

# **Tokyo Democracy Forum**

**15 -16 February 2021**

**COVID-19 and Civic Space, Human Rights and  
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia Monitoring Project**

## **Impact on Migrant Workers in ASEAN**

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## Executive Summary

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with 655 million people, produce an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of \$9.34 trillion (2019) and a projected annual growth of over 5 percent until 2018, forming the world's 7th largest economy. ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) benefits from the large labour force of more than 300 million workers with an estimated 20 million migrant workers to support their productive growth. The AEC facilitates freer flow of trade, investment, services and labour.

A recent ILO study reveals that more than ½ of the workers, about 179 million of them in ASEAN are found in low skill jobs, vulnerable informal employment with inadequate social protection and poor working conditions. Workers in these situations have limited prospects, with few employable skills and are trapped in cycles of poverty that perpetuate the need to accept low-wage jobs<sup>1</sup>.

Women are also more likely to be engaged in vulnerable employment than men. The ILO figures for 2013 reveal that over 60 per cent of workers comprise of women. The majority of intra-ASEAN migration involves semi-skilled and unskilled labour, with a substantial number found working in vulnerable sectors like construction, agriculture, fisheries and domestic work. Unofficial figures identify the workers as poor and young females, aged between 20 and 39, at the time of migration. This trend is driven largely by the demand for labour in the sectors of domestic work, hospitality and entertainment.

In ASEAN, the COVID-19 continues to impact on SDGs, democracy and human rights includes deterioration of the freedom of expression and civic space. ASEAN States have also imposed repressive laws and policy during covid-19 to curb online freedom of expression and opinion claiming to safeguard national security and avoiding social unrest and protest by workers. Despite some progress in achieving the SDGs but in reality there is big gap in achieving the 17 SDG Goals. It's important to recognize the past policy failures and need to ensure that recovery leads to more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies.

The ASEAN governments to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic impose closures and quarantines. But governments are not extending adequate social protections to migrant workers, who are working long hours in essential sectors like care work under new restrictions, that risk their health. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions have exacerbated and intensified existing vulnerabilities of the migrant workers.

In ASEAN, the working population, are the most powerless and improvised by the race to the bottom in wages, living and working conditions. In richer countries, Covid-19 seems to

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2019, [https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASYB\\_2019.pdf](https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASYB_2019.pdf)

impact most on the poor, the neglected and disadvantaged communities, and the migrant workers. The migrant workers are living in overcrowded and unsanitary dormitories provided by their employer. Now, the rich countries are racing to procure vaccines.

Key vulnerability to severe labour exploitation of migrant workers is exacerbated by policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are:

- i. Restrictions are imposed on their movement with increased surveillance and control
- ii. Crowded and unhealthy living conditions - lack of basic health and safety at workplace
- iii. Exclusion from social protection and lack of livelihood support

In the SDG, the key reference to labour migration (migrant workers) is made in target 8.8 to "Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment".

Migration as cross-cutting issue is relevant to all 17 of the SDGs and most of the 169 targets in the 2030 Agenda. The ASEAN Member States has signed two non-binding agreements on migrant labour:

1. ASEAN Declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of the migrant workers
2. ASEAN Consensus on the protection and promotions of the rights of the migrant workers

The TFAMW Report summaries how COVID-19 impacted on migrant workers human rights and civic space, and the range of responses, the plan of actions to overcome the impacts, and the future of decent work for all migrant workers in ASEAN.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ACMW	ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AFML	ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labours
ALMM	ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEC	ASEAN Secretariat
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
SLOM	Senior Labour Officials Meeting
SOMSWD	Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development
TFAMW	Task Force on ASEAN Migrant Workers
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ADB	Asian Development Bank
PPE	Personal Protection Equipment

## Key Websites - Impact of Covid-19 on Migrant Workers in ASEAN

First ASEAN Policy Brief: Economic Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak on ASEAN  
[https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-policy-brief-2#f17b116497fc45402](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-policy-brief-2#f17b116497fc45402)

Second ASEAN Policy Brief: Assessing ASEAN Economic Policy Responses in a Pandemic  
[https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-policy-brief-2#91ee55ee90c52a71f](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-policy-brief-2#91ee55ee90c52a71f)

Third ASEAN Policy Brief: Trade Measures in the Time of COVID-19: The Case of ASEAN  
[https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-policy-brief-2#d5ce8594f4ad02c4b](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-policy-brief-2#d5ce8594f4ad02c4b)

The ASEAN Magazine Issue 1 May 2020 The Inside View: ASEAN Identity  
<https://asean.org/storage/2017/09/The-ASEAN-Magazine-Issue-1-May-2020.pdf>

The ASEAN Issue 02 June 2020 The Inside View Human Resources Development  
<https://asean.org/storage/2020/06/The-ASEAN-Issue-2-June-2020-dv.pdf>

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, Pandemics, and The Future of Work

The ASEAN Issue 03 July 2020 The Inside View Social Protection  
<https://asean.org/storage/2020/07/The ASEAN Issue 03 July 2020.pdf>

Link to the Risk Assessment Report (27 January 2020 to 27 September 2020)  
[https://asean.org/?static\\_post=updates-asean-health-sector-efforts-combat-novel-coronavirus-covid-19](https://asean.org/?static_post=updates-asean-health-sector-efforts-combat-novel-coronavirus-covid-19)

Risk Assessment for International Dissemination of COVID-19 to the ASEAN Region as of September 28, 2020 (2:00 PM GMT+8) ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center (ABVC) as of September 28, 2020 (2:00 PM GMT+8) Cases and Deaths as of 28 September 2020 As of September 28 (2PM, GMT+8)  
[https://asean.org/storage/2020/02/COVID-19\\_Report-of-ASEAN-BioDiaspora-Regional-Virtual-Center\\_28September2020.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2020/02/COVID-19_Report-of-ASEAN-BioDiaspora-Regional-Virtual-Center_28September2020.pdf)

Risk Assessment for International Dissemination of 2019-nCoV across ASEAN Countries As of January 27, 2020  
[https://asean.org/storage/2020/02/BioDiaspora-2-2019-nCov\\_BioDiaspora-Report -Regional-Virtual-Center\\_27Jan2020.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2020/02/BioDiaspora-2-2019-nCov_BioDiaspora-Report -Regional-Virtual-Center_27Jan2020.pdf)

United Nations, Policy Brief: A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, 17 April 2020  
[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_framework\\_report\\_on\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_framework_report_on_covid-19.pdf)  
 (accessed August 8, 2020).

IMF, Policy Responses to COVID19

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19>

(accessed August 8, 2020)

THE IMF AND COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) (as of 26 February 2021)

<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19>

Global and Regional Data (as of 26 February 2021)

<https://covid19policy.adb.org/cases/global-regional-data>

ADB COVID-19 Policy Database (as of 28 February 2021)

<https://covid19policy.adb.org/>

COVID-19 Civic Freedom Tracker (as of 26 February 2021)

<https://www.icnl.org/covid19tracker/?location=&issue=9&date=&type=%C2%A0>

Government Responses to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific (as of 26 February 2021)

<https://www.icnl.org/post/analysis/government-responses-to-covid-19-in-asia-and-the-pacific>

WTO Members to continue discussion on proposal for temporary IP waiver in response to COVID-19

[https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news20\\_e/trip\\_10dec20\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/trip_10dec20_e.htm)

10 Dec 2020

WTO Members discuss TRIPS waiver request, exchange views on IP role amid a pandemic

[https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news21\\_e/trip\\_23feb21\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/trip_23feb21_e.htm)

23 Feb 2021

C20-L20 Statement Translating commitments into action: supporting the TRIPS waiver is essential to end the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://civil-20.org/2021/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/C20-L20-TRIPS-statement.pdf>

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## Introduction

SDG-16 Monitoring Report on Migration in ASEAN is written in the context of on-going Covid-19 public health crisis. The Report summaries the various challenges, responses, and threats faced by civic space to protect the rights of migrant workers and implement SDG16+.

The 10-member states of ASEAN, with a population of 655 million, respond to Covid-19 almost with a full lockdown to contain both the Covid-19 and socio-economic impacts. COVID-19 has imposed restriction on fundamental human rights, such as the right to freedoms of expression, assembly and association. In ASEAN, the civic space is further shrinking in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 24 February 2020, the UN Secretary-General Call to Action for Human Rights reaffirms the UNs commitment to protect and promote civic space, to fulfil the UDHR fundamental rights and freedoms which are essential prerequisite for sustainable development, peace and justice. UN Secretary-General Call to Action sets the guiding principles and identifies seven thematic areas: (1) rights at the core of sustainable development; (2) rights in times of crisis; (3) gender equality and equal rights for women; (4) public participation and civic space; (5) rights of future generations, especially climate justice; (6) rights at the heart of collective action; and (7) new frontiers of human rights.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to the detriment of people to erode the fulfilment of human rights and various SDGs and increases the pre-existing realities of discrimination, inequalities, poverty, hunger, and unemployment. ASEAN Member States should frame their response with respect for human rights and Civil Society work need hand-in-hand ensure the protection of human rights.

AMS measures to slowdown the movement of migrant workers with border closures and travel bans. The lockdown and quarantine measures result in disruption of work, social, and cultural life. Moreover, the COVID-19 Pandemic has eroded millions of migrant workers capacity to handle the increasing health crisis due to lack of social protection, lack of access to health care, job insecurity due to factory shut-downs and lay-offs, and travel restrictions.

The Covid-19 Pandemic responses of ASEAN expose the deficient preparedness in coordination and cooperation to deal with the Pandemic. ASEAN Member States (AMS)

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<sup>2</sup> Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, THE HIGHEST ASPIRATION A CALL TO ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 24 February 2020

[https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The\\_Highest\\_Aspiration\\_A\\_Call\\_To\\_Action\\_For\\_Human\\_Right\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf)

enforced strict social-distancing and lock-down measures without a clear ASEAN action plan to overcome the public health crisis.

By April 2020, AMS including Vietnam and Singapore had imposed measures to lock-down, contact trace, and issue national guidelines to manage the Covid-19 infection. The AMS 650 million people faced inconvenience to access markets and convenient shops, public transport, and the closing of schools, while under lockdown. AMS also enforced travel bans and mandatory 14-day quarantine of all foreign and national arriving from within ASEAN and other regions.

April 2020, ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea) held special virtual meeting to tackle the pandemic crisis and related economic impact, and set-up a joint aid fund to assist poorer ASEAN member states. ASEAN plus Three also agreed to allow the transport of commodities, food and medical supplies across borders.<sup>3</sup>

Did the ASEAN Minister consider the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action (February 2020) and the "A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19" (April 2020) on how human rights can and must guide COVID-19 response and recovery?<sup>4</sup>

June 2020, the AMS envisioned better coordination for the future removal of restrictive measures and plans to tackle future pandemics crisis with the approval of the Draft ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan at the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2020.

