



# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

*CARAM Asia*





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**The CARAM Asia Vision**

All people have the right to settle or migrate, and live and work in dignity, with equal rights, in a society where their quality of life is ensured.

# CONTENTS

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## **Task Force on Migration, Health, HIV and Well-Being**

- CARAM Asia Achievements under MHH Task Force

*Major Activities and Achievements under this Task Force:*

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Awareness Raising on HIV Prevention among Migrant Workers
- ✓ Enhancing Access to Services for Migrant Workers
- ✓ Capacity Building of Partners, Stakeholders, and Communities
- ✓ Reducing Stigma and Discrimination against HIV positive migrant workers

## **Task Force on Migrant Workers' Rights (MWR)**

*Major Activities and Achievements under this Task Force:*

- ✓ Empowering Women Migrant Domestic Workers and Promoting their Rights in Malaysia
  - Advocacy
  - Enhancing Access to Services for Women Migrant Workers
  - Capacity Building of Partners, Stakeholders, and Communities
  - Other Meetings

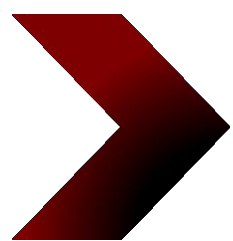
## **Task Force on Migration, Development and Globalization (MDG)**

*Major Activities and Achievements under this Task Force:*

- ✓ Safe and Fair Regional Workshop, Bangkok
- ✓ Thailand National Tripartite Preparatory Workshops for the 12th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour & 12TH ASEAN Forum Migrant Labour (AFML)
- ✓ ASIA Pacific Peoples' Forum for Sustainable Development 2019
- ✓ 6th ASIA Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development 2019
- ✓ Policy Dialogue On The Implementation Of The ASEAN Consensus On The Protection And Promotion Of The Rights Of Migrant Workers

## **Task Force on Migration, Climate Change and Humanitarian Crisis (MCCHC)**

## **Appendix**



***Task Force on  
Migration, Health, HIV  
and Well-Being***

# Task Force on Migration, Health, HIV and Well-Being



## Brief Introduction of the Task Force on Migration, Health, HIV and Well-Being

Throughout the migration cycle, governments of origin, as well as sending countries treat migrant workers as a commodity. Their well-being and health rights are largely ignored. Migrant workers suffer from discrimination as reflected in health issues such as mandatory health and HIV testing with deportation, lack of access to HIV services and treatment, no information on health, limited access to health services, and poor working and living conditions.

Using various human rights and health rights frameworks, CARAM Asia developed the Migration, Health, and HIV (MHH) program by combining the previous Task Force of Empowering Migrants Living with HIV (TFEM) and the State of Health (SoH) Programme to focus on migrant workers' health rights. The objective of the MHH is to promote the health rights of migrants through reform of discriminatory policies and equity in provision and access of health services for migrant workers, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV.

This program also pays special attention to the health and well-being of undocumented migrant workers, as well as documented migrants who are deported for health conditions, especially HIV. Empowerment of migrants living with HIV and their spouses to be meaningfully involved in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and policies is an integral part of the MHH Task Force.

### Objective:

The objective of the Migration, Health, HIV, and Well-Being Task Force is to promote the health rights and wellbeing of migrants by advocating to reform discriminatory policies and include migrant workers under all targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-3) on "Ensuring healthy lives and promoting Well-being for all at all stages".

### Key Issues

- Mandatory HIV Testing and related deportation
- HIV Risks and Vulnerabilities (subgroups and intersecting communities)
- Access to Treatment
- Mental Health of Migrants
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Gender-Based Violence and its Impact on Health of Migrants (cross-cutting issue with above issues)

# CARAM ASIA ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER MHH TASK FORCE



## ➤ *Greater Recognition Of Migrant Workers As A Key Population Affected By HIV*

**CARAM Asia** helps several governments in the region provide better information and support for their workers traveling overseas for work.

Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility – Asia (CARAM) is a dynamic regional Asia network of 42 migrants, civil society and migrant support organizations working with sending and receiving countries for migrant workers. It was established in 1997 in Malaysia and began working with the Robert Carr Fund in 2013, as well as supporting its core functions with the RCF's support.

CARAM Asia, with RCF's support, has worked intensively with its member organizations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka to ensure that migrant workers have access to HIV information, prevention, and care services.

CARAM Asia works together with member organizations facing challenges in remaining registered as national governments change their policies and practices in relation to CSOs. In Pakistan, CARAM was able to assist in the re-establishment of a national PLHIV network following deregistration of several Civil Society Organizations by the government. This allowed for the continuation of important work to gain recognition of migrant workers as a key population in HIV programming.

