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), acted as a discussant for the session.

The purpose of the session was for participants to share experiences on steps that have been undertaken to promote fair recruitment, examine measures that could be undertaken to establish a fair recruitment system that is gender-responsive, and discuss measures that enhance women migrant workers' access to information, resources and services.

### Panel presentations

Joint Secretary Umesh Dhungana provided a detailed description of the progress made towards addressing trafficking and forced labour to increase the protection for all migrant workers, including women migrant workers from Nepal. The steps taken included legislative reforms and amendments, setting up national committees and human rights councils to combat human trafficking and forced labour, and adoption of several BLAs and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with countries of destination, including agreements on zero-recruitment costs with Malaysia and Jordan. In terms of skills training, Nepal offers all migrant workers a pre-departure training and a free of cost garment machine operator training for potential women migrant workers in the garment sector to support their skills development. In terms of women migrant workers' access to services and information, several migrant MRCs have been established with the support of the ILO. Nepal has also revitalized a complaint mechanism for migrant workers who have been overcharged recruitment fees and successfully decreased the number of recruitment agencies in the country.

Laxman Bahadur Basnet discussed how trade union initiatives can support the establishment of fair recruitment systems, particularly for women migrant workers. The main purpose of SARTUC's migration framework is for governments, workers and recruitment agencies to ensure the effective realization of safe and fair migration. SARTUC is particularly concerned about recruitment policies and the lack of standard contracts for migrant workers. Despite international and regional regulation, several issues remain due to their ineffective implementation.

To improve the protection of migrant workers, SARTUC, in partnership with the Arab Trade Union Confederation (ArabTUC) and ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC), set up an MRC in Jordan to facilitate migrant worker's access to information and services, such as complaint mechanisms, including those related to violence in the workplace. MRCs can be vital for women migrant workers as a source of information and a place to settle grievances. According

to the ILO, over half of the beneficiaries of MRCs were women migrant workers between 2010 and 2018.<sup>4</sup>

Nick Forster discussed the role of private recruitment agencies in facilitating the realization of fair recruitment schemes. FSI Worldwide focuses on ethical recruitment and is built on the principle of not charging any fees to migrant workers while meeting the needs of employers. The accountability of ‘big brands’ and recruitment agencies needs to be emphasized to encourage them to support positive changes by demonstrating good practices and examples. More focus needs to also be placed on the development of effective skills training. For instance, in the Nepal-Jordan corridor, the machinery and equipment used in the factories in the destination country were different than the ones women migrant workers had received training for before departure. This indicates a gap in skills training with regards to women migrant workers in the Nepal-Jordan corridor. Through effective skills training, women migrant workers can have better access to decent work in terms of enhanced skills and earnings.

## Discussion

As discussant, William Gois, MFA, drew attention to the following key issues focusing on domestic workers. However, he emphasized that it is equally important to discuss gender dimensions in other sectors of labour as well.

There is a need for a more robust discussion on gender-responsive policies, what they are, how they are assessed and how they are contextualized. Mobility of domestic workers need not only include the possibility for the worker to leave abusive employers – the concept has to be considered within employment such as having enough days off. A clear distinction between work hours and leisure is extremely important to domestic workers whose workplace is often the home of their employer. Having sufficient days off also supports the well-being of domestic workers who may suffer from excessively long work hours and workplace isolation where risks of violence, harassment and abuse are multiplied.

While some progress has been made towards recognizing domestic work as work, many countries of origin are yet to ratify ILO Domestic Worker Convention (No. 189) which came into force in 2013.

Domestic workers’ access to justice in the case of abuse or unfair dismissal can be improved through policies that require joint and solidarity liability between private recruitment agencies and employers. A good example of this is the Philippines in which joint and solidarity liability schemes allow both the recruitment agency and the employer to be held individually liable for the entire amount of a claim owed to an overseas Filipino worker (OFW). Unfortunately, the Philippines may revoke the policy which in turn can have serious impacts on the protection of Filipino domestic workers.

When talking about challenges in the freedom of movement of women migrant workers, the word and concept of ‘runaways’ need to be carefully examined through gender-lens as they indicate significant deficits in the way migrant workers are treated. Gaps, especially in women migrant workers’ access to justice, is another key issue.

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<sup>4</sup> ILO (2019). Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of experiences and progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant workers. Background paper (forthcoming).

### Bans on migration

Several participants observed that even though gender-based migration bans are put in place to protect women and to address the risk of exploitation and abuse, they often result in migrant workers using irregular channels. By migrating irregularly, the risks of exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking are increased, especially for women migrant workers.<sup>5</sup>

### Freedom of association

Women migrant workers' freedom of association in terms of their opportunities to organize requires more attention since trade unions can have immense impacts on women migrant workers' agency, empowerment and recognition. Facilitating the unionization and organization of women migrant workers can effectively alleviate the exploitation of women migrant workers as unions act as gateways to information and education. Having access to organization can also enhance the collective bargaining power of women migrant workers which in turn can help to improve working conditions in addressing violence and exploitation in the workplace. It is noted that in cases of violence and abuse, peer networks of other women are often important as a source of information and support systems for many women migrant workers. Further, laws, policies and regulations designed to protect migrant workers become more effective if workers have the right and opportunity to organize. It is also recommended that in order to recognize freedom of association of migrant workers in all of its forms, it would be beneficial to document the different processes taking place in different countries to realize this fundamental right further.

### Access to services and information

Institutional processes have to be harmonized between countries of origin and destination so that workers have access to support systems wherever they are. Further, taking the psychosocial health of migrant workers into account when designing policies on support systems is also important. For returning women migrant workers, re-integration programmes and policies should be carefully examined to see what kind of support is available within these programmes and how they could better respond to the needs of women. Greater attention should also be given to providing orientation and training for employers (and not just for workers) as well as arranging post-arrival orientation for workers.

### Brain-drain

Policy and programmes developed to support fair and ethical recruitment should also consider the aspect of brain-drain or emigration of skilled human resources where appropriate. Guidance in the ILO Multilateral Framework call for adopting measures to mitigate the loss of workers with critical skills, including by establishing guidelines for ethical recruitment.

### Implementation and enforcement

Finally, attention needs to be paid to the development of implementing rules and regulations for legislation and enforcement, which also take into account the specific needs of women and men migrant workers. Much more needs to be done to prevent and address violence and exploitation faced by women domestic workers.

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<sup>5</sup> Issue was covered in Rebecca Napier-Moore (2017) *Protected or put in harm's way? Bans and restrictions on women's labour migration in ASEAN countries*. ILO and UN Women. Bangkok.

## Session 3A. Protection, with particular focus on women migrant workers (policies and good practices)

The session focused on sharing experiences on increasing the protection of migrant workers from exploitation, abuse and violence in the workplace through the adoption of national legislation in accordance with international standards, good practices in certification and recognition of skills and identifying women's specific needs in OSH, access to services, including justice, skills, and social protection, and information sharing on ILO Convention No. 190.

Participants for the session were: Iskander Zalami, Advisor to H.E. Minister of Labour, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, United Arab Emirates (UAE); Carl Rookie Daquio, Supervising Labor and Employment Officer, Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Philippines; Abdulkarim Ali, Assistant Secretary-General, General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU); and Emmanuel Gomez, Managing Director and Co-Founder, Staffhouse International Resources. Ryszard Cholewinski from ILO ROAS moderated the session while Melissa Alvarado, Regional Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Programme Manager, UN Women was the selected discussant for the session.

### Panellist presentations

Iskander Zalami shared recent policy and legislative reforms in the UAE that aim to increase the protection of women migrant workers in particular in terms of exploitation, abuse and violence in the workplace.

Firstly, in 2017 the UAE enacted the law on domestic labour which is based on the premise that the relationship between employer and the domestic worker is an employment relationship. The amendments address the power relation between the worker and employer and confirm the following: that the employment must be voluntary and based on mutual consent; that the employment contract may be terminated either at the end of the contract term or during the term of the contract by either party – thus, neither party can be forced to remain in the employment relationship against his or her will; that the worker is free to leave the UAE at any time; and that the worker is eligible to transfer to another employer upon termination of the contract without the consent of the current employer. Moreover, the jurisdiction over domestic labour was transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation in 2016, suggesting an improvement in the supervision of domestic labour as the oversight is performed by the same Ministry responsible for the supervision of all other workers in the UAE.

Secondly, the UAE adopted two new amendments to the 1980 Labour Law in August 2019 that brought changes in terms of non-discrimination and equal treatment of all workers. More specifically for women migrant workers, the sub-article added to article 30 of the Labour Law prohibits employers from terminating the employment of a woman worker based on pregnancy.

With regard to the sponsorship system, Iskandar Zalami reminded participants that it is important to recognize that the practice is relevant to a demand-driven admission scheme. Both supply and demand-driven admission schemes can involve malpractices during the



admission of migrant workers. What needs to be abolished, therefore, are certain practices and policies that allow these malpractices to take place. However, with regard to sponsorship regimes, caution should be placed in the manner they are being assessed since the sponsorship is a common system used in the countries of the GCC which cannot be terminated at a whim. A solution to this could be a hybrid admission scheme where both schemes (demand-driven and supply-driven) are applied.

Carl Rookie Daquio presented some of the good practices on the certification and recognition of skills and addressing women's needs in relation to OSH, and their access to services, justice and social protection in the Philippines. The government's approach to overseas employment aims to promote overseas labour, to protect overseas OFWs and to maximize the benefits of migration. Around half of the 3.5 million Filipino migrant workers are women, a large number of them being domestic workers. The Overseas Filipino Act of 1995 (amended in 2010) serves as a comprehensive approach to regulate labour migration to enhance the protection and promotion of the rights OFWs.

All Filipino migrant workers need to attend a mandatory pre-departure orientation seminar which also has specific modules for domestic workers, and a post-arrival orientation seminar. All workers are also obliged to undergo a skills training certified by the Technical Education, Skills and Development Authority (TESDA). To facilitate the delivery of training services, TESDA has developed an online programme to expand the skillsets of OFWs. Furthermore, several BLAs with countries in the Middle East have supported the skills development of overseas Filipino domestic workers.

To support workers' access to services and information, the Philippines operates a 24/7 hotline as well as a mobile application for OFWs in distress. Furthermore, a joint-case management team has been established to facilitate OFWs' access to justice. The team is tasked to supervise and monitor the management of complaints and requests for assistance brought to its attention.

Abdulkarim Ali discussed the role of trade unions in protecting and providing support services to women migrant workers in Bahrain. Although domestic workers are protected by certain provisions of the labour law in Bahrain, by working in isolation they are nevertheless more prone to abuse, violence and exploitation since labour inspection laws exclude private homes. Regional organizations and efforts should be utilized to support the protection of migrant workers in Bahrain. There should also be greater cooperation between trade unions in the country of origin and destination to increase support systems and protection for women migrant workers.

Abdulkarim Ali also highlighted the issue of 'free visa' workers. These types of workers are employed without proper documentation or they work for a different employer the visa was issued for. The issue of 'free visas' also complicates union organization in marginalized sectors such as domestic work and construction, and contributes to poor or hazardous living conditions since 'free visa' workers are often forced to live in abandoned or otherwise unsafe buildings.