September 2020, 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Virtual Meeting Joint Communiqué affirms "We highlighted the importance of a whole-of-ASEAN approach in responding to COVID-19 including through a holistic, comprehensive, inclusive and practical ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework," The communiqué further states "We agreed to further strengthen partnership and cooperation with our external partners, thus contributing to the continued efforts towards the realization of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and our proactive response to emerging challenges". The Minister affirm sustainable development cooperation .... as well as strengthening multi-stakeholder and comprehensive partnership"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Statement of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (14 April 2020)

<https://aseanplusthree.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final-Joint-Statement-of-the-Special-APT-Summit-on-COVID-193360.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-Generals, COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together, APRIL 2020

[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_policy\\_brief\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_covid\\_23\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_policy_brief_on_human_rights_and_covid_23_april_2020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Joint Communiqué of the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers

<https://asean.org/storage/2020/09/FINAL-Joint-Communique-of-the-53rd-AMM.pdf>

## **Covid-19 Impact on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Migrant Workers**

Despite some progress in achieving the SDGs but in reality there is big gap in achieving the 17 SDG Goals. It's important to recognize the past policy failures and need to ensure that recovery leads to more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies. There is need to address issues of governance, social protection, informality, unpaid care work, labour rights protection, access to justice, access to affordable housing and risks related to new technologies. And also to set priorities is to fulfil the social needs including health systems, water, sanitation and education.

The Decade of Action is aim better the SDG implementations and to prevent the Covid-19 Pandemic from undermining the SDGs. The UN Secretary-General said "Returning to the frameworks and systems that gave rise to this crisis is unthinkable" at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, launch of the Decade of Action at a Time of Crisis: Keeping the Focus on the SDGs While Combatting Covid-19, on 6th July 2020.

In 2021, the AMS will face the impact on lives and livelihoods of their peoples as well as the ASEANs economies by COVID-19 Pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic challenges public health systems and has caused disruptions to the ASEAN Member States (AMS) economy, trade and travel, resulting in job losses as well as impacted heavily on the lives of people and economies.

The vulnerable migrant workers must be protected, including tackling violence against women and children, and prevent stigmatization and discrimination, and existing inequality from worsening.

ASEAN plans to implement actions against the COVID-19 are comprehensive, proportionate, time-bound, equipped with measures that are sensitive to age, gender and disability. Measures adopted by ASEAN governments in response to the pandemic should protect and not undermine the human rights while focusing on saving lives and assuring the safety, well-being and livelihood of the People. The measures should not be used as a pretext to limit democratic, civic space, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the respect of the rule of law.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing unprecedented economic challenges that disproportionately affect developing and poorer countries. In response to the impacts of COVID-19, economic measures proposed in SDG 17 to achieve sustainable development goals.

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The peoples of Southeast Asia must have access to basic services such as universal healthcare as priority. So too should global solidarity, helping those hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing the climate change emergency. It has pushed an estimated 88 million people into poverty and put more than 270 million at risk at acute food insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted serious gaps in global cooperation and solidarity. Working together the countries could emerge from the pandemic and lay the foundations for a cleaner, safer, fairer world for all, and for generations to come.

In 2015, to overcome environmental destruction, inequality, and poverty, the UN agreed to implement the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ASEAN should take stock of the 17 goals intended to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require ASEANs to focus on priorities on reaching anyone of the 17 SDGs goals.

ASEAN has seen some progress in terms of health and wellbeing, quality education for all, economic growth, and reducing poverty. But the UN says that none of the 17 goals are on tracked to be achieved.

Will ASEAN focus on priorities to achieve at least some of the goals?

The COVID-19 pandemic challenges public health systems and caused disruptions to the ASEAN Member States (AMS) economy, trade and travel - resulting in job losses with heavily impact on the lives of vulnerable people. The vulnerable migrant workers needs better protection, including overcoming violence against women and children, prevention against stigmatization and discrimination, and tackling existing inequality from worsening.

ASEAN preventative measures against COVID-19 should be comprehensive, proportionate, time-bound, age-, gender- and disability-sensitive. Measures adopted by ASEAN governments in response to the pandemic must ensure protection and not undermine human rights while focusing on saving more lives and assuring the safety, well-being and livelihood of the vulnerable people. The measures should not be used as a pretext to limit democratic, civic space, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the respect of the rule of law.

The 2030 SDG Agenda recognize the contribution of migrant workers for "inclusive growth and sustainable development". The migrant workers contribute to the development of the countries of origin, transit and destination. Migrant Workers are vulnerable to the health, economic and social impacts of Covid-19 infections. With their economic and labour contributions, migrant workers are essential to the recovery. But little progress has been made to address issues of low-skilled migrant workers. Migrant workers right to access social protection and service is limited in most countries. And transaction costs for documents, travel and money transfer remain high.

## Covid-19 Impact on ASEAN and Migrant Workers

### Brief updates from October 2020 to end of January 2021

Since the first death from COVID-19 a year ago the global deaths are set to reach 2 million. It has taken the world less than four months to go from 1 million deaths on September 28, 2020, to 2 million on January 15, 2021. Today, 12 out of every 1,000 people globally have been confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, and 2.5 out of every 10,000 people have died. With the roll out of vaccines, experts anticipate there will be a reduction in mortality.

As of 30 January:

### CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS IN ASEAN



		Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases
Indonesia		1,066,313	+14,518	29,728	+210	862,502	174,083
Philippines		523,516	+2,109	10,669	+71	475,904	36,943
Malaysia		209,661	+5,728	746	+13	161,527	47,388
Myanmar		139,515	+363	3,115	+12	124,064	12,336
Singapore		59,507	+58	29	0	59,181	297
Thailand		17,953	+930	77	+1	11,505	6,371
Vietnam		1,739	+88	35	0	1,448	253
Cambodia		463	0	0	0	438	25
Brunei		180	0	3	0	170	7
Lao PDR		44	0	0	0	41	3
<b>ASEAN</b>		<b>2,018,891</b>	<b>+23,794</b>	<b>44,402</b>	<b>+307</b>	<b>1,696,780</b>	<b>277,706</b>

\*Source: WHO et. al. as at 7:00PM GMT +8 dated 30 January 2021.

\*New Cases and New Deaths refer to figures reported since our last update.

In ASEAN as of 30 January 2021, the total Covid-19 cases crossed 2 million, total death reached 44,402 and total recovery is close to 1.7 million, in the 10 ASEAN member States. ASEAN managed to keep low the Covid-19 cases, except in Philippines and Indonesia.

For ASEAN 2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges to public health, causing social disruption, and suffered heavy economic growth lost from Covid-19. ASEAN's economics depend on export and tourism. In 2019, for example, Thailand's export and tourism-reliant economy delivered only 2.4 percent of growth. In 2020, the IMF projects Vietnam growth to slow-down to 1.6 percent.

In ASEAN, the Migrant workers are more vulnerable to COVID-19 from construction workers in Singapore to workers in rubber glove factories in Malaysia. ASEAN Member Countries are now facing new challenges after handling, successfully, the first Coronavirus wave of infections.

In January 2021, the Coronavirus continues to re-bounce in ASEAN while the countries are preparing to receive and distribute the vaccine. New outbreaks of the Coronavirus challenges are happening in Thailand and Malaysia.

### **Update on ASEAN Migrant Workers Reality**

Before the pandemic, the United Nations estimated there were about 10 million international migrants in ASEAN countries, of which close to 7 million were intra-ASEAN migrants. In contrast to common perceptions, this means the majority of the regions migrants are from within the region. There are, of course, also millions more migrant workers from ASEAN in other parts of the world.

Migrant workers make important economic contributions in many ASEAN countries, both sending and receiving. Migrant workers made up 24 percent of total workers in Brunei Darussalam, 15 percent in Malaysia, 37 percent in Singapore, and 11 percent in Thailand in 2017, according to the International Labor Organization. Remittances to ASEAN (excluding Singapore and Brunei Darussalam) totaled \$75 billion in 2018 and served as an important lifeline to many households in the regions migrant-sending countries.

The scale of migration from the region makes the challenge of managing the impact on migrant workers and their families as well as economies quite a specific ASEAN challenge in responding to the pandemic.

The concentration of migrant workers in low-skill contact-intensive and informal sector jobs, the large share of women in these informal sector jobs, and the substantial share in irregular status contribute to their increased vulnerability to poverty and hardship.

The Covid-19 exposed the vulnerability of ASEANs millions of migrant workers and the weaknesses of the systems in place to send, support, and receive them.

Since March 2020, to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, governments in ASEAN countries implemented a wide range of travel restriction measures. Travel restriction coincided with millions of migrants losing their jobs in their host countries.

The governments are not extending adequate social protections to migrant workers, who are working long hours in essential sectors like care work under new restrictions, risking their health. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions have exacerbated and intensified existing vulnerabilities of the migrant workers. Key vulnerability to severe labour exploitation of migrant workers is exacerbated by policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 including:

- i. Restrictions of the movement of migrant workers with increased surveillance and control
- ii. Crowded and unhealthy living conditions and lack of basic health and safety at work
- iii. Exclusion from social protection and lack of livelihood support for migrant workers

Migrant workers going back to their home countries also face bleak employment prospects due to COVID-19s impact on the jobs market.

## **Update on ASEAN Member States**

### **Brunei**

- Continues COVID-19 prevention measure since 1 January 2021, such as
  - Limits customer/participant capacity
  - Encourages people to comply with protective measures and uses BruHealth App
  - Restricts entry of foreigners except workers related to matters of national interests, such as oil and gas sector and transport of essential goods

### **Cambodia**

January 13, there were 2,235 migrant workers under quarantine in Oddar Meanchey and over 300 workers had completed their quarantine period.

January 14, more than 3,000 migrant workers returned from Thailand via the international checkpoints of Banteay Meanchey province and nearly 1,000 had completed their quarantine.

January 15, the country recorded 426 infections, of whom 381 receiving the all-clear, and no fatalities.

More than 130,000 migrant workers had left Thailand for Cambodia.

### **Indonesia**

- Suspends entry of foreigners since 14 January 2021

### **Lao PDR**

- Continues COVID-19 prevention measures from 23 December 2020 to 31 January 2021

### **Malaysia:**

2019 World Bank reports that there are some 3.0 to 3.3 million migrant workers, and 1.2 to 1.5 million undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia. The migrant workers come from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Vietnam and other countries.

The government has imposed "emergency rule" until August 2021.

Malaysia re-imposes movement control order (MCO) from January 13 to 26.

Starting February 2nd, Malaysia expands the mandatory Covid-19 screening that involves 800,000 foreign workers

Most of them are living in dire, overcrowded housing provided in various industries, construction, and plantation sectors.

Migrant workers about 40,000 from Thailand and 12,000 from Indonesia return home

Malaysia provided subsidies to employers for COVID-19 screening of migrant workers.

**Philippines:**

- Extends General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in Manila and 9 other cities until 31 January 2021

In 2020, the economic disruption resulted in 23.7 million Filipinos to go hungry and 4.5 million into poverty. Total of 2.7 million Filipinos became unemployed and some 438,809 Filipinos died between January and October 2020 due to non-Covid-19 reasons.

More than half a million overseas Filipino workers have been displaced from their jobs as of October. Of these, over 300,000 have returned home. Many endured months of being stranded in their country of work, and many more lost their jobs but were unable to return to their home countries immediately. Given high levels of irregular migration in the region, lack of documentation prevented many migrants from accessing assistance overseas. The Philippines have provided one-off cash transfers to their affected migrant workers and also supported their return home by chartering flights.

04 January 2021, Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) reported repatriating a total of 327,511 overseas Filipinos in 2020. The statement says that 231,537 total repatriates were land-based coming from around 90 countries. About 95,974 are seafarers from about 150 cruise ships, oil tankers, and other bulk vessels. The most number of repatriates came from the Middle East with at least 228,893, from the Asia-Pacific 36,868, from the Americas 30,971, from Europe 28,909, and from Africa 1,870.

**Singapore:**

Singapore provides Counseling and bore the costs of COVID-19 testing and treatment for migrant workers.