The CARAM HIV Prevention and Care Project across Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka, took several forms. In Bangladesh, the project helped national member organizations engage with governments to modify their National HIV Policy to include migrant workers as a key or vulnerable population. In Pakistan, the project assisted national member organizations to work with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, to take part in policy development, specifically on the HIV section with a focus on HIV services for migrants, returnees, and deported migrants, which is an improvement in the recognition of migrants as one of the key populations at risk of HIV.

The national member organizations in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka worked with implementers of HIV programs (community outreach workers and health workers) to have increased awareness of how to reach and provide services for migrant workers. In Sri Lanka, CARAM Asia's national members worked closely with VCCT & STI clinics. Resultantly, the clinics' staff have realized that migrants are at high risk of contracting HIV while abroad, and have incorporated HIV prevention programs targeting migrants and advocated with STI clinics in Colombo to provide HIV testing programs for returnee migrants. Due to advocacy as part of RCF funded project migrant workers are recognized as a vulnerable group for HIV in Sri Lanka.

Under the CARAM Asia project, all three countries now formally recognize migrant workers in their National HIV Strategies. This is important, as these strategies drive program priorities and resource allocation.

CARAM Asia's efforts also resulted in significant improvements in migrant workers' pre-departure orientation programs, not only in these countries but also in other countries across the CARAM network. In most countries, orientation sessions were restricted to informing workers departing the sending country that they needed to be sure to obey their employers and abide by the country's laws.

However, with CARAM's support, its members have been able to insert curriculum (and in some cases facilitate orientation sessions) on HIV, sexual health, and rights into pre-departure programs.

In the Philippines large numbers of officers from different bureaus of the Department of Foreign Affairs such as from Foreign Service Institute (DFA-FSI), Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (DFA-OUMWA), Office of Consular Affairs-Consular Information Centre (OCA-ICIC), and the Regional Consular Office in Butuan (RCO) provided training to enhance their understanding on Gender, Sexuality, and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) concepts and to increase the understanding of participants of the intersectionality of these concepts with HIV in the context of migration.

CARAM Asia brings its member organizations together to work on issues of mutual interest and concern. Member organizations then draw on each other's skills and experiences working on a single issue across multiple countries, as was the case for the recognition of migrant workers as a vulnerable and/or key population, which also increases advocacy effectiveness in the region.

## ***CARAM Asia Project on Advocacy of Migrant's HIV Issues, Enhancing their Access to Health Services, Promoting and Protecting HIV Positive Migrant's Rights***

CARAM Asia implements a project on Advocacy of Migrant's HIV Issues, Enhancing their Access to Health Services, Promoting and Protecting HIV Positive Migrant's Rights in collaboration with member organizations such as ACHIEVE in the Philippines, OKUP in Bangladesh, SPEAK Trust in Pakistan, and Community Development Services (CDS) in Sri Lanka. This project is funded by the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks (RFC).

Under the project, CARAM Asia does advocacy and capacity building with various partners, stakeholders,

and PLHIV (People Living with HIV) networks, CARAM Asia lobbies for comprehensive legal protection for all migrant workers health rights regardless of immigration status.

The task force addresses stigma and discrimination against migrant workers, and makes efforts to enhance their (MWs) access to health services through advocacy, awareness-raising on HIV prevention, and Capacity Building of Partners, Stakeholders, and Communities



# MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ADVOCACY

The development of a strong advocacy agenda is a major program direction for CARAM Asia, as it recognizes the importance of using the information gathered effectively so that it is put to good use through lobbying and advocacy work.

In 2019, key advocacy meetings saw the implementation of fruitful change in policies and improved health care services regionally. Advocacy Meetings with stakeholders to develop policy guidelines for the provision of comprehensive reintegration services for MW's living with HIV were held as well as meetings with government officials and key stakeholders on rights issues of migrants and HIV/AIDS at various levels were conducted. These meetings were organized by OKUP in Bangladesh and ACHIEVE in the Philippines. The active participation of ACHIEVE in the Council and Network meetings contributed to sustaining CARAM Asia's partnership with relevant stakeholders which is a boost to the advocacy of HIV and migration issues.



The suggestions and feedback received from these discussions were that OKUP along with PLHIV Network NOP+, created a policy brief before the full policy guideline to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of the issues at hand. OKUP also ensured the participation of all self-help groups of PLHIV and other relevant stakeholders including National Aids/Std Programme (NASP) and UNAIDS, since UNAIDS had expressed interest in supporting an experienced consultant for developing the policy guideline.