It is essential that Bahrain strengthen the freedom of movement of domestic workers and facilitate their access to trade unions. Women migrant workers in particular should be better protected from human trafficking and sexual harassment. This should be supported by efforts that aim to increase the awareness among migrant workers of their rights so that workers are

educated about their rights and are able to ‘fight back’ through enhanced access to information and justice.

Emmanuel Gomez provided an overview of the role of recruitment agencies in the protection of women migrant workers. Recruitment agencies such as Staffhouse International can act as gateways for both employers and workers to access and take advantage of the labour market. Specifically, in terms of supporting the fair recruitment agenda, Staffhouse International collects no fees from workers. When talking about women migrant workers in particular, there are specific ethical guidelines that recruitment agencies can adopt that aim to reduce the risks of women migrant workers being subject to exploitation, abuse and violence. This includes using due diligence throughout their operations, avoiding the use of sub-agents, charging no fees to workers, pre-departure orientation and training, and on-site monitoring in countries of destination.

To support access to remedy, Staffhouse International has an employer relations department that monitors the working conditions; acts as a point of contact for workers, family members and employers; and assists workers in distress.

## Discussion

In her capacity as discussant, Melissa Alvarado described the challenges and good practices with regards to delivering and enhancing access to support services for women migrant workers. When women migrant workers face violence, they experience several barriers in the country of destination in accessing services and support systems. Women migrant workers are often uncertain about whether the available systems will help them. Migrant women also experience social pressure not to report the case, sometimes due to social stigmas that result in women being blamed for the violence that happens to them. There is also a lack of coordination between service providers; those who focus on violence against women; those who focus on labour migration; and those who focus on trafficking. There have to be better linkages between these different actors. While hotlines are important, they are not always available in the language of the migrant workers. It is important to make information available and accessible to women migrant workers. It also has to be ensured that women migrant workers are aware of their rights and services such as counselling and legal options available for them.

## Fatalities of migrant workers

Questions were raised on whether any policies exist in the destination countries in relation to investigating the accidental deaths and suicides of migrant workers. More research is needed to better understand and document migrant deaths and take measures to prevent such tragedies specifically when they involve women migrant workers. The issue was also recently brought up by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women who urged all member states to report on statistics on femicide or gender-based killings of women. Therefore, investigating the deaths of women migrant workers deserves more attention.

## Right to organize

The discussion also touched upon the challenges for women migrant workers in accessing trade unions in Bahrain. GFBTU aims to educate women migrant workers about their options to join trade unions. However, sometimes the mobility of women migrant workers is restricted,

which limits their ability to join trade unions. This is the case especially for domestic workers who often lack sufficient days off or are otherwise restricted from leaving the workplace (the home of the employer) to join trade unions.

### Legal reforms – challenges

Participants wished to know more about the challenges the UAE is facing in moving forward with the recent legal reforms. Iskander Zalami pointed out that legal reforms alone are not enough to ensure the protection of migrant workers and underlined the importance of household attitudes in improving the situation for migrant workers. In the context of the GCC, the demographics are changing, and families are transforming into two-income households. The subsequent increase in the level of education will hopefully help to ensure improvements in the protection of migrant workers, including women migrant workers.

Moreover, a representative of the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) highlighted that it can be challenging to conduct labour inspections in employers' homes despite the legal requirements, as domestic workers are employed in the private sphere.

## Session 3B. Protection, with particular focus on women migrants in key sectors of work in destination countries (e.g. domestic work, construction, among others)

The panellists for the second part of the session on protection shared good experiences and practices on increasing the protection of women migrants in domestic work, the construction and hospitality sectors. Panellists included Sultan Alzoubi, Head of Disputes and Legal Division of the Domestic Workers Department, Public Authority of Manpower, Kuwait; Niken Anjar Wulam, Programme Officer, IDWF; Ukrish Kanchanaketu, Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT); Nisha Baniya, Secretary of Labour Relations, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT); and Runglawon Kantasit, Director for the Prevention and Problem Solving on Labour Protection Group, MOL, Thailand. Imco Brouwer, Director, Gulf Labour Markets and Migration (GLMM), acted as a discussant, while Deepa Bharathi, Chief Technical Adviser, Safe and Fair programme, ILO ROAP, moderated the session.

### Panelist presentations

Sultan Alzoubi described the measures on the recruitment, employment and protection of domestic workers in Kuwait. Domestic workers receive relevant education that consequently increases their skill development and leads to enhanced opportunities. Employers are obliged to pay health insurance for domestic workers who have the right to compensation in the case of work injuries and accidents. The Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) also provides legal protection for domestic workers in the case where the employer breaches the employment contract as well as assists the workers by appointing a lawyer for them free of charge. Employers who violate relevant laws are sanctioned and penalized by the PAM.

Niken Anjar Wulam discussed the organization of migrant domestic workers and collaboration between trade unions and CSOs. The mission of the IDWF is to build a strong democratic and united domestic workers' global organization to protect and advance domestic workers' rights

everywhere. Although the IDWF currently represents over 500 000 domestic workers, only a fraction of the world's domestic workers are organized in unions. Migrant domestic workers face specific challenges in their working conditions: they are often excluded from labour laws and social protection and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse by their employers in isolated working conditions. There are also practical barriers when it comes to organizing - migrant women might not be familiar with the language of the host country and have very few leave days. To address some of the deficits when it comes to access to unions for migrant domestic workers, there is a need to recognize new forms of organization. Migrant domestic workers are already organized in different ways such as through hobbies, religious activities. Therefore, awareness of migrant workers' rights can also be raised through these groups.

Ukrish Kanchanaketu addressed the role of employers in implementing measures to support in particular women migrant workers in the construction sector in Thailand. Employers' organizations are important in protecting migrant workers' rights, including the rights of women migrant workers. Migrant workers in the construction sector in Thailand are encountered with a wide range of issues and these challenges are multiplied if they are in an irregular situation.

Women migrant workers in the construction sector in Thailand are marginalized as they lack access to adequate maternity leave and experience violence and harassment in and outside the workplace. Women migrant workers are also often hired as a part of a package-deal alongside their husbands, and as such, considered as secondary workers. Referring to a Safe and Fair study and meeting, he mentioned more specifically that due to inadequate accommodation arrangements, women have to share restrooms and bathrooms with men workers, which further increases the risk of violence against them.

ECOT provides consultation and education to construction companies so that they are aware of the legal frameworks in terms of having clear employment contracts in place and policies regarding violence and harassment in the workplace.

Nisha Baniya shared experiences concerning the organization of Nepali migrant workers through support groups established in destination countries. Her presentation specifically focused on women migrants. As estimated in 2018, around 2.5 million Nepalese women were employed overseas in Malaysia and the Middle East, a majority of them in an irregular situation. Returnee women migrant workers have reported having faced abuse at work, accidents and lack of access to medical facilities at the workplace. GEFONT is engaged with organizing Nepalese migrant workers abroad and helps to develop MOUs with local trade unions in destination countries under the legal framework of the countries of destination. The trade union confederation in destination countries also offers support and free legal counseling for migrant workers and are involved with organizing migrant workers as per their legal provisions. Some of the recommendations of GEFONT include the ratification of ILO Conventions Nos. 189 and 190; enhanced cooperation between trade unions in countries of origin and destination; and observance of the ILO's Operational principles and guidelines for fair recruitment.

Finally, Runglawon Kantasit described the measures of the MOL in Thailand which aim to prevent the trafficking of women migrant workers. Labour laws and regulations in Thailand provide equal protection for both men and women workers; however, specific attention is placed on women migrant workers. For the MOL in Thailand, sexual harassment in the workplace has become an important issue to tackle. The Ministry ensures equal treatment in

terms of remuneration, rest days and other relevant labour rights, and women migrant workers have access to maternity leave. Migrant workers in Thailand are entitled to access to justice through different compliance mechanisms, and the Ministry also carries out regular labour inspections and visits places that are subject to complaints.

## Discussion

The discussant for the session, Imco Brouwer, reviewed the existing measures, discussed and shared his opinion on other measures that are still needed to protect and empower migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers. To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of new laws, declarations and regulations, it is essential to collect data by interviewing the migrant workers themselves in the GCC countries. Despite the adoption of new laws and policies, challenges remain, particularly in terms of non-payment of salaries, long working hours and contract substitution. Redress mechanisms in GCC countries are in place, but the actual implementation is time-costly – this can prove to be extremely detrimental to low-income migrant workers, who usually are women.

### Right to organize for irregular migrant workers

Given the high number of migrant workers in an irregular situation and the importance of trade unions in terms of enhancing women's empowerment and agency, the right to organize for such migrant workers was also discussed. Both GEFONT and IDWF adhere to the principle of non-discrimination in the treatment of migrant workers in an irregular situation. Regardless of their status, all women migrant workers should have access to unions and freedom of association. However, connecting with migrant workers in an irregular situation can be difficult. The organizations noted that one way to enhance outreach to them is to cooperate with local NGOs in countries of origin and destination.

### Gender-based discrimination and access to support services

Progress has been made on wage protection and OSH for migrant workers in the GCC countries and Singapore. However, it was suggested that it is essential to work towards removing gender-based discrimination in immigration laws and working conditions in terms of wages, opportunities and maternity protections. More can be done to expand support services that women migrant workers can use to access to justice including complaints mechanisms. Important work in this regard has been done in Asia and the Arab States by all the constituents and by CSOs, such as through the establishment of MRCs, and organizing with local trade unions.

## Listen to me: Voices of women migrant workers in ASEAN

In the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, five migrant women<sup>6</sup> shared their migration experiences in a chat discussion. Three of the women are currently working in Thailand, while the other two are returning migrants from Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China and Saudi Arabia. All of the women worked as domestic workers in the host country, while some also worked in the hospitality sector in addition to being domestic workers.

### Reasons for migration

When asked about the reasons for migrating, nearly all of the women indicated a poor socio-economic background and the lack of opportunities in their country of origin as the main reasons for seeking employment overseas. One migrant woman who had been working in Thailand as a domestic worker for 19 years stated her desire to learn English as the main motivation for migration. Through increased earnings, many of the women were able to financially support their families back home and enhance their skills in different areas. In addition, one woman was able to use her savings from her job as a domestic worker in Hong Kong SAR, China, to pay for university tuition fees after returning to her home country.

### Challenges

While for many the migration experience had significantly improved their livelihood and agency, all of the women experienced some sort of challenges in the country of destination.

### Decent work deficits

In terms of decent work deficits, the women recalled not having enough leave days, difficulties in changing employers, having long working hours with no overtime compensation, and lack of recognition for the value of their work. One woman reported passport and mobile phone confiscation and other restrictions on her freedom of movement, as well as extensive physical abuse by her employers.

Nearly all of the women agreed that their starting salaries were extremely low which made it difficult to cover all necessary expenses such as health care costs in the country of destination.

### Access to support systems

When asked about who they turned to whenever they needed help, some of the women stated that they did not know who to turn to. Others reported turning to their recruitment agencies, who were often unable or uninterested in helping them. Sometimes, recruitment agencies would advise the women to be 'good girls' and not to cause any trouble. One woman recalled the recruitment agency telling her to lie to the police in case they would ask her about her salary so that it would appear that she was earning more than what she was actually earning.