Suspends entry or transit of foreigners who have been to South Africa in last 14 days Covid-19 test on arrival is mandatory from 11.59 pm on 24 January as part of tighter border measures to manage the risk of imported Covid-19 cases. All travelers, including Singaporeans and permanent residents, will need to take the COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test upon arrival.

**Thailand:**

Thailand extends state of emergency until February 2021.

Dec. 20, 2020, Samut Sakhon, South of Bangkok is facing a challenge from an outbreak of the COVID-19 among migrant workers in the province close to Bangkok.

With movement restrictions from March to May, it was estimated that 150,000 migrant workers from Myanmar, 50,000 from Cambodia, and 60,000 from Laos returned home after losing their jobs in Thailand.

Thailand have provided one-off cash transfers to their own affected migrant workers and also supported their return home by chartering flights.

Thailand, for example, has issued an extension of permission to stay and work to migrant workers from Myanmar and Cambodia, and additionally has given migrant workers in the formal sector entitlement to unemployment insurance and severance pay, subject to number of contributions made and length of employment.

4 January 2021, Thailand has strengthens COVID-19 control measures in 28 provinces as “highly controlled areas” following an increase in community transmission.

15th January to 13th February 2021 Online Registrations of migrant workers

Dec 29, Thailand government allows migrant workers without an employer and employers with migrant workers to register with the Employment Department online for a month until Feb 13. The unregistered undocumented migrant workers are estimated to number 50,000. Thai government allowed undocumented migrant workers from Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos to register online with no penalties to allow authorities to monitor their health. Once registered, a worker will be entitled to live and work in Thailand for two years -- along with a dependent, who must already be in Thailand and less than 18 years of age at the time of registration.

But the registration and related costs run into thousands of baths that deters

undocumented migrant workers from registering. Few migrant workers have the money to pay for registration. Those who did not have an employer or an address had problems registering. If they approach the agents they will be charged 3,000-4,000 baht for the services to register.

Food factory converted into quarantine facility in Samut Sakhon  
The factory which manufactured canned foods under the Nautilus brand is converted into a 600-patient bed quarantine facility. Thai health authorities are speeding up COVID-19 tests for more than 35,000 workers at 400 factories in Samut Sakhon by January 24. Samut Sakhon houses a large number of migrant workers from Myanmar.

## **Vietnam**

Since January 2021, Vietnam has imposed lockdowns due to Covid-19 variant in several provinces and cities including Hanoi. Vietnam is suspends or limit incoming flights from at least 34 countries and territories that have detected cases of the new COVID-19 variant. Vietnam also cancelled festivals for the Lunar New Year celebrations.

- Suspends international flights since 1 December 2020
- Encourages people to comply with protective measures

### **ASEAN Regional Mechanism to manage the pandemic**

The ASEAN Member States (AMS) managed to better prevent the spread of the pandemic and keeping the deaths low. But the economic impact is much worse, contracting 4% to 7% among the 10 countries. With economies heavily reliant on exports and tourism, there is an earnest desire to make the region pandemic-free in 2021, and for economic recovery. A few AMS are starting 2021 with lockdowns and border closures to deal with the multi-dimensional impact of the pandemic. Millions of jobs have been lost, resulting in an astounding number of people falling into extreme poverty and facing serious threats to food security.

**ASEAN Strategic framework for Public Health Emergencies (PHE)** as of 10 November 2020 The ASEAN Leaders Declaration of the 8th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting or ASEAN Unity in Health Emergencies, highlights regional cooperation in information sharing and assistance during times of crises. Commitments to strengthen existing capabilities, close cooperation, and leading national and regional responses in building capacity for disease control were renewed. To this end, and in order to ensure streamlined cooperation among various AMS, the formulation of an ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Public Health Emergencies (SOP-PHE) was agreed by ASEAN leaders during the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020.

These important mechanisms include the ASEAN Emergency Operating Centre Network for Public Health Emergency and the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre, which facilitated timely and accurate exchanges of information and technical inputs on the nature of the disease. They also established health protocols to observe such as testing, contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine. The Regional Public Health Laboratories Network was another important mechanism that provided expertise and technical support to laboratories of its member states, while the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre helped disseminate preventive and control measures, including combatting false news and misinformation. The speed with which these mechanisms were deployed significantly helped countries enact early measures to prevent and stop the spread of COVID-19.

A number of ASEAN Summit meetings followed to agree to regional health and economic measures to fight the pandemic. These included the agreement to build an ASEAN stockpile of essential medical supplies and equipment, as well as setting up an ASEAN Recovery Fund to assist member states. To mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19, ASEAN also agreed to ensure the smooth flow of essential goods by refraining from imposing unnecessary non-tariff measures during the pandemic and strengthening supply chain connectivity and resilience. And to further strengthen regional public health capacity as well as pool resources to fight COVID-19 and future pandemics the ASEAN Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases was launched in November 2020.

## **ASEAN PROGRESS**

Mitigation measures are important, with uneven progress among ASEAN Member States, Vietnam and Singapore better compared to Indonesia and the Philippines. Why some countries do better include factors like more centralized and/or better coordinated national pandemic taskforce, clear public messaging, and strict enforcement of public health measures. The regions ability to mitigate the spread of the pandemic has much to do also with its experience in pandemic preparedness and response put into practice. The region is also facing uneven progress in containing the pandemic.

### **ASEAN Potential for Coordinated Responses**

The scale of *intra*-ASEAN migration flows offers an opportunity for greater cross-country cooperation to establish a regional system to facilitate the return home and avoid the stranding of newly unemployed migrant workers.

The system should address cross-border challenges through policy alignment and intergovernmental collaboration platforms.

Such a system should also enhance social protection across borders for a highly mobile population. In the absence of coordination between national legislations, migrant workers face the risk of losing their social protection rights in their home country; they are also seldom covered by social insurance provisions or safety nets in the destination country. Migrant workers should ideally have access to emergency social assistance measures in the receiving country, especially if they cannot return to their own countries. This will have health and economic benefits not just for the migrant workers but also the host country.

In addition, the region could explore the option of multilateral or bilateral social insurance agreements that coordinate the schemes of two or more countries to provide equality of treatment, and access to, preservation, and/or portability of social insurance entitlements. The feasibility of such agreements would depend on the maturity of the social insurance system. For instance, the Philippines Overseas Worker Program already provides partial social protection coverage to migrant Filipino workers. While there was widespread understanding of the potential benefits of portability to the region as a whole in pre-COVID times, the pandemic has underscored how important it is both to manage the current situation and to mitigate against future crisis.

Migrant workers make a significant economic contribution both to their home countries and their countries of employment. It is time they are provided social protection and to recognize their economic contributions.

## **ASEAN Covid-19 Vaccine Procurement**

The Covid-19 virus has the potential to infect and kill many more millions of people. In many countries, Covid-19 had infected more vulnerable migrants and other disadvantaged people in poverty, and the discriminated with no health care. Travel, Trade, Manufacturing, and Construction will continue to face disruption until there is access to more effective preventive measures and COVID-19 vaccine becomes more widely available to all.

**The World Health Organization (WHO)** has arrangements with nine pharmaceutical developers to procure vaccines supported by **COVAX**, a coalition of 172 countries and in partnership with **Gavi**, the Vaccine Alliance Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to guarantee rapid, fair, and equitable access to vaccines for people in all countries.

COVAX is the best answer to the COVID-19 pandemic with the capacity to deliver two billion vaccine doses in 2021 and reach people in 190 participating countries and economies, regardless of their ability to pay. COVAX/Gavi Advance Market Commitment (AMC) mechanism will ensure the COVID-19 vaccines are available to people living in the 92 low and middle-income countries. COVAX plans to deliver about 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by end-2021, covering about 27 percent of the population in the 92 countries.

International donors contributed US\$2 billion that the COVAX AMC needed for 2020 and the program needs an additional US\$5 billion for 2021.

### **Ending the Covid-19:**

*Ending the covid-19 everywhere depends on the following key realities:*

- 1. Effective implementation of preventives measures like the wearing of mask, social distancing, avoiding crowds, and hand washing.*
- 2. Capacity of countries to overcome the challenges of distribution and logistics to deliver the vaccines.*
- 3. Access to vaccine by all countries including the very poor countries.*

### **Covid-19 Immunisation programmes**

Every national government wants to protect their citizens and, globally, about 35 countries have concluded bilateral arrangement with pharmaceutical manufacturers for COVID-19 vaccines. The wealthier nations have already reserved more than 50 percent of the potential doses expected to be produced by 13 leading developers in 2021. As such at least 25 percent of the world's population may not have access to a COVID-19 vaccine until 2022. In rich countries, Immunisation programmes have started to administrate the vaccines.

### **The Challenges**

The challenges for many countries include the need for two doses and the very low temperatures needed to store some of the vaccines. Global solidarity and cooperation to ensure the covid-19 vaccines as a principle is a public good and is fairly distributed to all.

## ASEAN countries rush to procure vaccine

Within ASEAN, Singapore becomes first country to start COVID-19 vaccination campaign in December 2020. ASEAN Member States (AMS) continue to procure vaccines with the spike in the number of infections and deaths in Southeast Asia. Currently, in Southeast Asian countries, the number of infections topped 2 million, while death exceeded 44,000.

### Summary of ASEAN countries vaccine procurement

Country	Population (M)	Ordered (m)	Received	Programme Start
Brunei	0.430	0.24	0	Q2 2021
Cambodia	15.60	6.2	?	March 2021
Indonesia	270	405.6	18m	January 2021
Laos	7.00	3.4	2,000	November 2020
Malaysia	32.0	58.20	0	February 2021
Myanmar	54.4	40.80	1.5m	January 2021
Philippines	108.0	148	0	February 2021
Singapore	5.7	11.4	na	December 2020
Thailand	70.0	63.	0	February 2021
Vietnam	96.0	30.0	0	Q1 2021

*As of 3 February 2021 Covax Interim Distribution Forecast*

<https://www.gavi.org/sites/default/files/covid/covax/COVAX-Interim-Distribution-Forecast.pdf>

**Brunei** is part of the WHO arranged global Covax scheme and expect to receive COVID-19 vaccine in the first quarter of 2021, sufficient to vaccinate 50% of the population. Brunei plans to vaccinate a total of 70 percent of the population.

**Cambodia** will receive vaccines from both China and Russia. China will deliver 300,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine in early February 2021. Cambodia had accepted a donation of one million doses of the vaccine from China.

**Indonesia** requested COVAX in early December 2020 for vaccines. Indonesia with over million covid-19 infection cases has also ordered 3 million doses of China's Sinovac vaccine. Indonesia also ordered vaccine from several sources: 50 million doses of Novavax vaccine from Canada; 50 million doses of Covax vaccine from Gavi; 50 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine from the UK, and 50 million doses of Pfizer vaccine from the US. In Mid-January 2021, Indonesia started the vaccine campaign with over nine million doses being given to front line workers. Indonesia plans to buy a total of 426 million doses to vaccinate 181.5 million citizens within 15 months.

**Laos** has made arrangement for vaccines with China, Russian and the GAVI COVAX. Laos vaccinated frontline medical staff in January 2021. Laos provides free tests and treatment for citizens who contracted the covid-19. But business people and foreigners working in Laos will need to pay for tests and treatment of Covid-19.

Laos first Covid-19 vaccinations were given in November 2020 with the provision of 2,000 doses of vaccine from China. The Russian government has also given Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V to Lao PDR. Lao PDR expects to receive Covid-19 vaccines from the Gavi COVAX in April 2021. Laos expects 50 percent of the population to be vaccinated by 2022, with more to be vaccinated in the following years.