The stakeholders in attendance, including government officials, NOP+ representatives, NGO representatives, and returned migrants are now aware of the rights of PLHIV, migration and HIV nexus, HIV scenario in Bangladesh, etc., and are committed to disseminating the information to their respective communities. They are also committed to contribute in decreasing discrimination and negligence against PLHIV.

Meetings with the Ministry of Overseas Employment and Human Resource Development in Pakistan resulted in sensitizing some of the key Stakeholders such as (Federal Investigation Agency and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation) on the issues regarding migrants' health rights and their effective redressal. This sensitization on migrants' HIV-related needs will help in reducing migrants' vulnerabilities towards HIV and provide them with better services in the long run. This is the outcome we can expect after inclusion in the policy or else effective mechanism in place at the airports for referral and reintegration for most vulnerable labor migrants.

Improved healthcare services were seen through meetings with Global Fund, National AIDS Control Program (NACP), Provincial AIDS Control Program (PACP - KP), and Nae Zindagi Trust (an NGO working on HIV prevention for injecting drug users) in Islamabad, where SPEAK Trust shared the problems being faced by the PLHIV (People Living with HIV) community in terms of access to healthcare services. This bid to both government and civil society to jointly establish and update the HIV service centers in Batkhela, Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and other locations, upon implementation, will increase access to health care services for returnee mi- grants as well as people living with HIV.



Muhammad Ibrahim (Field Officer – SPEAK TRUST), Pre-Departure Orientation Session to Potential Migrant in Butkhela, Swat.

Advocacy meetings with the Federal Protectorate of Emigrants' office by SPEAK Trust in Pakistan were held to review and amend the content of pre-departure orientation sessions with HIV positive emigrants, and also to review and support the adaptation of federally approved content with each of the four Provincial Protectorate of Emigrants' offices. This will lead to a more comprehensive orientation content, which in turn,



will increase the awareness among migrants and reduce the likelihood of HIV infection and related deportation. Meetings with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the National AIDS Control Programme to advocate for an establishment of data records and referral mechanisms for deported migrants to HIV testing and services were also held.

In Sri Lanka, an advocacy workshop was conducted by the Community Development Services (CDS), who partnered with the Saviya Development Foundation, to organize a workshop for young and potential migrant men, in order to disseminate knowledge and preventive information in the context of HIV & AIDS.

Recognizing the importance of effective dissemination of information, various IEC (Information, Education & Communication) materials were produced in the effort to raise awareness where needed. One such example was the response to the recent outbreak in Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan (851 infected out of which around 700 were children), where SPEAK collaborated with the National AIDS Control Program (NACP) and Sindh AIDS Control Program (SACP) to update their IEC material on HIV/AIDS and 30,000 brochures were printed (15,000 in Sindhi language and 15,000 in the Urdu Language).



International AIDS Day was observed with a rally, discussions, and meetings between multistakeholders, public hospital staff, and government officers for sensitization and awareness of HIV positive migrant's rights and to eradicate stigma and discrimination.

## Awareness Raising on HIV Prevention among Migrant Workers

**Awareness-raising is an important aspect of promoting a better understanding and increased awareness of the health issues faced by migrant workers, particularly on HIV Prevention, their right to equal protection under the law, and practical access to support and health services.**

CARAM Asia and its member organizations implemented several awareness raising activities and sessions as described below.

### HIV and AIDS Awareness Raising Sessions for Migrant Workers in Malaysia

#### ➤ Introduction

There are various programmes had organized by CARAM ASIA for migrant workers in 2019. One of the programmes that pertaining to migrants' health was conducted in Downtown, Kuala Lumpur which entitled 'Talk on HIV& AIDS for Migrant Workers in Malaysia'.



These awareness raising sessions were organized specially for migrant workers who are working and living in Malaysia for the past several years from various countries. Thus, a total of six awareness raising sessions were conducted for more than 200 migrant workers from Myanmar, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Bangladesh.

This programme was executed successfully in collaboration with FAPA-Philippines, North-South Initiative (NSI), Think City and Migrant Workers Health Alliance.



Group photos of all collaborators for health program including medical and dental volunteers, NSI, Think City, FAPA-Philippines and CARAM Asia

In details, CARAM Asia and its NGO partners took part in the health programme called “medical camps” which was organized by Think City together with Migrant Workers Health Alliance/ North-South Initiatives by organizing the ‘talks on HIV & AIDS prevention. Talk Session’ for every milestone or agenda.