### Access to information

Many of the women lacked information about their rights as domestic workers and received no support from the government of the country of origin nor the country of destination. They were also unfamiliar with the language, culture or laws of the destination country, and lacked

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<sup>6</sup> Three of the migrant women were from Myanmar, while the other two women were from Indonesia and Viet Nam.

information regarding the nature of their work or skills required before migrating overseas. Although pre-departure training can be integral for domestic workers, the period for such training is sometimes too short to obtain all the necessary information prior to departure.

While in Hong Kong SAR, China, one woman was able to join a trade union in which she received paralegal training. Joining the union significantly increased her knowledge about her rights as a domestic worker, which consequently improved her bargaining power helping her to eventually change employers.

Another migrant woman from Myanmar pointed out the importance of social media and returning migrants in spreading awareness about domestic workers' experiences to potential migrant workers in the country of origin.

### MOUs and domestic workers

All of the migrant women from Myanmar agreed that while MOUs between Thailand and Myanmar have had a positive impact on the lives of some migrant workers, domestic workers are excluded from the provisions of most MOUs, which also leaves them with no access to social security provisions. The lack of MOUs covering domestic workers puts women at risk since they will often use recruitment agencies who can sometimes be deceptive and charge extremely high fees to workers.

## Session 4. Progress made in redressing employer-employee relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement

This session brought together Salem Ahmed M S - Almarzouqi, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADLSA), Qatar; Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr., Regional Representative, the Building and Wood Workers International (BWI); Pin Sin Chia, Assistant Director, Foreign Manpower Unit, Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Singapore; and Sophia Kagan, Chief Technical Adviser, ILO ROAS, who was the discussant for the session. Nilim Baruah, Senior Migration Specialist, ROAP, moderated the session. The focus of the discussion was on recent laws and regulations and on progress made in redressing employer-employee relationships, and sharing experiences on the possibility of migrant workers to change jobs.

### Panellist presentations

Salem Ahmed M S – Almarzouqi, ADLSA, Qatar, informed participants of Qatar's Visa Centers (QVCs), changes to Qatar's sponsorship system and other related reforms. To increase the efficiency of the visa application process and reduce contract substitution, 14 QVCs have been set up in six countries of origin. QVCs have the potential to increase protection including for women migrant workers as they contribute to more transparent recruitment processes.

In 2017, a law was introduced to protect domestic workers, under which employers are obligated to meet minimum standards on wages, decent accommodation, working time, etc. for domestic workers. Workers are already free to change employers in case of breach of the employment contract, and in 2020, workers will be given even full rights to job mobility.

In 2018, Qatar abolished the exit permit for workers covered by the labour law (companies are able to maintain the permit for up to five per cent of their workforce, at the executive level), and in 2020 all other categories of workers will also be allowed to leave the country without obtaining a permission from their employers first. Abolition of the exit permit can have a significant impact on the mobility and freedom of movement of domestic workers, many of whom are women.

In addition, a non-discriminatory minimum wage will also be introduced. The new laws will apply to all workers, including domestic workers.

ADLSA also shared that they are participating in consultations organized by BWI on Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment at work.

Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr., the regional representative for BWI, discussed the role of trade unions in implementing measures to support migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers. BWI recruits and facilitates the organization of workers mainly in the construction sector. Its mission is to defend and advance construction workers' rights and improve their living and working conditions. BWI has also been prominent in mega sporting events such as the Olympics and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cups and has made efforts to increase the protection of migrant workers employed during these events. There have been several successful strikes that have resulted in increased payments of unpaid or delayed salaries to migrant workers. Based on their experience in Qatar, BWI has put



forward various recommendations. To increase the effectiveness of the existing dispute settlement process, cases involving workers from the same company should be handled collectively rather than individually. In terms of OSH, safety and health standards and regulations in the construction sector should correspond with international standards.

Pin Sin Chia talked about Singapore's approach to ensuring the well-being of migrant workers, including foreign domestic workers. Singapore has comprehensive laws to ensure the well-being of migrant workers in Singapore. For instance, workers have to undergo mandatory medical examinations in Singapore to show that they are fit for the work they are hired to do. Employers have to purchase medical insurance with a minimum coverage sum of SGD15,000 for the worker before they are allowed to employ the worker.

The Employment Agencies Act caps the fees that employment agencies can charge to employees, including migrant workers, to at most one month of the worker's salary for each year of contract, capped at a maximum of two months. The employment agency is also required to refund at least 50 per cent of the fees collected to the worker in the case of early termination (within six months) of the worker's employment contract. First-time migrant workers in selected sectors, including foreign domestic workers, are required to attend a one-day orientation programme upon their arrival in Singapore. Selected first-time foreign domestic workers are also interviewed in the first few months of their employment to ensure their well-being. Singapore has also facilitated migrant workers' access to recourse and assistance channels by providing 24-hour hotlines and online feedback channels. MOM takes immediate action against both employers and workers, who are found to have violated the laws. Besides educating migrant workers, the Singapore Government raises awareness among employers and the general public about migrant workers' employment rights and enforcement actions taken against errant employers to create deterrence. The Singapore Government also allows migrant workers with valid grievances or claims to find another employer in Singapore. The Singapore Government works with NGOs or appointed employment agencies to facilitate the process for the worker.

## Discussion

Discussant Sophia Kagan from the ILO provided an overview of the existing measures and remaining challenges related to employer-employee relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement. Workers should also have the right to change employers during the employment period in case their rights are violated. However, it is often difficult, particularly for domestic workers, to prove that abuse has actually taken place. Due to the fact that their workplace is the domicile of the employers, conducting labour inspections based on allegations of abuse of domestic workers is almost impossible. Social stigmas and fear of deportation also restrict domestic workers from reporting their employers to relevant authorities.

When discussing workers freedom of movement especially in the Arab States, the focus is often on the sponsorship system. However, the problem is not unique to only the Arab States - there are a number of challenges for migrant workers gaining more open access to the labour markets also in South-East Asia due to visas and work permits being tied to a particular employer.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The issue was covered by Nilim Baruah and Sabrina Kouba in the recent ILO (2019) publication 'Access to the labour market for admitted migrant workers in Asia and related corridors'

Another limitation for workers to change employers is the length of a grace period at the end of the employment in order to find a new employer. Workers might not have valid visas or residence permits after employment has been terminated so they will either need to find a new employer who is willing to sponsor their visa or exit the country and go through the recruitment process all over again in their country of origin. The situation is even worse for so-called ‘runaway’ workers who have left their employers without giving notice – migrant workers in an irregular situation often do not have enough time to explain the reasons for leaving their employers to the police or immigration officials before they are deported. Such concepts and notions of ‘runaways’ do not often consider the realities and possible situations especially for women migrant workers who have been threatened with or experienced actual violence and abuse.

### Passport confiscation

Participants discussed who should be in the possession of the passport of the migrant worker during the employment period. Employers in Singapore are prohibited from keeping or withholding their workers’ passports. The Singapore Government also regularly educates employers not to keep their workers’ passports, and advises migrant workers to seek assistance from the authorities if their passports are withheld by their employers. It is noted that there are cases of women migrant domestic workers in Singapore reporting their employers of withholding their passports (Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), 2019).<sup>8</sup> The Singapore Government will take action against employers who are found to have kept or withheld their workers’ passports.

### Recruitment fees – who pays?

Recruitment agencies in many countries of destination are allowed to collect fees from foreign workers. In Singapore, the charging of recruitment fees is controlled by placing a two-month salary cap on the fees that can be collected by employment agencies in Singapore. It was suggested in the discussion that countries of origin and destination should consider moving towards a more ethical model of recruitment in which no fees are collected from workers or employers such as through public employment services. This would also help to protect women migrant workers in particular from various forms of exploitation such as debt-bondage and human trafficking.

It was also underscored that migration costs should be lowered for both workers and employers. One way to do this is to itemize recruitment costs that would clearly indicate who pays for what. Governments could also consider subsidizing some of the costs of migration.

### Cost-sharing during job transfers

The principle of equal treatment with nationals should also apply in terms of migrant workers’ access to the labour market, although it is reasonable to expect countries to reserve certain labour sectors for nationals only. Furthermore, recruitment costs are not only relevant during the entry-stage but also during job transfers.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME). 2019. CEDAW General Recommendations Trafficking of women and girls - A written submission by the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (Singapore), on Human Trafficking and Labour Migration. February 2019.

## Session 5. Priorities and opportunities for expanding fair recruitment and protection systems in the Asia-Arab States migration corridors, particularly to enhance protection of women migrant workers

For this session, participants were divided into three groups to discuss the different priorities and opportunities for advancing fair recruitment, protection systems to ensure decent working conditions, and partnership frameworks, with reference to women migrant workers. Group 1 focused on fair recruitment; Group 2 on decent work; and Group 3 on partnerships. Each group had guiding questions prepared for them in advance to facilitate the discussions. Shabarinath Nair, Labour Migration Specialist from ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia, moderated this session.

### Group 1. Guiding questions

- *What opportunities could be prioritized for expanding fair recruitment in the Asia-Arab states migration corridors?*
  - o *What measures are needed to ensure that these take into account the needs of women migrant workers, especially towards ending violence and abuse?*

### Group 2. Guiding questions

- *What opportunities could be prioritized for expanding protection systems to ensure decent working conditions in the Asia-Arab states migration corridors?*
  - o *What measures are needed to ensure that these take into account the needs of women migrant workers, especially towards ending violence and abuse?*

### Group 3. Guiding questions

- *What progress and good practices have been made against partnership frameworks on labour migration?*
  - o *How can such frameworks be made more gender-responsive and respond to needs of women to make migration safe and fair?*

### Group 1. Fair recruitment

The plenary discussion of Group 1 resulted in several recommendations. It was suggested that more pilots on fair recruitment should be tested. To make zero recruitment fees for workers more effective, a consensus on both sides of the migration corridor is needed. BLAs and MOUs are important in protecting rights and ensuring proper skills/jobs matches for business productivity. They should better incorporate international labour standards (ILS), including provisions on fair recruitment, and be responsive to the needs of women migrant workers. No fee clauses should also be incorporated in BLAs and MOUs between countries of origin and destination. To make these agreements more transparent, a wider range of stakeholders should be included in the process. Rather than having separate BLAs for domestic work and other 'feminized' sectors of labour, articles concerning domestic workers should be included in overall or integrated labour migration BLAs.

Fair recruitment guidelines and practices should also be followed during job changes in the destination country.

To support the enforcement of fair recruitment regulations, broad-based incentives for compliance could be utilized so that there are multiple actors feeding into reporting processes. Technological innovations and applications similar to the International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) 'Recruitment Advisor Platform' could help to protect migrant workers from fraudulent recruitment and employment practices.

Finally, in terms of responding to the needs of women migrant workers violence and abuse, MRCs and other services should be language accessible, gender-responsive and available during the recruitment stage.