**Malaysia** signed an agreement with AstraZeneca in late December to procure 6.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Malaysia also signed an agreement with Pfizer and Covax to procure COVID-19 vaccines for 30% of its population. The Malaysian government is in negotiation with Sinovac, CanSino, and Gamaleya to procure vaccine for 80% of the population or 26.5 million. The government expects to receive and administer the first supply of one million vaccines from Pfizer in February 2021. While AstraZeneca expects to make the first deliveries of the vaccine in the first half of 2021. Malaysia will vaccinate free of charge to citizens, but foreigners need to pay for the treatment.

**Myanmar** had procured 30 million doses of a Covid-19 vaccine from India that arrived by February 2021. Myanmar will receive 1.5 million doses of the Covishield vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India.

**The Philippines** decided to procure 2.6 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca. The government plans to finalize arrangement with AstraZeneca, Novavax, Pfizer, Johnson Johnson, Sinovac Biotech, and Gamaleya. The Philippines plans to purchase at least 148 million doses from about seven manufacturers. The Sinovac vaccine is expected to arrive in March 2021. The Philippines vaccination campaign will start in June 2021 and will cover 25 million of the population.

**Singapore** started Covid-19 vaccination campaign on Dec.30 with health workers inoculated with vaccine jointly developed by BioNTech and Pfizer. Singapore has allocated more than S\$1 billion for vaccination. Singapore signed advance purchase agreements with vaccine makers including US Pharmaceutical Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech, Moderna Inc. and China's Sinovac to secure enough doses for the 5.7 million population. Singapore and US company Arcturus also signed a supply agreement for the rights to buy the ARCT-021 vaccine. Singapore received the first batch of vaccines from Pfizer and BioNTech on 21 December 2020.

**Thailand** will receive 2 million doses of Sinovac vaccine from China over three months and the first delivery will arrive in late February 2021. Thailand is also expecting vaccine delivery in mid-2021 with sufficient doses to cover 13 million the population of about 69 million. The government hopes to procure another 35 million Covid-19 vaccine doses.

**Vietnam** will receive at least 30 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca in 2021 to vaccinate around 15 million people. Vietnam also signed an agreement with Medigen Vaccine to secure 3 million to 10 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to start delivering from the first quarter of 2021. Vietnam is in negotiation with vaccine manufacturers including Pfizer-BioNTech, Russia's Sputnik V, and China's Sinovac.

### **Promote a more human-centred recovery**

The key to promoting a human-centred recovery from the covid-19 pandemic will ensure implementation of International labour standards, together with the application of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation. Governments, employers and workers organizations, and Civil Society stakeholders, are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with measures to support the various sectoral workers to benefit from decent working condition.

For example, the construction sector severely impact from covid-19 has lost millions of jobs. In some countries, more than 80 percent of care workers are women, and those working in households are often women migrant workers. Some domestic workers provide personal care in private homes. Covid-19 in Indonesia killed more than 600 doctors, nurses, and other medical workers who had limited PPE. In many countries, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the overburdened and understaffed home and institution-based care sector. Women and migrant workers employed in the care works are vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic on their health and working conditions.

## A. Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Workers in ASEAN<sup>6</sup>

There are around 20.2 million migrants originating from ASEAN Member States (AMS). There are more than 10 million international migrants in ASEAN, almost half are women intra-ASEAN migrants. Migrant workers in ASEAN Member States:

- 38% of the workforce in Singapore (90% of COVID-19 cases are migrant workers)
- 24% of the workforce in Brunei (18.5% of COVID-19 cases are foreigners) 15% of the workforce in Malaysia (30% of COVID-19 cases are foreigners)
- 2.7 million migrant workers in Thailand

Migrant workers contribute to the sending countries GDP with their remittance: 10% of GDP in the Philippines, 7% in Vietnam and 5% in Myanmar.

### As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Confirmed Covid-19 Cases and Deaths<sup>7</sup>

#### CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS IN ASEAN



		Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases
Philippines		314,079	+2,415	5,562	+59	254,223	54,294
Indonesia		291,182	+4,174	10,856	+116	218,487	61,839
Singapore		57,786	+21	27	0	57,488	271
Myanmar		13,373	+946	310	+26	3,755	9,308
Malaysia		11,484	+260	136	0	10,014	1,334
Thailand		3,569	+5	59	0	3,379	131
Vietnam		1,095	+1	35	0	1,010	47
Cambodia		277	0	0	0	275	2
Brunei		146	0	3	0	142	1
Lao PDR		23	0	0	0	22	1
<b>ASEAN</b>		<b>693,014</b>	<b>+7,822</b>	<b>16,988</b>	<b>+201</b>	<b>548,795</b>	<b>127,228</b>

\*Source: WHO et. al. as at 7:00PM GMT +8 dated 01 October 2020.

\*New Cases and New Deaths refer to figures reported since our last update.

<sup>6</sup> ILO, Experiences of ASEAN migrant workers during COVID-19: Rights at work, migration and quarantine during the pandemic, and re-migration plans, 3 June 2020

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_746881.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/briefingnote/wcms_746881.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> ASEAN Post, DAILY SNAPSHOT: Covid-19 Cases in ASEAN, 1st October 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/TheASEANPost/photos/a.182344315604255/970157150156297>

In the context of Covid-19, migrant workers are vulnerable as reflected in the following realities<sup>8</sup>:

- Some migrant workers continued to work because of need or employer compulsions;
- conditions for migrant workers are not favourable for social distancing, and work in close proximity, and without sufficient personal protection equipment;
- Unlike nationals, migrant workers are generally not included in social security unemployment insurance; Migrant workers are not being included in relief measures;
- Migrant workers may be the first to be retrenched;
- Gender-based violence tends to increase during emergencies (hotlines responding to violence against migrant women have reported an increase in calls);
- Border and international travel closures have stranded migrant workers who may completed their contracts or lost their jobs;
- Undocumented workers have been subject to detention in unsafe conditions.

Covid-19 crisis exposed migrant workers to the deficiencies in social protections, no minimum wage, and limited rights. Within ASEAN about 60% of migrant workers are employed in informal work without social protection, such as unemployment support, retirement funds, accidental coverage, sufficient paid-leave and family care.

The Special ASEAN Covid-19 Summit prioritized collective response like sharing information, trading activities, and setting up ASEAN Covid-19 funds to purchase medical supplies.

The Covid-19 respond by AMS to protect migrant workers includes healthcare access and the use of information and communications technology to provide information to migrant workers.

In ASEAN, the Covid-19 infection is moving towards 900,000 cases and 21,000 deaths as of 25 October 2020. Estimates also indicate 30 million people have become unemployed and pushed 18 million people into poverty, of which 3 million are in extreme poverty.

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<sup>8</sup> COVID-19: Impact on Migrant Workers in Asia and the Pacific <http://apmigration.ilo.org/covid-19-impact>

## **SDG TARGETS ON MIGRATION**

The ASEAN Member States (AMS) regional integration is based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). But ASEAN needs to focus and tracked on SDG related targets implementation to achieve the priorities on migration:<sup>9</sup>

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

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<sup>9</sup> Measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals <https://sdg-tracker.org/>

## **B. Response to COVID-19 Impact on Migrant Workers in ASEAN**

In many countries, migrant workers make important contributions to societies and economies, and serving on essential jobs in health care, transport, services, construction, and agriculture and agri-food processing.

Many migrant workers are in low-wage, temporary, informal work, and with no social protection, like women migrant domestic worker. Reports indicate increase in discrimination and xenophobia against migrant workers and lack of access to food and health care, layoffs, worsening working conditions including non-payment of wages, cramped or inadequate living conditions.

Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have trapped migrants in countries of destination with few options to return home. Layoffs of migrant workers not only often lead to income losses but also the expiration of visa or work permits, putting migrants into undocumented status.

During the March-June 2020 period, at least 310,000 migrant workers have returned to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, the vast majority from Thailand. Yet hundreds of thousands of ASEAN migrant workers have returned or repatriated home since the epidemic started.

As of 28 June, 162,000 Indonesian migrant workers had returned home, and by 1 August more than 115,000 overseas Filipinos had been repatriated. Travel restrictions have also meant that many migrant workers have been prevented from taking up employment overseas. They have contracts, and paid high recruitment fees and costs, that leads to debt bondage.

### **Covid-19 and Access to Information**

The challenges includes lack of access to phone, internet, connectivity; language barriers; complex bureaucracies; geographical access (domestic workers, plantation workers, workers on fishing boats, etc.); lack of access to reliable information; closures due to COVID-19. The key to survival is the access to information on how to protect each human live and livelihood during a health crisis. Important to ensure, timely and freely available, accurate information on the public health precautions to prevent infections, and also on how to prevent gender-based violence under lockdown, and the extent of the pandemic in the country.

#### **Responses:**

- Workplace information sessions
- Loudspeakers in communities
- Social media

- TV and radio broadcasts
- Pamphlets
- Mobile messages (SMS)
- Apps
- Hotlines

## **Employment, Labour Rights, and Access to Justice**

Migrant workers often are the first to lose their jobs, before national workers. They face higher risks with poorer terms and conditions; higher recruitment fees and costs; exploitation; unsafe working conditions.

The violations of labour rights: coercion; withheld documents; unable to refuse work; threats of retrenchment or violence; forced labour; unpaid wages.

Gender-specific impacts and risks for women migrant workers; increased competition in the labour market

### **Responses:**

- Legal support by trade unions, CSOs, MRCs, and labour attachés, etc.
- Extensions of visas and work permits

## **Social Protection and Access to Relief and Income Support**

Migrant workers in destination countries are generally excluded from COVID-19 stimulus packages and policy responses, including from wage subsidies, unemployment benefits, and other social protection measures. ILO rapid assessment survey: 97% in destination countries had not accessed any social security support. Loss of income, loss of remittances, and increasing food insecurity.

### **Responses:**

- Extensions of social security systems and special, temporary measures
- Migrant welfare funds
- Economic relief: cash transfers, financial and food assistance
- MRCs, CSOs, and partners: care packages, PPE, food aid, et

## **Singapore: Financial Packages to Save Lives and Livelihood**

The Singapore government introduced and implement the budget under 4 budget schemes: Unity Budget, Resilience Budget and Solidarity Budget and Fortitude budget. The Singapore authorities have announced the 4 packages of measures on February 18, March 26, April 6 - April 21, and May 26 - amounting to a total stimulus of S\$92 (19 % of GDP). Funds to contain the outbreak are about S\$800 million (mainly to the Ministry of Health). The Care and Support Package provides support to households (S\$ 5.7 billion), including a cash pay out to all Singaporeans, and additional payments for lower-income individuals and the unemployed. The Stabilization and Support Package to businesses (about S\$35.3 billion), including wage subsidies, an enhancement of financing schemes, and additional support for industries directly affected and the self-employed. It also sets aside loan capital of S\$20 billion and introduces other economic resilience measures (S\$1. 9 billion).

## **Return and reintegration of migrant workers**

### **Data on returns:**

- Cambodia: 90,607 returns by early May
- Lao PDR: 119,401 returns by mid-June
- Myanmar: 141,710 returns by early August
- Indonesia: 162,000 returns by late June
- Philippines repatriated 115,793 migrants and provides re-skill training for jobs
- Malaysia arrested, detained, and deported

### **Responses:**

- Quarantine at home and in state-established facilities.
- Support and provisions: food; hygiene kits (PPE); financial support; legal aid; psychosocial support; transportation.
- Reintegration programmes: entrepreneurship; job-matching; competency assessment and certification; scholarships; trainings; upskilling and re-skilling

## **Government of Indonesia Decree**

The Implementation of the Placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers Decree Number 294 (2020) objectives:

1. Placement and protection of migrant workers is effective/complies with health protocols.
2. Prevent and control spread and protect migrant workers from risk factors of COVID-19.