All collaborators had their own roles and tasks in this health programme. For instance, Think City provided the space to organize health program for migrant workers, NSI provided services in relation to the medical and dental check-up while CARAM Asia provided healthcare advice on HIV prevention and also helped in

formulating the questionnaire to gauge the healthcare awareness and access to services for migrant workers via the awareness raising sessions.

The key objective of the awareness raising sessions was to spread awareness regarding HIV and AIDS by educating migrant workers on the prevention of HIV and how to prevent themselves from spreading the diseases to others, if they had contracted HIV.

The participants were informed about risky behaviours and what to do if they were engaged in risky behaviours. In order to achieve the objective the talk sessions comprised of comprehensive lecture as well as quizzes by the experts and professional speakers at the end of the lecture.



FAPA-Philippines medical and dental volunteers

### ➤ Content of the Awareness Raising Sessions

As stated above, the professional speakers and experts shared essential knowledge that could assist the migrant workers to lead healthy and peaceful life. This is because the speakers were thoroughly explained the following aspects in conjunction with HIV/AIDS epidemic:

- What is HIV?
- HIV Transmission & Symptoms
- How to prevent HIV and its transmission?
- What is PrEP & PEP?
- The effectiveness of PrEP
- Accessibility of PrEP
- HIV Testing & Treatment availability in Malaysia

### ➤ Impact of the Programme

This programme has reached quite a number of migrant workers though it was difficult to gain migrant worker’s confidence due to security reasons and fear of arrest and detention therefore a safe place was provided for the health program. Most importantly, the key objective was achieved. This is because the participants have acquired the knowledge that was delivered by the speakers. This was proven by the quality answers that given by the participants during quizzes conducted by the professionals at the end of each session to check the knowledge gained.



Migrants are having basic health checkup

SPEAK Trust, OKUP & CDS organized Pre-departure Orientation Sessions with potential migrants on HIV awareness and prevention with participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In these sessions, discussions were held regarding the reasons as to why migrants are at risk of contracting HIV and how they can prevent themselves from getting the infection. The pre-departure orientation was aimed at preventing new infections

among migrant workers who were at the stage of going through legal procedures to go abroad for work. A total of 1239 potential migrant workers who were in the process of completing their documents and fulfilling legal procedures to work abroad attended the sessions. Out of this total, 735 were female potential workers and 504 were male workers.

SPEAK Trust also organized IEC Material development and distribution to all of the 2,000 Overseas Employment Promoters in Pakistan through POEPA (Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association) benefitting more than 10,00,000 migrants. More comprehensive IEC materials on HIV & AIDS helped migrants increase their awareness and therefore reduced their likelihood of HIV infection.



Through an effort by SPEAK to organize counseling and referral for returned but not registered migrants, an ongoing activity to provide these services to migrant workers has been established. Local HIV testing laboratories and Overseas Employment Promoters in Swat and Peshawar were contacted to reach out to the new returnee HIV positive migrants and a total number of 135 (mostly male) returnee migrants have been motivated for voluntary HIV testing.

Out of the 135 who were tested, 9 were found to be HIV positive. The further identifying of migrant workers and their families to motivate them for voluntary HIV testing has been conducted.

## Enhancing Access to Services for Migrant Workers

**Migrant Workers, and Undocumented Migrants, in particular, are often excluded from national programs for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and care, or social protection schemes for facilitating their access to health and social services. CARAM Asia seeks to enhance the quality of services to migrants and their families or to provide services in locations where previously they were unavailable.**

In this effort, the CDS jointly worked with Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing (VCCT) clinics to initiate free mobile clinics for the HIV testing of returnee migrants. The target group for the VCCT clinics were returnee migrant men and women. As a result, Returnee Migrants are now educating their spouses and friends on the importance of HIV testing and where to get tested.

In efforts to enhance access to health services for returnee HIV positive migrants, and prevent the further spread of HIV to the families of returnee HIV positive migrants, SPEAK Trust contacted local HIV testing laboratories and Overseas Employment Promoters in Swat and Peshawar to reach out to new returnee HIV positive migrants through Counseling and Referral. The new returnee migrants were then referred to health care services. This classification helped assess the numbers of HIV positive migrants, which if found to be high enough, enables them to be potentially considered as a key population. Database development and upgradation of deported and HIV positive migrants will ensure access to health services through Referral Mechanism, and the collected information will provide evidence for advocacy.