## Group 2. Decent work

Group 2 discussed various different challenges related to the realization of decent work for women migrant workers predominantly in domestic work. Although the legal frameworks are in place, they fall short in enhancing decent work conditions if they are not aligned with international standards/effectively enforced. Similarly, BLAs fail to protect migrant workers if they are not properly enforced. Many are also not very gender-responsive and hence fail to effectively protect women migrant workers.

Workers and employers are often not aware of the laws of the origin and destination country, which poses a serious challenge to the realization of decent work. Migrant workers also lack knowledge about services available for them. Even if they are aware of their rights, they face difficulties in safeguarding their rights in practice because of power imbalances.

A culture shift is integral in enhancing the conditions for decent work for domestic workers. However, despite the legal reforms it is difficult to change the attitudes and beliefs towards domestic work in countries of origin and destination.

The discussion also indicated issues related to labour inspections in the domestic work sector. Due to the fact that the place of employment for domestic workers is the home of the employer, it can be very challenging to establish that workers are abused. One suggestion was for the Government to periodically arrange 'welfare calls' to domestic workers, to check that their living and working conditions meet the minimum legal standards. Alternatives to labour inspection at the home were also suggested such as periodic interviews of the worker at the relevant Department/inspectorate.

Collaboration between origin and destination countries and embassies is crucial in expanding decent work conditions in the Asia-Arab States migration corridor. This could help to make recruitment processes and the relationship between employers and employees clear, which could also contribute to lower recruitment costs.

Domestic work is often undervalued and has fewer labour protections, and although important steps have been taken towards addressing decent work deficits in the sector, domestic workers are excluded from social protection to a large extent. This can be partly explained by the lack of standard contracts for domestic workers and the fact that social security provisions do not extend to private households. As a result, domestic workers, a vast majority who are

women, face difficulties in accessing sufficient income support in the case of work-related injuries and retirement, for instance. Migrant domestic workers face even more discrimination as national regulations concerning social protection provisions for domestic workers often exclude migrant workers. Thus, a recommendation was made towards including domestic workers under social protection provisions.

### Group 3. Partnerships

Focusing on partnerships, Group 3 shared highlights from their discussion. There should be more BLAs between sending and receiving countries including the participation of social partners and other relevant stakeholders since they can contribute to the overall protection of migrant workers. To enhance the implementation of BLAs and MOUs, it was suggested that the monitoring systems should be strengthened, and meetings of the stakeholders concerned in the monitoring should be on a more regular basis. Such agreements would also contribute to the reduction in the costs of recruitment, portability of social security entitlements, and mutual recognition of skills. Further, in the context of the Middle East, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) requirements should be included in the MOUs in the countries to facilitate the protection of women migrant workers.

Collaboration between regional trade union confederations is also crucial in improving the protection of all migrant workers, in particular, women migrant workers. For instance, the MOU between ATUC, SARTUC and ArabTUC resulted in setting up an MRC in Jordan. It was also indicated that NGOs and trade unions should work together in a way that efficiently enhances protection for migrant workers. For example, the role of NGOs in providing services for migrant workers in countries of origin and some countries of destination including in countries where trade unions were not present was duly recognized. It was also mentioned that NGOs could refer migrant workers to trade unions on matters of freedom of association and right to collective bargaining. In addition, the importance of the portability of trade union memberships was underlined in the discussion. Trade union solidarity should be utilized to its full potential so that workers have access to unions also in the destination country. Further, the National Federation of Employees and Workers' Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL), has been engaged in the organization of domestic workers. Facilitating the organization of women migrant workers should be encouraged as it strengthens the leadership of women and contributes to the overall empowerment and liberation of women migrant workers.

There was also a call for stronger partnerships between trade unions and employers' organizations at the regional and national levels, in particular. A good example raised was the first joint meeting of the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC) and the South Asian Forum of Employers (SAFE) to agree on common opportunities and challenges in the protection of migrant workers from South Asia.

## Session 6. Partnerships

The first part of session 6 focused on the role of state-led global and regional partnerships and processes to support the implementation of the Bali Declaration and safe and fair migration for women. Participants of the session were Iskandar Zalami, Advisor to H.E. Minister of Labour, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, UAE; Imaduwa Vithanage Nilanthi Preethika Kumudunie, Director (Planning), Ministry of Telecommunication, Foreign Employment and Sports, Sri Lanka; Giuseppe Busini, Deputy Head, EU Delegation to Thailand; Michelle Leighton, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO; and Dana Graber Ladek, Chief of Mission, IOM. Frank Hagemann, Deputy Director, ILO ROAS moderated the session.

Closing remarks delivered at the end of the last session of the inter-regional meeting were conveyed by Michelle Leighton (ILO) and Anna-Karin Jatfors (UN Women).

Iskandar Zalami discussed the evolution and developments related to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD). When the ADD was created, it was a state-led process whose main function was to provide a platform for member states to exchange good practices and views on issues of migration governance. It also offered a platform for joint programmes and partnerships. Since then, the ADD has opened up participation also to non-state members and stakeholders. In terms of the Bali Declaration, the agenda of the ADD was already in accordance with the recommendations of the Declaration.

Imaduwa Vithanage Nilanthi Preethika Kumudunie provided an overview of the Colombo Process (CP). CP aims to provide a forum for Asian labour-sending countries to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices on overseas employment; consult on issues faced by migrant workers, labour origin and destination states, and propose practical solutions for the well-being of vulnerable migrant workers; optimize development benefits from organized overseas employment, and enhance dialogue with countries of destination, and review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations and identify further steps for action. CP has five thematic priority areas and four cross-cutting themes. The thematic priority areas include skills and qualification recognition processes; fostering ethical recruitment practices; pre-departure orientation and empowerment; promotion of cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances; and labour market analysis. The four cross-cutting themes are migrant health, operationalization of the migration-related elements of the SDGs, promotion of equality for women migrant workers, and consular support for migrant workers. CP has also connected with trade unions, such as SARTUC, and supported recruitment agency associations.

Giuseppe Busini from the EU Delegation offered insights to EU-led partnerships in Asia and the Arab States that have focused on the protection and promotion of the rights of women migrant workers. Firstly, migration is an encompassing mandate of the EU. The EU aims to fulfil the decent work agenda throughout its activities to foster economic integration, trade and sustainability. Moreover, gender equality and women's empowerment are integral in meeting the 2030 SDGs. Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration (REFRAME) is an EU-funded global action that aims to prevent and erase abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices while maximizing the protection of migrant workers and their contributions. In addition, the Ship to Shore Rights project has successfully collaborated with the Royal Thai government, employers' and workers' organizations and buyers to prevent unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood industry. Due to the success of the

project, the EU is discussing the opportunities for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 188 and Protocol No. 29 on forced labour.

Michelle Leighton from the ILO and Dana Graber Ladek from the IOM elaborated on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and UN Network on Migration that was set up to assist member states in the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM. The GCM is the first state-led framework that addresses all aspects of migration and is closely linked to the SDGs.

The UN Network comprises 38 agencies of the UN System, and the ILO and IOM are a part of the executive committee. It was emphasized that the UN Network will not take over all migration-related issues – rather, the network identifies the priorities under the GCM that are jointly targeted by the UN system as a whole. The network is essential in bringing the objectives of the GCM down to the local level.

To meet the objectives in specific areas of work, different working groups have also been established by the UN Network – for example, the ILO leads a thematic working group on decent work and regular migration. Previously, there has been a lack of consistent guidance regarding the support available for member states in implementing structures for cooperation between countries of origin and destination. To address this, the UN system will offer guidance in different aspects for member states engaged in cooperation arrangements regarding labour migration governance. Given that the UN Network is still in its infancy, the question is how to increase participation on the national and regional levels and how the Network can connect with different regional processes such as the CP and ADD.

In terms of projects, the IOM together with UN Women implements PROMISE (Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand) that directly targets women migrant workers to increase their protection and employability. The project aims to develop the skills of women migrant workers and to connect them with employers in Thailand.

## Discussion

The audience was asked if they feel that their interests are well represented in the different regional efforts and coordination mechanisms. Concerns were raised about the UN Network becoming a process of the UN itself rather than successfully engaging different stakeholders at regional and national levels. Therefore, it is important to consider how all stakeholders can be comprehensively included in the UN Network. In addition, more direction is needed to indicate the agency coordinating the UN Network in different countries.

GCM has facilitated more attention to migration issues. Implementation is taking place as a state-led voluntary process at national and regional levels. The UN Network is working at global levels, but also now emerging at regional and national levels to ensure better UN and stakeholder support to member states as they request support in these state-led processes. It was clarified that the UN Network is still emerging and that there are no fixed rules as of yet regarding which procedures and structures are the best in involving different stakeholders at the national level. However, drawing in different stakeholders at the national level and including them in the different processes of the UN Network is essential for the successful implementation of the GCM. The UN's role in the application of the GCM has to also be clearly defined.

## Freedom of association in regional processes

Freedom of association is one of the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work. However, workers' access to join trade unions can vary greatly between different countries. Participants discussed solutions for countries in which trade union rights are limited since tripartism and social dialogue can be vital for migrant workers. For instance, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and ADD have a specific civil society coordinator whose task is to ensure the sufficient representation of civil society in these global and regional processes.

## Session 6. Partnerships (continued)

The second part of session 6 on partnerships focused on sharing the ideas of civil society actors. Participants for the last session of the inter-regional meeting were Ukrish Kanchanaketu, ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE); Ruben Torres, General Secretary, ATUC; and Roula Hamati, Coordinator, Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM). Frank Hagemann, Deputy Director, ILO ROAS, moderated the session. The participants discussed how employers' and workers' organizations have taken forward the labour migration components of the Bali Declaration, with particular reference to women migrant workers. Experiences on partnerships between CSOs and other stakeholders in the Asia-Middle East corridor were also explored.

Ukrish Kanchanaketu elaborated on efforts by employers' organizations towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Bali Declaration. Since 2010 ACE has been a cooperating partner in ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN project, and in 2013 ACE developed an action plan and adopted employers' policy framework for sustainable labour migration in ASEAN in which skills, OSH, recruitment, forced labour and non-discrimination are prioritized. ACE member organizations have also taken part in other projects implemented by the ILO such as Safe and Fair and Ship to Shore. Importantly, the ACE is cooperating with ATUC on the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. ACE also aims to increase support on good practices for its members to ensure compliance with international labour standards.

Ruben Torres shared insights from the perspective of workers' organizations. ATUC aims to expand the opportunities for the organization of migrant workers and assisting migrant workers in crisis. To contribute to this end, ATUC has set up MRCs in Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Singapore with support from the ILO. MRCs not only provide a channel for migrant workers to lodge complaints but they also act as a gateway for the organization of the workers. As a result of the MOU signed by the ArabTUC, ATUC and SARTUC, an MRC was established in Jordan to respond to the needs of migrant domestic workers. ATUC also aims to strengthen women youth committees and increase the number of women members in trade unions. Finally, ATUC is engaged with different partners to raise awareness about OSH and violence against women migrant workers.