3. Provide widest possible information to migrant workers, ministries/agencies, and stakeholders on implementation, mechanism and administration of transparent, measurable and accountable placement during this period.
4. Strengthen coordination between ministries/agencies and service providers in the implementation/monitoring of placement.

The decree focuses on protective measures in the processes of pre-employment, during employment, and post-employment or repatriation by engaging different stakeholders. It includes:

- Guidance to service providers
- Health protocols for the place of service and for migrant workers
- Travel requirements
- Guidance on reporting, monitoring, and evaluation
- Template examples of implementation and response planning

### **ASEAN Travel Bans and Border Closures**

ASEAN Member State	National Responses to COVID-19	Date of Implementation
Brunei Darussalam	Travel bans	16 Mar 2020
Cambodia	Borders closed	31 Mar 2020
Indonesia	Borders closed	31 Mar 2020
Lao PDR	Travel bans	30 Mar 2020
Malaysia	Nationwide lockdown	18 Mar 2020
Myanmar	Borders closed	24 Mar 2020
Philippines	Travel bans	15 Mar 2020
Singapore	Travel bans	31 Jan 2020
Thailand	Borders closed	22 Mar 2020
Viet Nam	Travel bans	1 Feb 2020

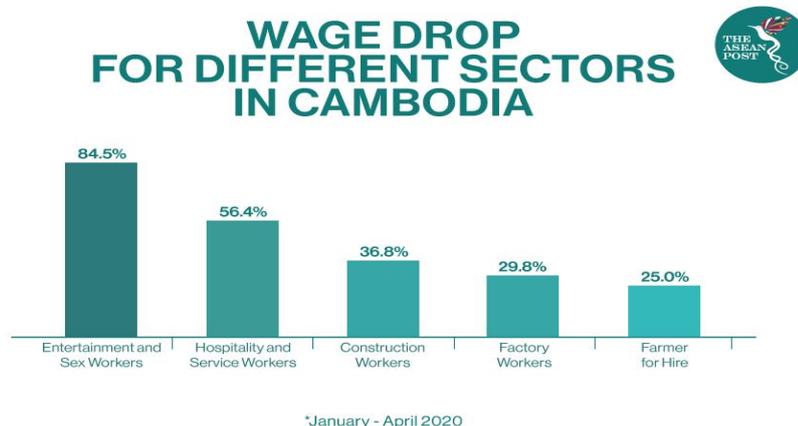
## Impact of Covid-19 on Employment, Income, and Social Security

### Cambodia: Job lost and Wage Declines

- The ADB projected that Cambodia will have a job loss of more than 300,000 due Covid-19.
- Those working in tourism - in hotels, spas, restaurants, tour services lost their job and income.
- More than 100 factories suspended production, with more than 100,000 workers laid off and lost their income.
- Between January and April 2020, the worker's salaries declined by about 30 percent.
- The COVID-19 increase the vulnerability of the poor and the wage decreased impact workers in construction, garment and agricultural workers.

### **Response:**

- Cambodia implemented contact tracing, temporarily suspend foreign visas, imposed travel restrictions and cancel the Khmer New Year celebrations, to effectively manage the pandemic.
- The government allocated US\$300 million budget for cash transfers. The government is implementing the ID Poor programme distributing US\$25 million per month to more than 500,000 poor and vulnerable families.



But Cambodians' Wage Earners are Hit-Hard<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Athira Nortajuddin, Cambodia's Wage Earners Hit-Hard By Virus, 11 September 2020  
<https://theasianpost.com/article/cambodias-wage-earners-hit-hard-virus>

### **Malaysian Migrant Workers Lost their Job in Singapore**

- Between January and July 2020, around 15,666 Malaysians have lost their jobs in Singapore.
- Malaysian workers in the service sector lost 11,123 jobs, manufacturing sector with 3,604 workers and construction with 939 workers.
- The numbers do not include workers who did not returned to Singapore since the movement control order (MCO) took effect on March 18.

### **Response:**

- Late July 2020, Singapore governments and Malaysian governments agreed to resume in August cross-border travel with Green Lane, allow cross-border travel for essential business and official purposes.
- Periodic Commuting Arrangement enables Singapore and Malaysia residents, who hold long-term immigration passes for business and work purposes in the other country, to enter that country for work <sup>11</sup>.

### **Indonesia Social Security Payment**

31 August 2020, Indonesia implemented a temporary regulation (GR 49/2020) to reduce and postpone mandatory contribution of the Workers Social Security between August 2020 to January 2021 by both employer and employee.

This will impact the workers Social Security on:

1. Work compensation for accidents occurring during work;
2. Old age benefits for retirement and laid off;
3. Pension benefits provides guaranteed income in retirement; and
4. Life insurance upon the death their family could claim the benefits

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<sup>11</sup> Malaymail, More than 15,000 Malaysians lost their jobs in Singapore, 22 Sep 2020

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/09/22/report-more-than-15000-malaysians-lost-their-jobs-in-singapore-due-to-covid/1905458>

### **The Philippines: Quarantine and Poverty**

The Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) impacted on 18.9 million workers or 45 percent of the 42.4 million employed (2018-2019). Many workers have lost their jobs, become part-time workers, had reduced salary, and informal sector workers lost their livelihood. About 7.7 million working families, had no support from the government pushing them into deeper poverty<sup>12</sup>.

### **Impact of Existing and New Laws, Policies And Practices - as Security and Digital Surveillance Measures – as Preventive Measures**

By March several countries had imposed lockdowns to control the movement of the people and social-distancing to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Several ASEAN countries impose lockdowns without adequate provision for food, housing, transport, PPE and medical testing.

Some ASEAN Member States had adopted emergency measures to respond to the challenges by the public health crisis, the economy and governance issues due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

### **Singapore Experience**

There is no special emergency proclaimed in Singapore during the pandemic. This is because the pre-pandemic existing legal framework is already highly restrictive on people's rights to expression and assembly particularly for political expression. During the pandemic, a new law called POFMA is used extensively by the government on social media postings that are deemed by them to be false.

March 2020, as the number of covid-19 case increased, the government introduced a series of temporary measures and regulations. But the government introduced in early April the "circuit breakers" measures which include enforcement of temperature checking at entrance to offices, shops, hospitals, workplaces, and other buildings and rapid contact tracing of covid-19 cases.

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<sup>12</sup> IBON Media, ECQ disrupts livelihood of 19M: Millions of working people left behind by poor govt response, 1 May 2020 <https://www.ibon.org/millions-of-working-people-left-behi/>

## **TraceTogether App and related privacy concerns**

Surveillance tools that pre-exist Covid-19 are temperature checks, immunity, certificate passports, thermal facial recognition, contact tracing CCTV, Camera, GPS, Mobile Location Data and Passenger Name Record. Since covid-19, new measures include temperature checks, immunity certificate passports, thermal facial recognition, and contact tracing.

In six ASEAN Member States, namely, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines Vietnam and Indonesia launch Trace Together (Peduli Lindungi) to monitor the movement of people to limit the spread of the Pandemic. CSO raise concerns about the disproportionate violations of the privacy rights of the most vulnerable people.

### **Singapore: TraceTogether App and related privacy concerns**

20 March 2020, a new mobile application named “TraceTogether” was launched to support ongoing contact tracing. Users will only be asked to share these records when contacted by MOH as part of contact tracing investigations. If they refuse, they may be prosecuted under the Infectious Diseases Act.

The Government Technology Agency (GovTech) developed mobile app is enabled through short-distance Bluetooth signals between mobile phones that have the app installed. The app estimates the distance between users, as well as the duration of their encounters to identify those who were in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case. The records of these encounters are encrypted and stored locally on each user's phone for 21 days, which covers the incubation period of the coronavirus.

The TraceTogether collects the user's mobile number, so that MOH can quickly contact those who have been in close proximity with a Covid-19 case. The app exchanges Bluetooth proximity data with nearby phones running the same app.

On 5 June 2020, the government was reported in the news that it is in the process of developing a wearable contact tracing device that may be distributed to all the people living in Singapore. It appears to achieve the same aim as the TraceTogether app but goes further in that it will reach out to those who do not own a smartphone. Critics and concerned citizens have already flagged this development as a potential further infringement of privacy rights.

September 2020, Singapore distributed thousands of devices that can track where a person has been and who they have interacted with. The small Bluetooth device is meant for those who do not own smart-phones.

In October 2020, Singapore started distribution of 450,000 contact-tracing tags to all construction, shipyard and process industry workers in a bid to restrict the spread of Covid-19.<sup>13</sup>

**Related Privacy Issues** – The Singapore Smart Nation initiative includes facial recognition in cameras installed on lampposts along the roads to record traffic offenders. There are also cameras in the elevator and car parks of housing estates. A person can be easily traced leaving his housing block to his workplace and return. In 2018, Singapore's largest health network was hacked and 1.5 million patient records were stolen. In 2019, a former expatriate released the names of more than 14,000 HIV-positive persons living in Singapore.

### **The Philippines Experience**

The Philippines has the highest number of confirmed cases in ASEAN with more than 283,000 infections and over 4,900 deaths. Six months after restrictions were introduced to curb Pandemic including stay-at-home orders, travel bans and no talking on buses and trains infections are increasing every day.

The COVID-19 pandemic is declared a national emergency. Both the military and police had their powers expand to cover enforcement of the quarantine. The police patrols ensure people's compliance with curfews.

### **Responses:**

In Philippines, the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) aimed to reduce mobility and prevent the spread of the Pandemic was imposed on Luzon island in Mid-March 2020 but with no arrangement for the needs (food and other essentials) of the people and also no Covid-19 testing. The government harassed CSO's that try to provide food and other essentials items to the people. The slum dwellers and poor communities are exposing the lack of social protections.

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<sup>13</sup> GCR, Singapore to tag 450,000 workers for Covid track and trace, 19 October 2020  
<https://www.globalconstructionreview.com/news/singapore-tag-450000-workers-covid-track-an>

## **Impact of Covid-19 preventive measures on democracy: human rights and civic space**

Emergency measures and lockdowns seem to increase human rights violations and reduce the civic space in Southeast Asia. Democracy includes the ability to express opinions, take part in decision-making, to hold those in power accountable, and to participate in elections. The government needs to ensure measures to prevent the spread of covid-19, protect livelihoods, respect human right and the space for civil society. The governments need to recognize the role of Civil Society to ensure authorizes and those in power are accountable, to protect the rights of all people, and where necessary facilitate access to various services (information, food, healthcare, and access to justice).

In Southeast Asia, COVID-19 has led to the further erosion of democratic practices in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand as the governments silence their critics during the pandemic. In this countries, pre-existing social and political division, inequalities, are pushing the democratic erosion and put constrains on the democracies due the pandemic<sup>14</sup>.

### **Singapore: Press Freedoms**

The Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranks Singapore as 158 on RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index. It now ranks below every country in Southeast Asia, except for Laos and Vietnam.

Singapore press freedoms are under further threat due to due to the October 2019 face news law - the law allows authorities to muzzle the freedom of press and put restrictions on social media. The Singapore government sues critical journalist and applies pressure to make them jobless, and to leave the country.