## Capacity Building of Partners, Stakeholders, and Communities

**An inevitable priority area is the need to build up the capacity of an organizations' members in order to meet the goals of organizational strategic plans, particularly when the uniqueness of CARAM Asia's network is its wide range of diversity and skills.**

The CARAM Asia Secretariat organized a Capacity Building on Monitoring & Evaluation (MEL) that ran concurrently with the CARAM Asia Board of Directors meeting. This program saw participants on a regional level from Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, India, Jordan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia and covered a variety of aspects such as; defining monitoring, defining evaluation, planning of processes, systematic incorporation of findings, as well as allowing participants to share on lessons learned, provide in-depth observations and recommendations into the program's decision making.

In the second half of the year 2019, CARAM Asia organized a Regional workshop on Capacity Building on Participatory Action Research (PAR). This workshop was attended by network partners from Malaysia, Pakistan, Jordan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Lebanon, Hong Kong, SAR of China, the Philippines, and the UAE. A total of 18 participants attended the workshop held in Kuala Lumpur. This Capacity Building Workshop on Participatory Action Research (PAR) enhanced and strengthened participants' capacity in the PAR methodology of researching the field.

A shift was also seen in the Philippine Migrant Health Network PMHN to mental health, and CARAM Partner ACHIEVE in the Philippines began conducting the Capacity Building of Frontline Service Providers involved in the medical repatriation program of the Philippine Migrant Health Network (PMHN) which focused on capacity building training for service providers or organizations providing services for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

The impact of this shift varied depending on the HIV and AIDS situation and the economic capacity of countries. Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region continue to face increasing HIV epidemics that are concentrated among key populations. The orientation was comprised of HIV prevention and the new HIV law for Bright Maritime Corporation for a batch of its outgoing seafarers. This was part of the pre-departure orientation seminar which is provided for outgoing overseas workers.

### 1 Regional Capacity-building to Advocate for Sustainable HIV Financing

Another key capacity building training was the training of CARAM Asia member CSO's Coalition on HIV Financing Advocacy to enhance the understanding of participants on different key aspects of HIV financing in prevention and response at a regional level, seeing participants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Nepal.



*Workshop on Sustainable HIV Financing and Budget Allocation on HIV and SRHR of migrants in Pakistan*

CARAM Asia also organized a Regional workshop on Sustainable HIV Financing for Migrant Workers from the 4th-7th October 2019. This workshop was attended by network partners from Malaysia, Pakistan, Jordan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Lebanon, Hong Kong, SAR of China, the Philippines, and the UAE. A total of 20 participants attended the workshop held in Kuala Lumpur. The objective of this training was to enhance the capacity of the members of CARAM's Migration, Health, and HIV Task Force to advocate for increased financing of HIV programs for migrant workers.

Migrant workers remain to be among the most vulnerable communities to HIV infection because of the various conditions that they encounter in the various stages of migration. However, more often than not,

migrant workers are left behind in the HIV programs of their sending countries because they spend most of their productive lives in receiving countries. Additionally, receiving countries do not include migrant workers in their HIV prevention, care and treatment programs because most of them simply disqualify and deport migrant workers who are found to be positive for HIV. If migrant workers are left behind, the goal to end the HIV epidemic by 2030 cannot be achieved.

This gap in HIV programming for migrant workers needs to be addressed and resourced. One step towards ensuring a fully-financed HIV program for migrant workers is to build the capacity of migrant CSOs and organizations of migrant workers on HIV financing advocacy. In this regard CARAM Asia has conducted a regional training of HIV financing advocacy that focus on migrant workers. The objective of this training was to enhance the capacity of the members of CARAM's Migration, Health and HIV Task Force to advocate for increased financing for HIV programs for migrant workers. Specifically, the training aimed to:

1. Enhance the understanding of the participants on the different key aspects of HIV financing;
2. Share experiences from the different countries represented in the training on their HIV and migration situation and HIV funding situation;
3. Increase the awareness of the participants on the various strategies to advocate for increased HIV financing for migrant workers.

As follow-up of regional capacity building workshop, CARAM member organizations conducted several small meetings with 31 CSOs, in Pakistan and Sri Lanka to establish a coalition and engage them in future



advocacy efforts for sustainable HIV funding on HIV and SRHR of migrants. To Mobilize Civil Society Organizations working on migration and HIV issues; bring them together in a form of group to advocate for sustainable

HIV financing. In Pakistan, Organizations working on HIV are mainly focusing on key population (Injected Drug Users, Transgender, MSM and FSW). SPEAK approached them and presented the case of migrants that how the migrant community particular from Pakistan is vulnerable to HIV.