Roula Hamati spoke about the importance of partnerships among CSOs and other stakeholders in the protection of migrant workers. Women migrant workers, in particular, are in an extremely vulnerable position when they are abused since often, they have no one to turn to for help. Policies alone are not enough to ensure the protection of migrant workers. Therefore, it is important to utilize the collective forces of governments, trade unions, UN agencies, CSOs, etc. CSOs may not necessarily always represent the voice of all migrant workers, but they can act as 'first responders' especially for women migrant workers in



distress since civil society actors are often familiar with the needs of migrant workers and the issues they frequently encounter. Access to services can be addressed through civil society partnerships rather than only relying on state action. Therefore, civil society can also help to empower migrant workers.

## Discussion

Participants were given the opportunity to share their opinions regarding their representation in inter-regional global networks and coordination mechanisms. In terms of employers' organizations, it is essential to engage all stakeholders in these processes. Employers' cooperation with workers' organizations such as ACE-ATUC partnership on the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus is an example of good practice which can be replicated elsewhere. Taking into account the interests of women migrant workers, the institutionalization of AFML as a multi-stakeholder forum in the ASEAN is also an example of good practice which can be shared with other regions.

Trade union agreements across countries are expanding, and these should be encouraged and supported particularly with regards to implementation. BLAs and MOUs are also important in protecting rights and ensuring proper skills/jobs matches for business productivity. They should better incorporate international labour standards including provisions on fair recruitment, and be responsive to the needs of women migrant workers.

Moreover, in Thailand NGOs in provinces with high concentrations of migrant workers collaborate with the employers to ensure the protection of migrant workers. In terms of trade unions, they represent and speak for migrant workers, and so trade unions should be included in global and regional processes. Finally, NGOs are crucial in linking regional processes at the national level sometimes even more effectively than UN processes. Therefore, it is important to consider how civil society can be included in the GCM agenda and its implementation.

### Assessing partnerships for migrant worker protection

Considering the magnitude and complexity of the issue of migration, there is clear evidence from migrant workers themselves that a lot more work needs to be done, especially when it comes to helping women migrant workers in distress or 'run away' workers.

Migrant domestic workers are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and violence as a significant number of them is in an irregular situation, and as such, excluded from national labour regulations. Live-in domestic workers who work in isolation can become trapped in an abusive employment relationship and do not report the abuse to law enforcement often in the fear of deportation and/or due to social stigmas. It is also more difficult for domestic workers to provide evidence of the alleged abuse as labour inspections seldom extend to private households. Running away from the employer is seen as a way out from the situation – however, this can further complicate their situation in terms of residency and/or legal status of the worker. Partnerships between the CSO and governments should be encouraged as they can help to fill the gap as a source of access to remedy and information especially when it comes to assisting women domestic workers in distress.

Sometimes, the understanding of particular social issues might differ greatly between countries in the Asia-Arab States corridor. It is important to analyze the resources and space

used for these partnerships so that they can improve the lives of migrant workers comprehensively.

## Closing remarks

Michelle Leighton summarized key lessons and recommendations relevant for going forward. Several positive developments exist in the context of fair and ethical recruitment. More efforts are needed to improve the enforcement of the different rules and regulations and to consider the specific needs of men and women migrant workers. In the area of protection, more research is required to better understand migrant deaths and the role of women migrant workers in this context. Greater attention should also be paid towards removing gender-based discrimination in immigration laws and working conditions. With partnerships, MOUs are important in protecting the rights of migrant workers and ensuring proper skills and jobs development – however, they should better incorporate international labour standards and provisions of fair recruitment and respond to the needs of women migrant workers. Extending trade union agreements across countries and extending these types of partnerships should be encouraged particularly with regards to their implementation.

Anna Karin Jatfors emphasized the need to have laws and policies in place that respond to the needs of women. When discussing means to end violence against women, it is necessary to ensure that the measures improve the protection and contribute to the empowerment of women migrant workers both in countries of destination and origin. In terms of accountability, 'speaking up' is crucial as it can potentially stop violence from taking place in the first place. When women migrant workers do face violence, appropriate support services must be available and accessible.

## Conclusions of the meeting and next steps

The following section provides a summary of each session, including the recommendations and challenges that came up in the discussions. It also indicates the next steps to be taken.

### Session 1. Introduction

- Most of the labour migration flows from Asia are concentrated in the GCC – recently, a decrease in these migration flows has been observed. However, there is a trend of increasing labour mobility from Africa. Women are often found in the ‘feminized’ sectors of work such as domestic and care work with fewer labour protections.
- There have been positive developments since the adoption of the Bali Declaration, namely efforts taken towards abolishing or reforming the sponsorship system in the Arab States, new laws in Asia, fair recruitment initiatives, measures for wage protection and improvement in OSH in some countries. However, particular areas of concern remain, such as high recruitment costs and the realization of fair recruitment, and low ratification rates of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Data collection on SDG indicators for decent work and well-managed migration remains a challenge.
- Women migrant workers, in particular, lack sufficient access to justice and support systems and effective maternity protections; and suffer from gender-based discrimination in immigration laws.

### Session 2. Fair recruitment with a focus on women migrant workers

- Progress has been made to increase fair recruitment practices in countries of origin since the adoption of the Bali Declaration. Nepal, for instance, has taken steps towards eliminating malpractices in recruitment by reducing the number of recruitment agencies in the country and by concluding MOUs and BLAs with countries of destination on zero-recruitment costs for workers. This may particularly benefit women, who often have to pay high costs for migration. The Nepal-Jordan migration corridor has demonstrated improvements in strengthening protections for Nepalese women migrant workers regarding fair recruitment in the garment sector.
- Private recruitment agencies potentially have an important role in contributing to fair recruitment. By fostering fair and ethical recruitment practices, such as charging no fees on workers, recruitment agencies can support positive changes by leading through example. They will need to take an approach that further supports women migrant workers including reviewing any unethical practices within the recruitment agency membership and cases of violence by recruitment agencies.
- Taking migrant workers’ psycho-social health into account when developing policies on support systems should be considered. Needs of women, especially those who might have faced violence and harassment have to be taken into account as well.

- Greater attention needs to be paid to providing orientation for both employers as well as workers. Migrant workers should also be offered post-arrival orientation and training in all countries of destination, and likewise employers should receive similar training with specific reference to domestic workers.
- With regard to returning migrant workers, re-integration programmes should be designed in a way so that they can respond to the needs of women migrant workers.
- Despite the legal reforms on the national level and the tools and instruments provided by the ILO and other international/regional bodies, recruitment policies and other frameworks often remain weak in terms of their implementation. Attention needs to be paid to the development and implementation of rules and regulations for legislation and enforcement, which also consider the specific needs of men and women migrant workers.
- Policy and programmes developed to support fair and ethical recruitment should also consider the aspect of brain-drain or emigration of skilled human resources where appropriate. Guidance in the ILO Multilateral Framework call for adopting measures to mitigate the loss of workers with critical skills, including by establishing guidelines for ethical recruitment.
- When discussing the specific needs of women migrant workers, issues underlying “absconding” workers (such as domestic workers) needs to be carefully examined, since it often indicates severe deficits in the treatment of migrant workers.

### Session 3A. Protection, with particular focus on women migrant workers (policies and good practices)

- New laws to enhance the protection of women migrant workers have been adopted in countries of destination, such as the UAE and Qatar. The reforms in the UAE have increased the equal treatment of both women and men workers and provided specific maternity protections for women migrant workers as well as for domestic workers.
- Progress has also been made on mechanisms for wage protection (GCC countries) and OSH (Singapore)
- The Philippines has continued to demonstrate good practices. s. These include BLAs with GCC countries to facilitate the skills development of workers and providing support systems for OFWs, including online mechanisms.
- Private recruitment agencies can also be integral in strengthening the protection of women migrant workers by conducting background checks on the employers and making sure that the workers have the skills required for the job they are recruited for.
- To support the empowerment of women migrant workers, awareness needs to be raised so that women migrant workers are aware of their rights, such as joining unions while overseas. There should also be greater collaboration between trade unions in the country of origin and destination to enhance support services and protection for women migrant workers.

- Specific challenges remain in terms of delivering and enhancing access to support services for women migrant workers. Women migrant workers continue to be victimized for the violence that happens to them, which restricts them from reporting the cases to relevant authorities. They are often not aware of their rights and have limited access to support services and information.
- More research and analysis are needed to better document and understand migrant deaths and the experiences of women migrant workers in these tragedies.
- Greater attention is needed on joint work towards removing gender-based discrimination in immigration laws and working conditions, such as wages and lack of maternity protection. Gender-based immigration bans can result in women migrating through irregular channels.
- Since domestic workers' place of employment is located in the private sphere, conducting enforcement through labour inspections can be extremely challenging.
- Legal reforms are not enough to bring about effective results in enhancing protection for women migrant workers. To complement reforms, there has to be a change in public attitudes and beliefs regarding the contribution, role and rights of all migrant workers.
- More can be done to expand support services to women migrant workers facilitating their access to justice, including complaints mechanisms. Important work in this regard has been done in Asia and the Arab States by ILO constituents' and CSO-supported MRCs.
- There is a lack of coordination between service providers. These different actors have to be linked to each other more comprehensively. Also, support services must be available for women migrant workers in their language.

### 3B. Protection, with particular focus on women migrants in key sectors of work in destination countries (e.g. domestic work, construction, among others)

- Several protection measures exist for workers in domestic work and construction in destination countries. These include mechanisms to enhance wage protection and OSH provisions, and specific protections relevant for women workers such as regulations against sexual harassment.
- Employers' organizations can also have considerable impacts on improving protection for women migrant workers. Specifically, ECOT reported that it provides consultation to construction companies in Thailand so that they can comply with relevant laws and respect the rights of migrant workers, including women migrant workers.
- However, more work needs to be done towards workers' representation to improve women's empowerment and leadership. Legal and practical barriers restrict the organization of women migrant workers; they often work in isolation with few days off in a sector not recognized as regular employment. Due to bans or restrictions on migration, women migrant workers are beyond the protection of governments and

unable to access the opportunities or facilities provided by them. Employment opportunities should be protected by special provisions by both governments. GEFONT has been engaging in partnerships with trade unions in countries of destination to facilitate the delivery of support systems for migrant workers, with a particular emphasis on issues related to the vulnerability of women migrants.

- Migrant workers such as women migrant domestic workers are already organized in different ways, such as through hobbies, religion, etc. Opportunities to raise awareness of migrant workers' rights within these groups should be utilized.
- In addition, it was suggested, that the inclusion of migrant workers in an irregular situation in trade unions needs to be addressed.

#### Session 4. Progress made in redressing employer-employee relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement

- Several steps have been taken towards addressing unequal employer-employee relationships in Qatar. Significantly, progress towards job mobility and the abolition of the exit permit will considerably enhance workers' freedom of movement in Qatar. In addition, in Singapore, the industry association supports job matching for migrant construction workers under certain conditions, through a directory set up. However, with respect to domestic workers, the consent of the current employer is required for workers to change employers.
- The importance of complaints mechanism to be put in place to settle disputes related to non-payment and delayed payments of wages was reiterated.
- With regard to migrant worker mobility, it is also necessary to consider the length of a "grace period" for workers after leaving their employers, and how it affects irregular migration. The UAE grants migrant workers 30 days to find a new employer before having to leave the country.
- To ensure the freedom of movement of migrant workers, it is important that workers are in the possession of their passports.
- Workers should not pay to get a job, including during job transfers. Some countries, such as Singapore, partners with NGOs to facilitate the process of finding a new employer for migrant workers with valid claims/grievances.
- It was highlighted that the costs of migration should be lowered for both workers and employers. Countries should consider utilizing recruitment frameworks that require collecting no fees from migrant workers or employers such as public employment services.