The Singapore government to prevent fake news empower the ministers to give orders to platforms like Facebook and Twitter to put up warnings next to disputed posts. The networks could be ordered to take the content down. The law also allows for fines of up to SG\$1 million (\$734,000 for companies that fail to comply. Individual offenders could face up to 10 years in prison. The law provides the Singapore authorities powers to clamp down on online views of which it disapproves and to censor dissent.

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<sup>14</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Political Polarization in South and Southeast Asia: Old Divisions, New Dangers, 2020 [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Political\\_Polarization\\_RPT\\_FINAL1.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Political_Polarization_RPT_FINAL1.pdf)

## **Impact of Covid-19 on Freedom of Expression**

Indonesia, Myanmar, Laos, and the Philippines, delayed or limit the release of information on the effects of Covid-19 until April 2020. President Joko Widodo, Indonesia, had even encouraged travel and provided incentives for local tourist.

Covid-19 response in ASEAN countries include the enforcement of laws to prevent free speech, censor online content (misinformation and fake news) and political expression, most notably in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

## C. Challenges and Assessment

### SWOT ANALYSIS: Protection of Rights of ASEAN Migrant Workers

Coverage	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Democracy and Human Rights	CSO and Migrant Groups are demanding their rights and try to prevent further erosion of their rights	A number of ASEAN Governments have become undemocratic and less friendly towards human rights and defenders	The people are protesting to defend the rights including labour rights.	Governments have arrested and jailed CSO leaders and human rights defenders.  Imposed restrictive measures against public expressions.
Civic Engagement	CSO are able together and engage in the ASEAN Processes to advocate for the rights of labour and migrant Workers	But undemocratic AMS are finding ways to have their way and nominate their prefer NGO / CSO representatives.	CSO work together to engage the AMS at the various ASEAN process on human rights, labour and migrant workers' rights.	The governments try to gain emergency powers to impose authoritarian ways of control over the people and erode the limited civic space.
Protect the Rights of migrant workers  on	ASEAN develop both the ASEAN Declaration and the ASEAN Consensus to protect the rights of migrant workers – both are non-binding	There is often the big gap between policies and implementation due to lack of political will of the AMS.	The AFML related action plans and engagement of CSO with the relevant ASEAN process – open the space for CSO participation.	Under pandemic the migrant workers have lost their income and jobs – many have no choice but return to their country of origin – with limited opportunity for decent work.

SDGs Attainment	ASEAN have integrate the SDG in plan of Action and implementation of the SDGs reported in its Annual Report.	SDGs is selectively implement with limited CSO involvement.	CSO involved in SDGs see possible opening in areas like climate change and issues of environmental concerns.	The pandemic and resulting economic impact has pushed a large of the population into poverty and face livelihood issues as 60% of ASEAN people are in informal sector with no social protection.
Coping with COVID	The ASEAN governments have responded slowly first protecting the own citizen with measures to prevent the covid-19 and provide for their livelihood, and retain employments with economic stimulus.	But they forgot the migrant workers who also needed the livelihood support and medical testing – such discrimination was harmful as the crisis increased.	The pandemic has exposed the gaps to be overcome with implementation of various preventive measures, treatments, and social protection	The pandemic is not discriminative but human are – we even blame the migrants for the crisis. Without the migrant workers many industries are closing – more jobless and increase poverty impact on the people.

There are over 265 million migrants, around the world, most of them are migrant workers. They cross-borders in search of better jobs pushed by poverty, income inequalities, lack of decent jobs and income in their home country; and pulled by destination countries due to globalization, demographic shifts (lack of young workers), and higher income.

Labour migration from and within the ASEAN has increased over the decades. There are an estimated 20.2 million ASEAN nationals living outside of their country of origin. Within the ASEAN region, migrant workers has increased from 2.9 million in 1990 to 9.8 million in 2015. From the 2015 statistics, 8.7 million are intra-regional migrant workers who moved

from one ASEAN country to another. About 5.1 million (52 per cent) were male migrants, and 4.7 million (48 per cent) were female migrants. But most of the intra-ASEAN migration is temporary and includes irregular migrants who may not be included in the migration statistics.

More than 65% of the workforce in the region are in precarious work – without permanent and decent jobs, access to social services and social protection, and without adequate income that could enable them a life with dignity. Less than 30% of the population have social protection as government expenditure for social protection remains low.<sup>15</sup>

There are several obstacles for the migration process to achieve fair and effective labour migration governance and provide effective mechanism for the protection of the rights of migrant workers' and their families.

Migrant cross-borders to search for better jobs pushed by poverty, income inequalities, lack of decent jobs and income in their home country; and pulled by destination countries due to globalization, demographic shifts (lack of young workers) higher income and opportunities for improving their families.

Majority of the peoples in the region continue to suffer from economic and social deprivation, insecurity, and exclusion as inequalities continue to widen.

## **Advocacy on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in ASEAN**

The TFAMW Advocacy increase knowledge and enhance the capacity of key CSO stakeholders on migrant workers' rights to better understand and advocate in Southeast Asia's changing realities of the political, economic and social environment. They will also have better knowledge of the linkages between migration governance, sustainable development, and mechanisms for protecting migrant workers' rights in ASEAN.

The TFAMW builds on the ASEAN's political commitment to improve migration policies on protection, development and mobility processes for its workers, in particular migrant workers. The TFAMW Advocacy goals are to better protect rights, improved safe labour mobility, and ensure fairer distribution of the development (economic and social) benefits for migrant workers and their family.

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<sup>15</sup> ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2019 [https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASYB\\_2019.pdf](https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASYB_2019.pdf)

The TFAMW contribute towards realizing the goals of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 which includes SDG Goals (8, 10, 16, 17) by aligning priorities with the new ASEAN Labour Ministers (ALM) Workplan and the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW) Workplan (2016-2020).

The TFAMW works on the regional and national levels and continues to create space for intensify CSO engagement with the ACMW through the regional consultation process, capacity development, research, and the implementation of the AFML recommendation on the ASEAN Declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of the migrant workers (Cebu Declaration).

To achieve its goals, the TFAMW engages and dialogue with the 10 ASEAN Member States ACMW representatives and the ASEAN bodies (e.g. ACMW, SLOM), the ASEAN Secretariat (primarily with the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Department), other relevant stakeholders, regional civil society organizations, academic institutions, and international organization (ILO ASEAN Project, IOM and UN Women)

## **AMS Challenged to Build a Just, Equitable and Humane Community**

In ASEAN for the past 50 years, CSO participation is severely limited. ASEAN ability to respond to peoples' needs and to ensure social justice, and human rights and welfare is very limited by the practice of decision-making by consensus and the policy of non-interference in the "national affairs" of other ASEAN member States (AMS). Despite civil society efforts to engage and create constructive dialogue on peoples' issues, there are only provided limited participation (meaningful spaces) that could actually make an impact on ASEAN's decision-making processes<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Interaksyon Southeast Asian civil society to ASEAN: 50 years of exclusion is enough August 8, 2017 <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2017/08/08/89513/southeast-asian-civil-society-to-asean-50-years-of-exclusion-is-enough/>

## **CLMV Countries Still Have the Lowest Incomes Among ASEAN Member States**

Today, ASEAN's main challenge is reducing the socio-economic inequality among the ASEAN 10 member countries. Despite rapid economic growth, CLMV countries have the lowest incomes among ASEAN Member States. Currently, three out of the four member states are least-developed countries (LDCs). The commitment to equitable development and narrowing development gap is reiterated under the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

## **Sustainable Development**<sup>17</sup>

In the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASEAN underlined the complementarity of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with ASEAN Community building efforts to uplift the living standards of its peoples. Capacity building to facilitate the exchange of policies, practices and approaches in the area of sustainable development is critical, in order to meet the related challenges, raise the living standards of people in CLMV countries and realise the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Key Issues Faced by Vulnerable Migrant Workers**

Decent work continues to be out of reach for most migrant workers in ASEAN. The protection of the basic human, labour, and migrant workers' rights; and access to justice by vulnerable continues to be a major challenge in Southeast Asia. Labour policies across ASEAN do not protect people from employment discrimination based disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and ethnicity. Those who challenge such policies are vulnerable to violence.

### **Race to the Bottom**

Most ASEAN member states have labour laws and policies that favours investment and business. The business management are free to bully workers with the power to terminate the workers anytime without giving any reason. The workers could be terminated for complaining about their working conditions and even joining unions, workers are saddled with low wages and poverty.

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<sup>17</sup> ASEAN Sustainable Development Goals Indicators Baseline Report 2020

[https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-sustainable-development-goals-indicators-baseline-report-2020](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-sustainable-development-goals-indicators-baseline-report-2020)

The protection of migrant workers' rights is inadequate and they suffer from low wages, long hours and dangerous work, and bad living conditions.

ASEAN needs to transform the structures, institutions, and norms economic, political and social that are holding back progress in realizing a humane, just, and equitable Southeast Asia. And urgently, needs to take measures to protect migrant workers' rights, address the cases of Southeast Asian overseas workers on death row, and resolve the issue of widespread unemployment in the region; and implement guarantee social protection for all.

### **Opportunities: TFAMW-CSO Participate in the AFML**<sup>18</sup>

1. TFAMW influencing the migration policies of ASEAN Member States and support national CSO to dialogue and engage the ACMW on the development, implementation, and monitoring of the ASEAN migration policies (Cebu Declaration). The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) has been a success process for engaging the ACMW to advocate for better protection of migrant workers and follow-up on recommendation for implementation (Clusters), monitoring, and sharing of lesson learned.
2. TFAMW works for more meaningful and effective engagement of CSOs, and encourage ACMW to institutionalise national preparatory meetings as already the participation of TFAMW (CSOs) is institutionalise for the AFML.
3. TFAMW supports exchange of experiences and knowledge between National CSO to build their capacity on labour migration governance, recruitment process and trainings, information sharing and awareness, and better protection for migrant workers. TFAMW supports CSOs to create stronger policy advocacy on issues at the workplace such as payment of salary, occupational safety and health, recruitment process and fees, non-discrimination, social security, and skills trainings.

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<sup>18</sup> The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) Background information booklet, 2020 [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_733912.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_733912.pdf)

**CSO and Government Implement ASEAN Consensus on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Migrant Workers (ASEAN Consensus)**

Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of the migrant workers (2007 Cebu Declaration) are concrete steps towards developing plans to implement the ASEAN Consensus on protection and promotion of the rights of the migrant workers (2017 ASEAN Consensus).

The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) is one of the activities under the ACMW Work Plan pertaining to strengthening protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. The AFML is annual event of the ACMW and is participated by governments of member states, workers' and employers' organizations and civil society organizations (TFAMW- CSO). It provides an open platform for discussion, exchange of best practices and review of the implementation of recommendations adopted.

Each year the commitment and willingness of governments and tripartite constituents and CSOs to work together has increased as observed in the ASEAN Forum on migrant Labour. Each of the forums developed a set of recommendations on these themes. Previous AFMLs have focused their discussion around the ASEAN Declaration, carrying themes such as:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> AFML: “ASEAN Declaration on Migrant Workers: Achieving its Commitment”.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> AFML: Enhancing Awareness and Information Services to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers
- 4<sup>th</sup> AFML: “Development of a public campaign to promote understanding, rights and dignity of migrant workers in countries of destination; Return and reintegration and development of sustainable alternatives in countries of origin”.
- 5<sup>th</sup> AFML: Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers: Regulation of Recruitment
- 6<sup>th</sup> AFML: “Enhancing Policy and Protection of Migrant Workers Through Data Sharing, and Adequate Access to the Legal and Judicial System During Employment, Including Effective Complaints Mechanisms”.
- 7<sup>th</sup> AFML: Towards the ASEAN Community by 2015 with Enhanced Measures to Protect and Promote the Rights of Migrant Workers.
- 8<sup>th</sup> AFML: Empowering the ASEAN Community through Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.
- 9<sup>th</sup> AFML: Better Quality of Life for ASEAN Migrant Workers through Strengthened Social Protection.
- 10<sup>th</sup> AFML: Towards Achieving Decent Work for Domestic Workers in ASEAN.