The vulnerabilities stems from lack of knowledge about HIV, deportation in case of getting infected with HIV in host country and very limited or no access to healthcare services. Pakistan AIDS Strategy 2015- 2020 recognized migrants as a vulnerable population but nothing has been done so far to protect and promote their rights in this regard. SPEAK Trust sensitized them to advocate for increased HIV Funding particularly for migrants. CDS in Sri Lanka conducted the coalition building meetings with 21 CSO's and TU's working on migration and HIV issues.

## 2 M.E.L (Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning) Workshop

In July of 2019, CARAM Asia organised an M.E.L Workshop in order to strengthen its institutional and advocacy capacity that work with Inadequately Served Populations (ISPs). This workshop was attended by CARAM Asia partners from Asia, and the Middle East.

If inadequately Severed Populations (ISPs) can find legitimate representation for decisions that affect them, it will enable ISP groups to have more influence over the human rights and HIV issues that affect them. There is a need to systematise and formalise both advocacy planning and M.E.L processes. The aim of this workshop was to “know how” to conduct monitoring of outcome indicators (OI), the M.E.L process and how to reflect on the changes that will set the environmental indicators (EI) as well as to capacity build CARAM members on M.E.L

The sustained influence from ISPs with regard to HIV and human rights issues at a global, regional and national level will result in a more enabling and rights-affirming social, policy and legal environment for the

ISP themselves. Along with this, a more accessible and appropriate quality HIV services and programs, with corresponding available resources to create better conditions for ISPs with regards to HIV2.

## Reducing Stigma and Discrimination against HIV Positive Migrant Workers

**Migrant Workers routinely face stigma, discrimination, abuse, and a positive HIV status only compounds and further exaggerates the difficulties of an already vulnerable, exploited, and marginalized group. Thus, CARAM Asia aimed to reduce these destructive thoughts and actions among people**

In an effort to reduce the obstacles of access to healthcare as well as provide social protection to Migrant Workers, sensitization Workshops with hospital staff to Eradicate Stigma and Discrimination about HIV/AIDS were conducted on how to deal with HIV Positive migrants without any discrimination, which will lead to better health services for PLHIV and migrants.



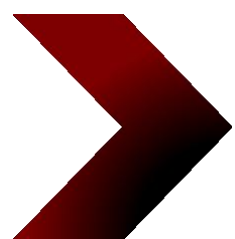
*Sensitizing staff of Mariam Memorial Hospital Islamabad on eradicating stigma & discrimination on HIV/AIDS*

The hospitals involved in this activity were the Quaid e Azam Hospital (41 participants - 18 females & 23 males), Mariam Memorial Hospital, Rawalpindi (27 participants - 20 females and 07 males), and the Holy Family Hospital, Rawalpindi (50 participants - 40 females and 10 males). This led to the sensitization of around 118 (78 female & 40 males) health care staff on how to deal with HIV Positive migrants without any discrimination.

This outcome will lead to better health services for PLHIV and migrants. In an initiative to Re-integrate Returned Migrant Workers, Life-skill/Vocational trainings for HIV Positive Migrants and their families were conducted in the Philippines by ACHIEVE, in collaboration with Technical and Vocational Skills Training Centers. A Stakeholders Forum on Reintegration Programs for OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers) living with HIV was also held. Community consultations on the needs and concerns of OFWs living with HIV in relation to reintegration were given, and the scoping of existing reintegration programs for OFWs were carried out.

A total of 6 workshops were conducted for local level government officers in Sri Lanka by the CDS. Program participants consisted of Women Development Officers, Child Development Officers, Counselling Officers, Grama Niladari, Youth Officers, Child Rights Protection Officers, and Development Officers of Foreign Employment (DOFE's). The workshop helped dispel the various myths the officers had regarding HIV, reduced stigma, and discrimination, and it helped them understand the special risk factors which put migrants at risk of contracting HIV.

Another effort in raising awareness saw the development and distribution of 15 flip charts by CDS, handed out to the CSO's (Civil Society Organizations) invited for an advocacy workshop in Sri Lanka on HIV financing for migrants, in order to ensure they had the right tools to educate their respective communities.



***Task Force on Migrant  
Workers' Rights  
(MWR)***

# Task Force on Migrant Workers' Rights (MWR)



## Brief Introduction of the Task force on Migrant Workers' Rights

The Migrant Workers Rights Programme seeks to address the absence of legal protection, rights to redress, and access to justice for migrant workers. The abuse, exploitation, and discrimination faced by migrant workers are compounded by the fact that migrant workers are often viewed as a temporary cheap commodity to meet the destination countries' production and domestic needs.