## Session 5. Priorities and opportunities for expanding fair recruitment and protection systems in the Asia-Arab States migration corridors, particularly to enhance protection of women migrant workers (Results of the group discussion)

- There may be more pilots on fair recruitment, and zero recruitment fee clauses should be incorporated into BLAs and MOUs between countries of origin and destination. In addition, articles concerning domestic workers should be included in the overall or integrated labour migration BLAs.
- Online platforms and mobile applications could be utilized to enhance reporting and monitoring of recruitment agencies, employers and government services.
- To facilitate the realization of decent work for women migrant workers, awareness should be raised among women migrant workers about their rights and the support services available for them in the countries of origin and destination.
- Labour inspections though challenging should extend to the household of the employer of domestic workers, and social protection should also provide coverage to domestic workers. Alternatives to labour inspection at the home were suggested such as periodic interviews of the worker at the relevant Department/inspectorate.
- There should be more regional cooperation between trade union federations to protect the rights of women migrant workers. In addition, a collaboration between trade unions in the country of origin and destination in terms of portable union memberships is encouraged to improve migrant workers' access to unions. Further, the organization of women migrant workers should be supported since it can effectively contribute to the empowerment of women migrant workers.
- More government-to-government BLAs should be put in place to increase protection with a specific focus on women migrant workers. To support the implementation of MOUs, monitoring should be conducted on a more regular basis. To further enhance protection for women migrant workers, MOUs could also incorporate important principles of CEDAW. Finally, specific efforts on prevention and addressing violence and harassment against women migrant workers should also be made.
- NGOs and trade unions should work together in a way that supports the organization of migrant workers. For example, NGOs could act as referrals to trade union referrals for migrant workers.

## Session 6. Partnerships

- Given the large scale and complexity of international labour migration, global, state-led mechanisms and regional processes have increasingly placed importance on engaging all stakeholders, including non-state members, in the implementation of the labour migration components of the Bali Declaration.

- BLAs and MOUs are important in protecting rights and ensuring proper skills and jobs matching to improve business productivity. These agreements should better incorporate international labour standards, including provisions on fair recruitment, and respond to the needs of women migrant workers.
- Extending trade union agreements across countries should be encouraged and supported particularly with regards to implementation.
- Taking into account the interests of women migrant workers, the institutionalization of the AFML as a multi-stakeholder forum in ASEAN is an example of good practice which can be shared with other regions.
- GCM has facilitated more attention to migration issues. Implementation is taking place as a state-led voluntary process at national and regional levels. The UN Network is working at global levels, but also now emerging at regional and national levels to ensure better UN and stakeholder support to member states as they request support in these state-led processes
- Collaboration among trade unions, employers' organizations and CSOs, including women's organizations, is equally critical for the realization of the labour migration aspects of the Bali Declaration.
- Employers' cooperation with workers' organizations such as the ACE-ATUC partnership, on the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus, is an example of good practice which can be replicated elsewhere
- Cross-regional trade union partnerships have been essential in establishing MRCs in countries of origin and destination, to set up mechanisms to respond to the needs of migrant domestic workers.
- CSOs can act as first aid responders when migrant workers need assistance since they are often familiar with the specific needs and issues of migrant workers, including women migrant workers.

### Next steps

It is recommended that different constituents integrate the lessons learned and take the suggested actions or recommendations from various discussions from the inter-regional meeting forward in their operations. Governments, social partners and CSOs may incorporate the suggestions at the national and regional levels. The ILO will include the takeaways of the meeting into its programme implementation in 2020-21 and deepen and broaden the inter-regional dialogue in the Arab States, Asia and Africa. Further, the ILO will accelerate its efforts towards eliminating discrimination, violence and harassment against women by promoting ILO Convention No. 190 and incorporating these efforts into the different ILO projects and programmes. For example, integrating these specific issues into the counselling and services provided by MRCs will be essential.

This report and the results of the inter-regional meeting will also feed into the planning of the 17<sup>th</sup> APRM anticipated to take place in 2021.



## Annex 1. Selected good practices

### Fair recruitment

#### Qatar Visa Centers (QVCs)

QVCs aim to increase the transparency and efficiency of recruitment and employment processes for both employers and workers and to alleviate contract deception. Importantly, no fees are charged to migrant workers since employers in Qatar are required to cover the costs through bank transfers. Through QVCs, migrant workers are able to get information about their rights and their employment contracts prior to departure. QVCs in major countries of origin have been important in protecting the rights of migrant workers, including women migrant workers, by facilitating the recruitment process making them more transparent and faster. Thus, QVCs can potentially prevent women migrant workers from being subject to exploitation during recruitment.

#### Fair recruitment pilots

ILO's FAIR project in the Nepal-Jordan labour mobility corridor between 2017 and 2018 aimed to enhance fair recruitment practices and eliminate instances of human trafficking and forced labour in the garment sector. A majority of the Nepalese migrant workers in the sector in Jordan are women migrant workers. The project involved a wide range of stakeholders in the two countries, including governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, recruitment agencies and civil society, and engaged with major clothing brands to promote fair recruitment practices. Specifically, the results of the pilot were lower migration-related fees and debt, and increased knowledge by workers of their working hours and employment contracts. Moreover, the pilot also demonstrated the important role of large international brands in encouraging fair recruitment practices in Jordan, reaching also factory suppliers.

#### Fair and ethical recruitment agencies

Private recruitment agencies are crucial in effectively responding to labour market needs by matching workers with employers. However, specific areas of concerns remain in terms of the relationship between unscrupulous employment agencies and the exploitation of women migrant workers in particular as fraudulent recruitment practices can result in forced labour or human trafficking. Therefore, fair and ethical recruitment practices that charge no fees and related costs to workers are essential in protecting the rights of women migrant workers. Fair and ethical recruitment practices are also aligned with the fundamental principle of the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), according to which "agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers." Companies like FSI Worldwide and Staffhouse International that have embodied the values of fair and ethical recruitment through their business conduct, can present examples of good practice in this field and further increase the protection for women migrant workers.

#### Online tools

Women migrant workers particularly in the domestic sector, are often not aware of their rights or have limited access to information. Online tools and applications can be valuable for women migrant workers as a means of accessing information in terms of their rights in the country of

destination. Online platforms and applications can also help migrant workers to stay clear from fraudulent recruitment agencies through peer-to-peer review systems. Supported by the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative and developed by ITUC, the Migrant Recruitment Advisor Platform gives migrant workers the opportunity to post their experiences online, rate recruitment agencies in the country of origin and destination. The platform also provides valuable feedback to governments about the practices of private recruitment agencies.

## Access to justice and support services for women migrant workers

### Migrant worker resource centers (MRCs)

ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme has provided support for 24 MRCs in six countries in Southeast Asia in areas with a high concentration of migrant workers. MRCs provide support services (such as counselling) and information to migrant workers and their families. Migrant workers can also lodge complaints through MRCs. Services provided by MRCs aim to improve migrant workers' awareness of their rights related to recruitment and employment and makes them less vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Having access to the services provided by MRCs is crucial for women migrant workers since women migrant workers are likely to experience violence, abuse and harassment throughout the migration cycle. Between 2010 and 2018, over 50 per cent of the beneficiaries of MRCs were women.

## Worker mobility

### Qatar – removal of the no-objection certificate (NOC) and the exit permit

In the context of the Arab States, sponsorship systems can result in workplace isolation and migrant workers' dependency on the employer, and create challenges in terms of changing employers.

In Qatar, new legislation will be adopted in early 2020 to remove the need for all migrant workers (including domestic workers) to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC) from their employer as a condition for changing employers. Migrant workers will thus have the right to change employers without the approval of their current employer. Also, in January 2020, a decree will be adopted removing the exit permit for all workers, including domestic workers.

## Partnerships and international cooperation

### MOU between ATUC, SARTUC and ArabTUC

Collaboration between regional trade union associations has been influential in promoting the rights of migrant workers. An agreement signed by ATUC, SARTUC and ArabTUC in 2015 resulted in the establishment of an MRC in Amman, Jordan in 2018. The MRC provides information and legal services to women migrant workers from South Asia.

### ASEAN Forum for Migrant Labour (AFML)

AFML brings together different stakeholders in labour migration in the ASEAN, including tripartite constituents but also the ASEAN Secretariat, civil society and international organizations, to build consensus on the protection of migrant workers. For over a decade,

the AFML has convened 12 meetings focusing on different thematic discussions resulting in several recommendations for the ASEAN Member States and social partners under the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of Migrant Workers (Cebu Declaration).

The AFML also gives particular importance to concerns related to women migrant workers. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> AFML, the need for enhancing access to information for both women and men migrant workers was recognized. In 2011, participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> AFML agreed on gender-sensitive return and reintegration policies to protect and promote the rights of women migrant workers. The recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> AFML under the theme of ‘Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers: Towards Effective Recruitment Practices and Regulations’ emphasized the importance of gender-responsive migration policies that effectively respond to specific needs of women migrant workers in vulnerable sectors of labour.

Further, the recommendations of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFML on ‘Empowering the ASEAN Community through Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers’ resulted in specific recommendations to include gender-sensitivity under the umbrella of OSH promotion and compliance. Finally, the 10<sup>th</sup> AFML held in 2017 contributed to concrete recommendations recognizing domestic work as work in ASEAN.

#### Cooperation between employers’ and workers’ organizations

Collaboration between employers’ and workers’ organizations are also crucial in the protection of WMWs rights. In 2019, ACE and ATUC joined hands in supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and urged the ASEAN Committee of Migrant Workers (ACMW) and governments of ASEAN Member States to strengthen tripartite social dialogue mechanisms in the formulation and implementation of laws, policies and programmes to facilitate the realization of the ASEAN Consensus. The ASEAN Consensus asserts the protection of migrant workers with particular reference to women migrant workers and urges the ASEAN Member States to uphold fair and equal treatment migrant workers (irrespective of gender) with respect to remuneration, and protection from sexual violence and harassment at the workplace.

#### NGO partnerships – Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)

MFA is the largest NGO network committed to the protection of migrant workers. The MFA works together with trade unions both at the national and regional levels making sure that they are represented in regional and national consultations organized by the MFA. The MFA has also engaged Members of Parliament in the Asian region on migration advocacy and promoted the Lawyers Beyond Borders (LBB) Network of volunteer lawyers in countries of origin and destination to facilitate migrant workers’ access to justice.

MFA has been integral in working towards enhancing protection for women migrant workers and bringing attention to addressing violence against women by, for example, advocating for the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 189 (Domestic workers Convention), and organizing capacity building programmes for CSOs on the protection of the rights of migrant workers with a specific focus on gender.