- 11th AFML: Digitalisation to Promote Decent Work for Migrant Workers in ASEAN.
- 12th AFML: Future of Work and Migration.

### **2017 ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Migrant Workers (ASEAN Consensus)**

ASEAN member states not all ratified the eight core ILO conventions (29, 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 138, and 182) and harmonise their national laws with the standards as such they are not “politically willing” to implement a “legally binding instrument”.

The Civil Society Proposal: ASEAN Framework Instrument on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers was presented and discussed at the 2nd ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour, 30-31 July 2009, as reference document. The TFAMW urged the ACMW to consider the CSO proposal of 192 recommendations for its action plans<sup>19</sup>.

### **TFAMW Engagement with ASEAN Processes and ACMW**

*Engage ACMW effectively at national preparatory meetings for the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) and participate constructively in the AFML.*

The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour is an open platform for the review, discussion and exchange of best practices and ideas between governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and civil society stakeholders on key issues facing migrant workers in South East Asia, and to develop recommendations to advance the implementation of the principles of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

The Forum provides opportunity to share stakeholder activities to implement the recommendations from past forums in Hanoi 2010, Bali 2011, Siem Reap 2012, Brunei 2013, Nay Pyi Taw 2014, Kuala Lumpur 2015 and Vientiane 2016, as well as the experience of developing the draft ASEAN Instrument on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

National CSO Preparatory Meetings for the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour is held in all ASEAN member states to take stock on progress to date and implementation of previous

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<sup>19</sup> The Civil Society Proposal: ASEAN Framework Instrument on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers [http://www.workersconnection.org/resources/Resources\\_72/book\\_tf-amw\\_feb2010.pdf](http://www.workersconnection.org/resources/Resources_72/book_tf-amw_feb2010.pdf)

AFML' recommendations at the national level, to discuss the AFML's theme, and prepare recommendations for the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour.

Implementation (Cebu Declaration), sharing of lesson learn, and reporting, according to the Clusters of AFML recommendations (CSO prepare and make presentation at national preparatory meetings and at the AFML) as follows:

<b>Clusters:</b>	<b>AFML Recommendations (3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> AFML)</b>
<b>Cluster 1:</b>	Information sharing, dissemination and public information campaigns regarding overseas work, including costs at all stages and working conditions information for sending countries and positive perception of migrant workers
<b>Cluster 2:</b>	Collection, sharing and analysis of data regarding migrant workers for both sending and receiving countries
<b>Cluster 3:</b>	Effective return and reintegration strategies including sustainable alternatives for migrant work
<b>Cluster 4:</b>	Facilitative access for complaints and grievance mechanisms for both sending and receiving countries.
<b>Cluster 5:</b>	Promotion of cooperation, partnerships, information exchanges and meaningful involvement among all stakeholders in both sending and receiving countries
<b>Cluster 6:</b>	Regulation of overseas recruitment
<b>Cluster 7:</b>	Labour Inspections (Minimum Standards of Employment and Workplace Safety (OSH)
<b>Cluster 8:</b>	Better Quality of Life for ASEAN Migrant Workers through Strengthened Social Protection

The ASEAN Consensus provides a new deal for migrant workers in ASEAN, in which the basic rights of workers are enforce and social protection assured for all workers and their families

Mobility-related risks include poverty, vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation, dangerous working environments, under payment or non-payment of wages, inability to access basic preventative health or education services, and separation from social support structures.

The **13<sup>th</sup> AFML Forum 2020** takes into account the current COVID-19 pandemic is organised with the theme “**Supporting migrant workers during the pandemic for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community**”. It will be a platform for ASEAN Member States and stakeholders to exchange information on challenges and impacts of COVID-19 on migrant workers and draw lessons for better preparedness for and response to future crisis such as a pandemic, economic crisis or natural disaster<sup>20</sup> .

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<sup>20</sup> The 13th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour [https://www.ilo.org/asia/events/WCMS\\_755357/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/events/WCMS_755357/lang--en/index.htm)

## **D. Action Plans and Proposals**

### **Regional ASEAN Processes and Plan of Actions in Support of Migrant Workers During and Beyond the Pandemic**

14 May 2020, ASEAN Labour Ministers' Special Meeting adopted the Joint Statement on response to the impact of COVID-19 on labour and employment, and also outlines actions to support migrant workers stranded in each other's country or in third countries. ASEAN has jointly responded to the COVID-19 and its impact by undertaking measures to sustain the health and livelihood of the people and accelerate economic recovery.

14 May 2020, ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM), convened a special video conference, on response to the impact of COVID-19 on Labour and Employment and adopted the ALMM Joint Statement.

The ASEAN Labour Ministers exchanged and shared data and information on measures and policies to cope with COVID-19 for workers, particularly issues relating to their income, employment, safety and health. They also discussed recommendations for common response of ASEAN to COVID-19 impacts in the field of labour and employment. The ministers adopted a joint declaration which stressed the need to implement joint efforts to promote labour and employment policies in response to impacts of pandemics.

The ASEAN Labour Ministers agreed to provide support for the livelihood and health of all workers, especially those working in high-risk sectors, and safeguard their labour rights; endeavour to provide all workers, including migrant workers, laid off or furloughed by employers affected by the pandemic are compensated appropriately by the employers and eligible to receive social assistance or unemployment benefits from the government where appropriate.

The ASEAN Labour Ministers agreed to facilitate access of all workers infected by COVID-19 to essential health care services and other relevant medical support as necessary and prevent discrimination against infected workers; provide appropriate assistance and support to ASEAN migrant workers affected by the pandemic in each other's country or in third countries; and further strengthen the effectiveness of active labour market policies at national and regional levels, occupational safety and health standards, and social protection systems through social dialogue to retain employment, reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk workers, and improve their resilience.

The ASEAN Labour Ministers also agreed to enhance cooperation with tripartite partners, civil society, international organisations, ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other stakeholders in mutually agreed areas such as knowledge sharing, research and development technical assistance and resource mobilisation to support rapid responses and post-pandemic recovery plan; and continue sharing of best practices and lessons learnt among ASEAN member countries on measures to help at-risk workers and employers and promote their resilience.

The ASEAN Labour Ministers agreed to regional solidarity and to continue to strengthen cooperation in this challenging time and implement the following 9 actions<sup>21</sup> :

1. Provide support for the livelihood and health of all workers, especially those working in high-risk sectors, and safeguard their labour rights amidst the impact of COVID-19 to the economies and industries of ASEAN Member States;
2. Endeavour to provide that all workers, including migrant workers, laid off or furloughed by employers affected by the pandemic are compensated appropriately by the employers and eligible to receive social assistance or unemployment benefits from the government where appropriate, in accordance with the laws, regulations and policies of respective ASEAN Member States;
3. Facilitate access of all workers infected by COVID-19 to essential health care services and other relevant medical support as necessary and prevent discrimination against infected workers;
4. Provide appropriate assistance and support to ASEAN migrant workers affected by the pandemic in each others country or in third countries, including effective implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, working towards their health, well-being and safety as well as facilitating their movement and reuniting them with their families;
5. Further strengthen the effectiveness of active labour market policies at national and regional levels, occupational safety and health standards, and social protection systems through productive and harmonious social dialogue to retain employment, reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk workers, and improve their resilience;
6. Utilise digital technology as communication and consultation media amidst temporary restrictions of movement in many countries so as to further regional cooperation and national responses to the impact of the pandemic on labour and employment;
7. Enhance effective and transparent public communications through official forms of media for timely updates of government labour and employment policies and measures in response to the pandemic and counter misinformation;

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<sup>21</sup> Joint Statement of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (14 April 2020) <https://aseanplusthree.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final-Joint-Statement-of-the-Special-APT-Summit-on-COVID-193360.pdf>

8. Enhance cooperation with tripartite partners, civil society, international organisations, ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other stakeholders in mutually agreed areas such as knowledge sharing, research and development technical assistance and resource mobilisation to support rapid responses and post-pandemic recovery plan; and
9. Continue sharing of best practices and lessons learnt among ASEAN Member States on measures to help at risk workers and employers and promote their resilience.

### **Action Plan 2021-2025 : TFAMW-CSO Proposal to the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW)**

In 2020, the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), and other ASEAN sectoral bodies, review the past work and develop the new Work Plans for 2021-2025. The ACMW is a subsidiary body of the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

The ACMW is responsible for implementing the 2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (Cebu Declaration) and the 2017 ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ASEAN Consensus).

The current ACMW Work Plan 2016-2020 includes 15 projects under four thematic areas, including (i) governing mechanisms of labour mobility; (ii) social protection of migrant workers; (iii) protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers; and (iv) labour dimensions of trafficking in persons.

The new ACMW 2021-2025 Work Plan will be developed under the framework of the cross-sectoral ASEAN Consensus Action Plan 2018-2025, which defines five broad categories, namely<sup>22</sup>:

- (i) education/information;
- (ii) protection;
- (iii) enforcement;
- (iv) recourse; and
- (v) reintegration.

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<sup>22</sup> ASEAN Consensus Action Plan 2018-2025 <https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/clean-Action-Plan-2018-2025-of-ASEAN-Consensus-on-the-Protection-and....pdf>

Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Viet Nam, the 2020 Chair of the ACMW, is co-ordinating the development of the ACMW Work Plan 2021-2025 in a consultative process. The TFAMW-CSO representatives were invited to the ACMW consultation to present priorities and proposals.

The implementation of the Action Plan in 2021-2025 will be supported by the ASEAN Secretariat and the ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme.

### **Action Plan (2018 – 2025) to Implement ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers**

The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ASEAN Consensus) was signed by the ASEAN Leaders during the 31st ASEAN Summit in November 2017. The ASEAN Member States (AMS), through the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), will implement the ASEAN Consensus through an action plan.

The action plan is developed based on the following principles:

- (a) ASEAN Consensus' provisions can be categorised under five broad areas, namely (i) education/information; (ii) protection; (iii) enforcement; (iv) recourse; and (v) reintegration;
- (b) AMS are at various stages of development and progress, with different laws, regulations and policies on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers;
- (c) The action plan will capture AMS's efforts between 2018 – 2025 to implement the ASEAN Consensus. Changes to projects can be made in the action plan in 2019 and subsequent years by consultation and consensus of ACMW.
- (d) The action plan to implement the Consensus is aligned with the ACMW Work Plan (which implement activities related to the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers – “Cebu Declaration”), the ACMW Work Plan will merged with the action plan 2018 – 2025 to implement the ASEAN Consensus. For greater oversight, progress on the ACMW Work Plan will be reported at ACMW meetings.
- (e) The action plan is endorsed by the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) and adopted by the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM).