The situation is made worse with the rising costs of migration that force many poor workers to migrate through unofficial channels resulting in them becoming undocumented migrant workers. Some exploitative employers refuse to renew work permits and pay wages, the majority of employers keep passports and/or travel documents of workers in their custody, which force migrant workers to become undocumented.

However, CARAM Asia views the lack of documentation as an administrative issue that should not deny un-documented migrant worker's human rights. Through advocacy with various stakeholders, CARAM Asia has been consistently lobbying for comprehensive legal protection measures to be made available for all migrant workers regardless of their immigration status.

The Foreign Domestic Workers (FDW) program of CARAM Asia area focuses on the recognition of domestic work as an economic activity and to have it included under national employment act or labor laws in both origin and destination countries. Key activities include advocacy, utilizing appropriate international instruments (SDG, Domestic Workers Convention 189, Core labor standards of ILO, CEDAW Convention Recommendation NO. 26, and Migrant Workers Convention) public campaigns, and awareness programs. Activities also include building regional cooperation with other networks, trade unions, and organizations to strengthen the response towards protecting and promoting the labor and health rights of foreign domestic workers.

CARAM Asia has initiated the formation of the United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights (UFDWRs), a coalition of regional and international groups that advocate for foreign domestic workers' rights. Due to a lack of recognition and protection under labor laws, among other factors foreign domestic workers experience rights violations as well as violence, abuse, and exploitation by employers, recruiting agents. The FDWs stay at employer's houses in isolation without any social protection and freedom to mobility puts them at risk of sexual and physical violence. CARAM Asia addresses these issues and provides legal services to the survivors of violence under this task force.

## Key Priorities

- Women Migrant Workers with a focus on Foreign Domestic Workers
- Access to justice/ legal framework
- Undocumented migrant workers (addressing modern-day slavery)





## *Empowering Women Migrant Domestic Workers and Promoting their Rights in Malaysia*

**CARAM Asia** undertook a 1-year project funded by the Mondiaal FNV Foundation, which concluded in 2020 titled “Empowering Women Migrant Domestic Workers and Promoting their Rights in Malaysia”. This project aimed to promote legal protection and empower women, migrant domestic workers, through the creation and spread of awareness on their rights in Malaysia.

The above-mentioned project enhanced migrant domestic workers’ recognition as workers, and they have benefited from access to justice in cases of violence, abuse, and exploitation. The availability of these support and protection services have increased their knowledge and informed them of their rights as workers, migrants, and human beings. Thus apprised with this knowledge, they are now in a position to safeguard their rights rather than unknowingly suffer violations and are aware of the services available to them in case of need.

CARAM Asia’s aim is to contribute in reducing discrimination and violence against women migrant domestic workers by empowering women and lobbying with relevant government agencies for the protection of this most marginalized group of people.

This project was also aimed at assisting migrant women workers in strengthening their advocacy, publicizing their issues, and having representation in dealing with the authorities on issues such as drawing up safeguards, improving working conditions, as well as establishing coordination with civil society, other organizations, and embassies.

CARAM Asia’s implementing partners are Tenaganita, North South Initiative, Serantau, Trade Unions in Malaysia and Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) in Indonesia.

CARAM Asia’s partners report many cases of physical/sexual abuse, no day’s off granted by employers, the substitution of contract, non-payment of wages, and deprivation of food with long working hours, in some cases to the point of death, due to the severity of abuse or malnutrition.

These violations reveal that employers of domestic workers practice modern-day slavery. The workers have limited or no access to information, and are trapped in debt bondage. Abuses are most rampant when domestic workers work in isolated and secluded situations, where they are most vulnerable because of the lack of availability to access assistance when it is needed.

CARAM Asia seeks to advocate for the adoption of safeguards and proper representation of these women, while working closely with source country governments to put in place services for this target group, empower migrant women themselves on their rights, and to train community service providers to better serve the women migrant domestic workers in Malaysia.

Activities were drawn up to address the numerous problems faced by this segment of migrant workers, often in silence, as well as the stress impacted by the constant threat of violence, abuse, and discrimination.

Under this Project, CARAM carried out three (3) Planning meetings with implementing partners Tenaganita, NSI, and Trade Unions. The objectives of the Project, expected outcomes, result indicators and targets, expected results (outputs), and the roles of each partner were presented and a work plan was then developed for each partner, then the requirements of the project were shared. A Budget and Activity Plan was also drawn up.

# MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Under the project, CARAM Asia conducted advocacy and capacity building with various partners, stakeholders, and community networks, CARAM Asia lobbied for comprehensive legal protection for all migrant workers regardless of immigration status.