## Annex 2. The Bali Declaration in relation to gender and labour migration

The Bali Declaration, adopted at the 16th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, on 9 December 2016, determined priorities for national policy and action priorities for member States in the region, to be implemented in consultation with the social partners. The priorities included:

**7. closing gender gaps in opportunity and treatment at work through:**

- (a) measures to break down barriers to women's labour force participation and advancement;
- (b) promotion of equal pay for work of equal value;
- (c) extended maternity protection measures;
- (d) measures enabling women and men to balance work and care responsibilities;

**8. enhancing labour migration policies based on relevant international labour standards that:**

- (a) recognize the labour market needs of all;
- (b) are based on the General principles and operational guidelines on fair recruitment (2016), including no charging of recruitment fees or related costs to workers; and the entitlement of workers to keep in their possession travel and identity documents;
- (c) provide adequate protection to all migrant workers, including through better portability of skills and social security benefits;
- (d) take into account the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2005);
- (e) redress employer-worker relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement, their right to terminate employment or change employers, taking into account any contractual obligations that may apply, and their right to return freely to their countries of origin;

Source: Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of experiences and progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant worker. Background paper. (ILO, 2019).

### Annex 3. List of participants

No.	Title	Name	Country	Position	Organization/Ministry	Attendance
<b>Government</b>						
1	Mr	Khali Buhazza	Bahrain	Labour Department Manager	GCC Labour and Social Ministerial Council	Participant
2	Ms	Hana Al Saffar	Bahrain	Director of Communication	Labour Market Regulatory Authority	Participant
3	Mr	Mohammed Al Busmait	Bahrain	Director of Legal Affairs	Labour Market Regulatory Authority	Participant
4	Dr	Nasi Kamrun Nahar	Bangladesh	Deputy Secretary	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	Participant
5	Mr	Tareq Ahmed	Jordan	Head of Inspection Department	Ministry of Labour	Participant
6	Mr	Sultan Alzoubi	Kuwait	Head of Disputes and Legal Division	Domestic Workers Department, Public Authority of Manpower	Participant
7	Mr	Umesh Dhungana	Nepal	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS)	Participant
8	Mr	Abdulla AlMullahi	Oman	Director of International Organizations and Foreign Relations	Ministry of Manpower	Participant
9	Mr	Carl Rookie O. Daquio	Philippines	Acting Supervising Labor and Employment Officer	Institute for Labor Studies and Department of Labor and Employment	Participant

10	Ms	Claire Ruzzel Esturas	Philippines	Gender and Development Specialist II	Philippine Commission on Women	Participant
11	Mr	Mohammed Hassan Al Obaidly	Qatar	Deputy Under Secretary for Labour Affairs	Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs	Participant
12	Mr	Saleh Saeed H A Almarri	Qatar	Director of the International Cooperation Department	Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs	Participant
13	Mr	Salem Ahmed M S – Almarzouqi	Qatar	Senior Labour Specialist, International Labour Relations	Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs	Participant
14	Ms	Pin Sin Chia	Singapore	Assistant Director	Foreign Manpower Unit, Workplace Policy and Strategy Division, Ministry of Manpower	Participant
15	Ms	Nilanthi Preethika Kumudunie Imaduwa Vithanage	Sri Lanka	Director (Planning)	Ministry of Telecommunication, Foreign Employment and Sports	Participant
16	Mr	Lal M Samarasekera	Sri Lanka	Additional Secretary (Administration)	Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations	Participant
17	Ms	Runglawon Kantasit	Thailand	Director	Prevention and Problem Solving on Labour Protection Group, Ministry of Labour	Participant
18	Ms	Patana Bhandhufalck	Thailand	Assistant Permanent Secretary	Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour	Participant
19	Mr	Jatuphon Sakrat	Thailand	Labour Specialist, Practitioner Level	Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, Ministry of Labour	Participant
20	Mr	Kobchai Wongwaiyut	Thailand	Senior International Relations Officer	International Affairs Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour	Participant

21	Ms	Phonnicha Wang-arkad	Thailand	Foreign Relations Officer	International Affairs Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour	Participant
22	Ms	Noppawan Buengchaiyaphoom	Thailand	Social Development Worker	Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)	Participant
23	Ms	Varee Chaitaveepporn	Thailand	Foreign Affairs Officer	Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)	Participant
24	Mr	Iskandar Zalami	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Advisor to H.E. the Minister	Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation	Participant
25	Mr	Mahaba Al Saleh	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Director of International Organizations Department	Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation	Participant
26	Ms	Alia Mohammad	United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Head of Section	Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation	Participant
<b>Workers' organizations</b>						
27	Mr	Dimas Supriadi Wardhana	Indonesia	Focal Point for Migrant Workers	K-SPI: Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (CITU)	Participant
28	Mr	Markus Saholat Sidauruk	Indonesia	Vice President of KSBI Program	K-SBSI: Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Trade Union	Participant

29	Mr	Josua Mata	Philippines	Secretary General	Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO)	Participant
30	Mr	Thavee Techateeravat	Thailand	President	Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC)	Participant
31	Ms	Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tu	Viet Nam	Staff member	Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL)	Participant
32	Mr	MD Razequzzaman	Bangladesh	Member	National Coordination Committee on Workers Education (NCCWE)	Participant
33	Ms	Nisha Baniya	Nepal	Secretary of Labour Relation Committee	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)	Participant
34	Mr	Hapuarachchige Subash Dimuth Ruwantha Karunarathna	Sri Lanka	Vice President	National Trade Union Federation (NTUF)	Participant
35	Mr	Abdulkarim Ali	Bahrain	Assistant Secretary General, International Relations	General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU)	Participant
36	Mr	Mo'yad Al Waheedi	Jordan	Secretary	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU)	Participant
37	Mr	Ghassan Hijazi	Lebanon	Secretary General of International Affairs and Secretary of Youth	National Federation of Employees' and Workers' Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL)	Participant
38	Mr	Abdulla Moosa Ali Al Husaini	Oman	Acting Head of Institutional Relations and Media Department	General Federation of Oman Trade Unions (GFOTW)	Participant



39	Mr	Ruben Torres		General Secretary	ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC)	Participant
40	Mr	Laxman Bahadur Basnet		General Secretary	South Asia Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC)	Participant
41	Mr	Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr.		Regional Representative	Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI)	Participant
<b>Employers' organizations</b>						
42	Mr	Gregorius Cheh Tan Fung	Indonesia	Manpower and Social Security Committee Member for Regulations and Institutional Cooperation	The Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO)	Participant
43	Ms	Raquel Bracero	Philippines	President	Employers Confederation of the Philippines / Philippine Association of Service Exporters, Inc. (PASEI)	Participant
44	Mr	Ukrish Kanchanaketu	Thailand	Adviser	Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) / ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE)	Participant
45	Ms	Vi Thi Hong Minh	Viet Nam	Deputy Director of Bureau for Employers' Activities	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Participant
46	Ms	Rajani Nepal	Nepal	Officer	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)	Participant
47	Ms	Samanthika Niroshinie Gonagala	Sri Lanka	Senior Industrial Relations Advisor	Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC)	Participant
48	Mr	Fahad Faisal Alaynati	Bahrain	Senior Specialist of International Relations	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)	Participant

49	Mr	Mohammed Alamer	Bahrain	Manager of Legal Affairs	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)	Participant
50	Ms	Sonya Janahi	Bahrain	Member of Board of Directors	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)	Participant
51	Mr	Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman	Bangladesh	Secretary General	Bahrain Employers Federation (BEF) / Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA)	Participant
52	Mr	Ali AlHossayan	Kuwait	Assistant Director	Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)	Participant
53	Mr	Abdulaziz Al Kuwari	Qatar	Director of Legal Affairs Department	Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI)	Participant
54	Mr	Hussein Al Qahtani	Saudi Arabia	Executive Director Saudi Committee for Labour Market	Council of Saudi Chambers (CSC)	Participant
<b>Recruitment agencies and associations</b>						
55	Mr	Emmanuel Gomez		Managing Director and Co-Founder	Staffhouse International Resources	Speaker
56	Mr	Nicholas Forster		Senior Vice President	FSI International	Speaker
<b>Government observer</b>						
57	Mr	Raymond Wasukira	Uganda	Senior Labour Officer	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Observer
<b>Academia</b>						

58	Mr	Piyasiri Wickramasekara		Consultant	International Labour Organization	Observer / Expert Consultant for the development of the meeting's Background Paper
59	Mr	Imco Brouwer		Director	Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population (GLMM) Programme	Speaker
<b>Civil society organizations</b>						
60	Mr	Ashley William Gois		Regional Coordinator	Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)	Speaker
61	Ms	Niken Anjar Wulan		Program Officer	International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)	Speaker
62	Ms	Roula Hamati		Coordinator	Cross-Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM)	Speaker
63	Ms	Rima Isa Kalush		Director	Migrants Rights Organization	Observer
64	Ms	Deana Janin Safarini		Project Coordinator	Tamkeen Fields for Aid	Observer
65	Ms	Dao Thi Vi Phuong		Vice Director, Department of Laws and Policies	Vietnam Women's Union	Observer
<b>Women migrant workers</b>						
66	Ms	Dina Nuriyati	Indonesia	Coordinator Research and International Relations	Serikat Burug Migrant Indonesia (SBMI)	Speaker
67	Ms	Tran Thi Vinh	Viet Nam	Returning migrant worker from Saudi Arabia		Speaker

Development partners and embassies						
68	H.E.	Pirkka Tapiola		Ambassador of the European Union to Thailand	European Union Delegation to Thailand	Speaker
69	Mr	Giuseppe Busini		Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Thailand	European Union Delegation to Thailand	Speaker
70	Ms	Francesca Gilli		Attaché – Programme Officer Cooperation	European Union Delegation to Thailand	Observer
71	Ms	Maria Chiara Piazza		Policy Officer, Migration Employment, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development	European Commission	Observer
72	Ms	Ellen Kelly		Governance Adviser, Asia Regional Team	British Embassy, Bangkok	Observer
UN agencies						
73	Ms	Sabine Henning		Chief, Sustainable Demographic Transition Section	Social Development Division, UNESCAP	Observer
74	Mr	Hakim Norton		Intern	Social Development Division, UNESCAP	Observer
75	Dr	Pia Oberoi		Senior Advisor on Migration and Human Rights	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	Observer
76	Ms	Jessica Wong-Dewangga		Regional Programme Officer	Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, UNODC	Observer
77	Ms	Dana Graber Ladek		Chief of Mission	International Organization of Migration (IOM) Thailand	Speaker

78	Mr	Mohammed El Zakari		Chief of Mission	International Organization of Migration (IOM) Bahrain	Observer
79	Ms	Shashini Gomez		Regional Labor Mobility and Human Development Officer	International Organization of Migration (IOM)	Observer
80	Ms	Yujin Park		Regional Migrant Protection Support Officer	International Organization of Migration (IOM)	Observer
81	Ms	Valentina Gurney		Programme Officer for CREST	International Organization of Migration (IOM)	Observer
82	Ms	Sang Hee		Project Manager	International Organization of Migration (IOM)	Observer
83	Ms	Anna-Karin Jatfors		Deputy Regional Director	UN Women	Speaker / Moderator
84	Ms	Melissa Alvarado		Regional EAW Programme Manager	UN Women	Speaker
85	Ms	Robin Mauney		EAW Programme Specialist, SAF Programme	UN Women	Observer
86	Ms	Nansiri Iamsuk		National Programme Coordinator	UN Women	Observer
<b>International Labour Organization (ILO)</b>						
87	Ms	Tomoko Nishimoto		Regional Director	ILO ROAP	Speaker
88	Ms	Panudda Boonpala		Deputy Regional Director	ILO ROAP	Speaker / Moderator
89	Mr	Frank Hagemann		Deputy Regional Director	ILO ROAS	Speaker / Moderator
90	Ms	Michelle Leighton		Chief, Labour Migration Branch	ILO HQ in Geneva	Speaker / Moderator