## **Action Plan (2018 – 2025): Summary of 5 Action Thematic Areas to Implement the ASEAN Consensus**

<b>Areas of action plan</b>	<b>Possible action areas to ensure effective implementation of the action plan</b>
<b>Education/Information</b>	<p><b>Right to information:</b></p> <p>Need to share information on migration costs, identify ways to reduce costs, women need to be reached and informed on how to reduce costs.</p> <p><b>Accessible information:</b></p> <p><b>TFAMW CSOs</b> could be partner for sharing information on possible violence, harassment and exploitation of Women Migrant Workers (MMW)</p> <p><b>Information sharing platform:</b></p> <p>Share information among AMS on citizens, in the context of undocumented migrant workers.</p> <p>Need to study good practices on gender responsive laws and policies in AMS to prevent violence, harassment and exploitation of WMW, and promote employment and decent work opportunities for WMW.</p> <p><b>Pre-departure orientation:</b></p> <p><b>TFAMW CSOs</b> to promote information on healthcare issues in the context of Pandemic to ensure effective and timely protection of Migrant Workers (MWs).</p> <p><b>Brunei and Malaysia (ACMW)</b> - Cost of Migration including the cost borne by employers (hidden and obvious costs) may be inflated which leads to challenges of trafficking, exploitation. This requires collaboration between AMS and Recruitment</p>

	<p>Agencies</p> <p><b>Post-arrival information:</b></p> <p><b>TFAMW CSOs</b> to promote information on healthcare issues in the context of Pandemic to ensure effective and timely protection of Migrant Workers (MWs).</p> <p><b>Skills development:</b></p> <p>Building on existing work- mobility initiatives (Mutual Recognition Framework for recognition of skills) for lower skilled work. For this engaging private sector and employers based on demands is important. Exchange of information on practical skills between AMS and MWs is important (like MRCs of ILO by Triangle and Safe and Fair providing practical info)</p> <p><b>Malaysia (ACMW)</b> - During COVID 19 sectors which are affected should be provided with skills development and training. So that migrant workers are enable to work in other sectors (mobilization of MWs to work in other sectors)</p> <p><b>Public perception, awareness raising:</b></p> <p><b>Brunei, Malaysia (ACMW)</b> - Cost of Migration including borne by employers (hidden and obvious costs) may be inflated which leads to challenges of trafficking, exploitation. This requires collaboration between AMS and Recruitment Agencies.</p> <p><b>Malaysia, Viet Nam (ACMW)</b> - Need to improve public perception on positive contributions of migrant workers – both in COO and CODs.</p> <p><b>Viet Nam (ACMW)</b> - Campaign to support network of MWs especially women migrant workers’ networks, especially in other countries.</p>
<b>Protection</b>	<p><b>COVID-19 response</b></p> <p>Cooperation with SLOM-WG on extending social protection in informal sectors (fisheries, domestic workers, agriculture,</p>

	<p>forestry), to include migrant workers in social security → Prerequisite for portability!</p> <p>ACMW project on building capacity on negotiating bilateral Social Security Arrangement (SSA). To reach Memorandum of Cooperation on portability.</p> <p>Cambodia: Social protection portability important. No agreements on portability. CLMVT can improve portability of SP. Roadmap developed. How to improve bilateral agreements.</p> <p>Regional programme to build capacity to prevent violence and harassment campaigning, capacity building on prevention (behaviour change), work with private sector (self-assessments, indicators), services (regional guidelines on service provision)</p> <p><b>Organizing workers in informal sectors</b></p> <p>Extend coverage of accident and health insurance schemes to cover all sectors, including informal sector</p>
<p><b>Enforcement</b></p>	<p><b>Labour inspection</b></p> <p>Independent, government labour inspection strengthened, capacity building, need for more inspectors and women inspectors for women-dominant sectors. Joint training.</p> <p>Proposed project on labour inspection that has been postponed due to COVID. Follow up could include better networking among AMS to implement labour inspection.</p> <p><b>Voluntary Compliance</b></p> <p>Voluntary compliance &amp; audits among employment federation members looking at compliance of national laws and international standards. This practice can be shared with AMS. The capacity of government to do labour inspection is limited. Employer organizations to do such audits should know ILS. Capacity building at higher level is not only for inspectors but also for employers and unions.</p>

	<p><b>Monitoring Recruitment</b></p> <p>Guidelines of contracts on Domestic Workers, and also need to monitor recruitment agencies fees. Train recruitment agencies</p>
<p><b>Recourse / Remedy</b></p>	<p><b>Access to complaints mechanisms</b> – include facilitation of discussions between employers and workers as such conciliation is a first step.</p> <p><b>Destination country and origin country corridor links</b> – cross-border cooperation on recourse generally – Ministries of labour, Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Justice.</p> <p>Principles are crucial to effectively implement these for the benefit of migrant workers.</p> <p><b>Expansion of compensation</b> in concept</p> <p>Monitoring of migrant workers and that communication and link as the foundation of recourse – reciprocal arrangements to enable cross-border justice – referral as entry point for cross border recourse</p> <p>Labour inspection, workplace audits, in a targeted manner to meet needs of migrant worker on protection against sexual harassment, violence and harassment at work within the scope of compensable harms</p> <p><b>Pandemic challenges and responses:</b> – entitlements to unpaid wages and benefits, PPE .. etc</p>
<p>Reintegration</p>	<p><b>Develop comprehensive national policies</b> and programmes on reintegration taking into consideration the ASEAN guidelines on effective return and reintegration of migrant workers. Ensure effective implementation of such policies and programmes. MWs have different migration experiences (more or less “successful”) as such the important services to returnees are:</p> <p><b>Effectively use of remittances earned abroad and skills learned:</b></p>

	<p>-In COO, skills recognition upon return both for national employment and remigration</p> <p>-In CODs, employers can offer skills upgrading and certification.</p> <p>-There are different skills qualifications in COOs and CODs</p> <p><b>Employment services</b> - job centres, job matching etc</p> <p>And financial literacy training, business management (for self-employment)</p> <p><b>Set up data bases on returnees</b></p> <p>Ensure that returnees have access to holistic support services, taking the specific needs of women into consideration.</p> <p><b>Establish referral mechanisms</b> (for services including psychosocial support and access to legal remedy)</p> <p><b>Effective repatriation services</b> and mechanisms to be put in place,</p> <p><b>Learning from COVID-19</b> - ensuring national and regional preparedness</p> <p><b>Potential regional activities:</b></p> <p><b>Sharing of good practices</b> in holistic reintegration programme and capacity building</p> <p><b>Stock taking of policies that</b> exists in AMS related to reintegration (noting that there is a gap in reintegration policies/programmes in the region), publication and workshop</p> <p><b>Exchange information</b> on establishing returnee databases</p>
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## **TFAMW Civil Society Recommendations to the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers' (ACMW) Workplan 2021-2025)**

The taking reference from the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, developed the following recommendations for the ACMW's consideration for inclusion and implementation of the ACMW Workplan 2021 – 2025 with the TFAMW-CSO.

### **TFAMW-CSO Proposed Priority Action for ACMW Implementation:**

1. Develop a crisis preparedness and response plan for migrant workers, covering support to stranded migrant workers and safe repatriation;
2. Extend social protection of migrant workers, including workers in informal sectors, fishing, domestic work and agriculture, and enable portability of social protection;
3. Address health risks of migrant workers (physical and mental), including those affected by COVID-19, and ensure migrant workers access to medical services;
4. Ensure access to justice, complaint and redress mechanisms, including cross-border mechanisms to ensure compensation for migrant workers, especially for non-payment of wage;
5. Strengthen policies and programmes for safe return and repatriation, and reintegration programmes and services;
6. Improve pre-departure and post-arrival orientation and training;
7. Provide accessible and long-term registration for migrant workers; and
8. Hold employers and recruitment agencies accountable for respecting migrant workers' rights.

### **TFAMW CSOs are Prepared to Partner with ACMW to Implement the Following in the Period of 2021 - 2025:**

1. Provide information, education and skills training to migrant workers;
2. Organize migrant workers into associations;
3. Provide reintegration support services;
4. Provide legal support services to migrant workers, including cross-border mechanisms;

5. Participate in development of indicators for implementing the ASEAN Consensus, and in monitoring progress in its implementation; and
6. Develop information platforms in various local languages.

**On-going AFML Activities and Processes 2021 – 2025: To Implement the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Migrant Workers**

1. National CSO Preparatory Meetings for the Annual AFML (10 Countries)
2. Effective participation in the Annual AFML
3. National CSO Planning Meeting follow-up to AFML to implement and monitor the implementation of the 2021 – 2025 implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers – including the relevant SDGs.

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## **Regional and Country impact and policies**

[Social protection responses to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific: The story so far and future considerations](#)

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19 August 2020 The COVID-19 crisis has fundamentally shaken societies and economies across the Asia-Pacific region and the world. As some countries begin to enter what is likely to be a long recovery phase, this note, result of a collaborative effort of the United Nations Issue-based Coalition (IBC) for Inclusion and Empowerment, explores how short-term measures can be transformed into comprehensive and shock-responsive social protection system.

Experiences of ASEAN migrant workers during COVID-19: Rights at work, migration and quarantine during the pandemic, and re-migration plans

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03 June 2020 The COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting labour migration throughout the ASEAN region and globally. In 2019 there were an estimated 10 million international migrants in ASEAN, of whom nearly 50 per cent were women. The ILO undertook a rapid assessment survey, interviewing ASEAN migrant workers from end-March to end-April 2020 about how COVID-19 has impacted them. This brief summarizes the responses of the 309 women and men migrant workers who participated in the survey.

## **Covid-19 Impact and Response of ASEAN Member States**

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15 June 2020 This report examines in detail how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the labour market in Thailand, making use of the data available at the end of the first quarter 2020.

[COVID-19: Impact on migrant workers and country response in Thailand](https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/issue-briefs/WCMS_741920/lang--en/index.htm)

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Reports of International Organizations on Migrant Workers in ASEANWORLD REPORT 2020  
 HRW annual review of human rights around the globe <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020>  
 World Report 2020 is Human Rights Watch's 30th annual review of human rights practices around the globe. The 652-page volume reviews human rights practices and trends in nearly 100 countries. In his introductory essay, Executive Director Kenneth Roth says that the Chinese government, which depends on repression to stay in power, is carrying out the most intense attack on the global human rights system in decades. He finds that Beijing's actions both encourage and gain support from autocratic populists around the globe, while Chinese authorities use their economic clout to deter criticism from other governments.

## **International Reports on Labour**

ILO, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020  
<https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2020/lang--en/index.htm>

Key findings:

1. Almost half-a-billion people have insufficient access to paid work:

- 165 million have a job but want to work more hours;
- \* 188 million are unemployed;
- 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market.

2. Access to paid work is no guarantee of a decent life:

- Many people have to accept unpleasant or unattractive jobs because not enough decent work is available;
- These jobs tend to be informal, low paid, insecure, with little access to social protection and rights at work.

Decent work concerns the adequacy of wages or self-employment earnings, the right to job security and a safe and healthy workplace, access to social protection, the opportunity to voice one's views and concerns through a trade union, employers' organization or other representative body, and other fundamental rights such as non-discrimination. Decent work deficits are especially pronounced in the informal economy, which registers the highest rates of in-work poverty and high shares of people who are own-account self-employed or contributing family workers who lack adequate protection.

### 3. Labour markets are currently producing extremely unequal outcomes:

- At the global level, inequality is much greater than previously thought, mainly because of extreme inequality in developing countries;
- The bottom 20 per cent are earning only 4.5 per cent of total income.

This group needs 11 years on average to earn what the richest 20 per cent do in one year. The new data on labour income (for all workers, including the self-employed) demonstrate that, at the global level, income inequality is far greater than previously thought.