91	Mr	Ryszard Cholewinski		Senior Migration Specialist	ILO ROAS/DWT-Beirut	Speaker / Moderator / Organizer
92	Ms	Sophia Kagan		Chief Technical Adviser, Fairway Project	ILO ROAS/DWT-Beirut	Speaker
93	Mr	Max Tunon		Technical Specialist, Wage/Forced Labour, NORMES	ILO Project Office for Qatar	Observer
94	Mr	Nilim Baruah		Senior Migration Specialist	ILO ROAP/ DWT-Bangkok	Speaker / Moderator / Organizer
95	Mr	Pong-Sul Anh		ACTRAV Senior Specialist	ILO ROAP	Observer
96	Mr	Shabarinath Nair		Migration Specialist	ILO South Asia, DWT/CO-New Delhi	Moderator / Organizer
97	Ms	Anna Engblom		Senior Programme Manager for TRIANGLE in ASEAN	ILO ROAP	Observer
98	Ms	Marja Paavilainen		Senior Programme Officer for TRIANGLE in ASEAN II	ILO ROAP	Observer
99	Ms	Anna Olsen		Technical Specialist for TRIANGLE in ASEAN II	ILO ROAP	Observer
100	Ms	Anjali Fleury		Technical Officer for TRIANGLE in ASEAN	ILO ROAP	Observer
101	Ms	Anyamanee Tabtimsri		Programme Officer for Ship to Shore Project	ILO CO-Bangkok	Observer
102	Ms	Deepa Barathi		Chief Technical Adviser for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Moderator / Organizer
103	Ms	Catherine Laws		Technical Officer for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer
104	Ms	Rebecca Napier-Moore		Research and M&E Officer for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer

105	Ms	Natthanicha Lephilibert		National Project Coordinator for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer
106	Mr	Pichit Phromkade		Communications Officer for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer
107	Ms	Hatairat Thongprapai		Programme and Administrative Assistant for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer
108	Ms	Siripan Arayangkoon		Administrative Assistant for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO ROAP	Organizer
109	Ms	Ilora Hossain		Consultant for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO	Observer
110	Ms	Sichen Liang		Intern for Safe and Fair Programme	ILO	Organizer
111	Ms	Yoona Song		Intern for DWT for East Asia and South-East Asia and the Pacific	ILO	Organizer

## Annex 4. Agenda

Time	Agenda	Speakers	Moderators and Discussants
8:30 -9:00	Registration		
9:00 -9:45	Opening Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tomoko Nishimoto</b>, Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)</li> <li>• <b>Frank Hagemann</b>, Deputy Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)</li> <li>• <b>Anna-Karin Jatfors</b>, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)</li> <li>• <b>Amb. Pirkka Tapiola</b>, EU Ambassador to Thailand</li> </ul>	
9:45-10:00	Photo session		
10:00 – 11:00	<p><b>Session 1: Introduction</b></p> <p><i>Speakers will:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Present ILOs Global Programme on Migration and Mobility</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Present the meeting’s background paper: Labour migration trends in Asia and the Arab States, policy developments and key issues with a focus on women migrant workers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Michelle Leighton</b>, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO Geneva</li> <li>• <b>Nilim Baruah</b>, Senior Migration Specialist, ILO ROAP</li> <li>• <b>Ryszard Cholewinski</b>, Senior Migration Specialist, ILO ROAS</li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Patana Bhandhufalck</b>, Assistant Permanent Secretary, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Thailand</p>





<p>14:00 – 15:30</p>	<p><b>Session 3A: Protection, with particular focus on women migrant workers (policies and good practices)</b></p> <p>Speakers will:</p> <p>(i) <i>Share experiences on increasing the protection of migrant workers from exploitation, abuse and violence in the workplace by the adoption of national legislation in accordance with relevant international standards, effective enforcement of policies, and implementation of support services.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Share good practices in certification and recognition of skills and identify women’s specific needs in OSH, access to services, including justice, skills, and social protection (including maternity protection).</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Information sharing on ILO C190</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enhancing migrant worker protection in recruitment, skilling and in the work place</i> <b>Iskander Zalami</b>, Adviser to H.E. the Minister, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, United Arab Emirates (TBC)</li> <li>• <i>Good practices on the certification and recognition of skills and addressing women’s needs in relation to OSH, and their access to services, justice and social protection –</i> <b>Carl Rookie Daquio</b>, Supervising Labor and Employment Officer, Employment Research Division, International Labor Studies, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippines</li> <li>• <i>Role of trade unions in protecting and providing support services to women migrant workers -</i> <b>Abdulkarim Ali</b>, Assistant Secretary General, International Relations, General Federation of</li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Ryszard Cholewinski</b>, Senior Migration Specialist, ILO ROAS</p>
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	<p><b>Open Forum</b></p>	<p>Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Role of recruitment agencies in protecting and providing support services to women migrant workers –</i> <b>Emmanuel Gomez,</b> Managing Director and Co-Founder, Staffhouse International Resources</li> </ul>	<p>Discussant:</p> <p><b>Melissa Alvarado,</b> Regional EAW Programme Manager, UN Women, ROAP</p>
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break		
15:45 – 17:00	<p><b>Session 3B: Protection, with particular focus on women migrants in key sectors of work in destination countries (e.g. domestic work, construction, , among others)</b></p> <p><i>Speakers will:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Share experiences and good practices on increasing the protection of migrant workers, particularly women migrants in domestic work, construction and hospitality</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Highlight the role of governments and workers and employers’ organizations in addressing sector-specific concerns and taking into</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Experiences on the recruitment and employment of migrant domestic workers and measures to protect women migrant workers-</i> <b>Sultan Alzoubi,</b> Head of Disputes and Legal Division of the Domestic Workers Department, Public Authority of Manpower, Kuwait</li> <li><i>Organizing migrant domestic workers and the</i></li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Deepa Bharathi,</b> Chief Technical Adviser, Safe and Fair Programme</p>

	<p><i>consideration the needs of women migrant workers</i></p>	<p><i>collaborations between trade unions and civil society organizations -</i>  <b>Niken Anjar Wulan,</b>  Program Officer,  International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role of employers in implementing measures to support migrant workers, in particular women, in the construction sector -</i>  <b>Ukrish Kanchanaketu,</b>  Adviser, Employments Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)</li> <li>• <i>Organizing Nepali migrant workers through support groups established in destination countries, with particular focus on women migrants -</i>  <b>Nisha Baniya,</b> Secretary of Labour Relations, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)</li> <li>• <i>Measures to prevent the trafficking of women migrant workers -</i>  <b>Runglawon Kantasit,</b>  Director, Prevention and Problem Solving on Labour Protection Group, Ministry of Labour (MOL), Thailand</li> </ul>	<p>Discussant:</p> <p><b>Imco Brouwer,</b>  Director, Gulf Labour Markets</p>
	<p>Open forum</p>		

			and Migration (GLMM)
18:30	Reception dinner: Discussions with women migrant workers		
Time	Agenda	Speakers	Moderators and Discussants
8:30 - 9:00am	Registration		
9:00 – 10:15	<p><b>Session 4: Progress made in redressing employer-employee relationships that impede workers' freedom of movement</b></p> <p><i>Speakers will:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Discuss recent laws and regulations and reflect on progress made</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Share international standards and experiences on the possibility of migrant workers to change jobs</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Share tripartite approaches and experiences in protection of migrant workers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Qatar's Visa Centres, changes to Qatar's sponsorship system and related reforms - Salem Ahmed M S - Almarzouqi, Senior Labour Specialist, International Labour Relations Department, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, Qatar</i></li> <li><i>Role of trade unions in implementing measures to support migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers - Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr., Regional Representative, Building</i></li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Nilim Baruah,</b> Senior Migration Specialist, ILO ROAP</p>

	Open Forum	<p>and Wood workers International (BWI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Singapore's approach to ensuring well-being of migrant workers –</i> <b>Pin Sin Chia</b>, Assistant Director, Foreign Manpower Unit, Workplace Policy &amp; Strategy Division, Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Singapore</li> </ul>	<p>Discussant:</p> <p><b>Sophia Kagan</b>, Chief Technical Adviser, Fairway Project</p>
10:15 -12:00	<p><b>Session 5: Priorities and opportunities for expanding fair recruitment and protection systems in the Asia-Arab States migration corridors, particularly to enhance protection of women migrant workers</b></p> <p><i>Group work with guiding questions and sharing in plenary</i></p>		<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Shabarinath Nair</b>, Migration Specialist, ILO South Asia</p>
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch		
13:30 - 15:00	<p><b>Session 6: Partnerships</b></p> <p><i>A discussion in talk show format will take place on partnerships to further implementation of the Bali Declaration and safe and fair migration for women.</i></p> <p><i>Such partnerships include State led global and regional mechanisms and processes, bilateral arrangements, and collaboration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Iskander Zalami</b>, Adviser to H.E. the Minister, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization, United Arab Emirates (UAE)</li> <li>• <b>Imaduwa Vithanage</b> <b>Nilanthi Preethika</b></li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Frank Hagemann</b>, Deputy Regional Director, ILO ROAS</p>

	<p><i>among trade unions, employers' organizations and CSOs.</i></p> <p><i>Support to the implementation, monitoring and review of the decent work, labour migration and gender components of the GCM will also be discussed.</i></p> <p><b>Open Forum</b></p>	<p><b>Kumudunie</b>, Director (Planning), Ministry of Telecommunication Foreign Employment &amp; Sports, Sri Lanka</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Giuseppe Busini</b>, Deputy Head of Mission, EU Delegation to Thailand</li> <li>• <b>Dana Graber Ladek</b>, Chief of Mission to Thailand, International Organization for Migration</li> <li>• <b>Michelle Leighton</b>, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO Geneva</li> </ul>	
15:00 – 15:15	Coffee break		
15:15 – 16:30	<p><b>Session 6: Partnerships (continued)</b></p> <p><b>Open Forum</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ukrish Kanchanaketu</b>, Adviser, Employments Confederation of Thailand (ECOT), ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE)</li> <li>• <b>Ruben Torres</b>, General Secretary, ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC)</li> <li>• <b>Roula Hamati</b>, Coordinator, Cross Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants (CCRM)</li> </ul>	<p>Moderator:</p> <p><b>Frank Hagemann</b>, Deputy Regional Director, ILO ROAS</p>

16:30 – 17:00	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Panudda Boonpala,</b> Deputy Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</li><li>• <b>Anna-Karin Jatfors,</b> Deputy Regional Director, UN Women, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</li></ul>	
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