Malaysia is one of the major receiving countries in Southeast Asia where over 90% of workers in domestic work are women migrant workers. According to the statistics of the Department of Immigration Malaysia, there are close to 300,000 domestic workers in the country which includes documented, undocumented women migrants and locals. Out of this number, approximately 94,636 Indonesian migrant domestic workers are working in Malaysia (statistics as of 31 July 2019). They are isolated and work long hours without a weekly rest day or any other minimum standards or safeguards.



## Overview of the situation of migrant domestic workers in Malaysia 2019

As the legislation and policies have excluded domestic work from many clauses under the Employment Act 1955, this has resulted in gross violations of domestic workers rights and have caused hundreds of thousands of domestic workers, both local and foreign, to experience the most horrendous working conditions ever seen in the Malaysian labor force. These exclusions have caused domestic work in Malaysia to be deemed as modern-day slavery which we need to remedy urgently.

The numerous cases of domestic workers' abuse and the many foreign domestic workers who have absconded due to these abuses are evidence that domestic work is extremely precarious in Malaysia. As they fall under the informal sector and their status non-citizens, this deprives them of many legal rights which citizens enjoy. Domestic workers are one of the groups most vulnerable to exploitation, violence, harassment, and forced labor. These are the many realities faced by women migrant domestic workers in Malaysia.



Among the litany of abuses suffered by domestic workers are; long work hours with no rest days, shifting placements where they are required to do multiple jobs, poor wages or in some cases no wages, lack of benefits, restrictions on the mobility and/or confinement to the workplace, lack of proper food and sleeping areas, lack of hygienic facilities for bathing and toilets, restricted or denied medical treatment and healthcare, withholding of passport or other ID documents, denied communication with and access to family and friends, prohibitions on practicing religion, and restrictions on their

right to form associations that can protect their rights. Domestic workers further experience misconduct like rape and constant abuse and at times, even torture resulting in death. They have limited or no access to information and are also trapped in debt bondage.

The domestic worker's work permit is cancelled the moment she takes action or escapes from the abuse. Slavery-like practices and servitude often enable employers to discriminate against domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers encounter abuses not only in the workplace but also at many stages of the work cycle.

Their nightmare continues, and they face numerous problems as they are seen as easy targets for exploitation. In short, the system that is in place supports the employer, excludes protection by not recognizing domestic work as work.

A fundamental root cause is the absence of any form of legal protection, unrecognized with no minimum standards and safeguards which puts them in a vulnerable and unprotected situation.

The issue and plight of migrant domestic workers have been a core concern of CARAM Asia and its partners over many years. CARAM believes that the special conditions of domestic workers require legislative frameworks that address their needs if their rights are to be protected. Domestic employees, like the rest of the working population, should be treated fairly and with dignity.

The government, at last, appears to have made an effort in addressing the inadequacies of domestic employees, but until they accord them the safeguards and benefits under the Employment Act 1955, the kind of changes they are proposing will be meaningless. In line with this, CARAM Asia, implementing partners and other NGOs have responded to the Ministry of Human Resources' (MOHR) call to submit a Proposed Draft of the Employment Domestic Employee Regulations 2019, it was recommended that the government enacts a stand-alone Act for domestic workers due to the unique isolated nature of work which increases the risk of being abused. This would mean there would be coverage under the provisions of the Employment Act thus ensuring that minimum wage, limits on working hours, and all other minimum standards to be accorded to all domestic workers as well.

### ❖ **The government to ratify the long-overdue International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Domestic Workers**

CARAM Asia, together with the Domestic Workers' Coalition, called on the government to urgently take steps to extend the legal safeguards in the Employment Act to all domestic workers in order to ensure a better and healthier relationship between domestic workers and their employers and to end abuse and exploitation.

*Refer to Appendix for Press Statements made in the year 2019*

01

## Advocacy

CARAM Asia has worked tirelessly alongside partners, stakeholders, and community networks regionally to advocate for a voice for migrants, and to address issues of abuse and injustices through various advocacy spaces.

Serantau organized 2 PAOS trainings under CARAM Asia's Migrant Women Empowerment project funded by Mondiaal FNV Foundation (FNV) Project. Their objective was to empower women migrant workers through the knowledge of how their rights should be protected.

Their main activities were information dissemination, case referrals, organization of migrant workers, capacity building, and policy advocacy. The first Post Arrival Seminar (PAOS) was held in June, and Indonesian domestic workers were briefed on the Employment laws and the protection mechanisms in place. Indonesian Embassy officials also briefed the 40 participants on the services provided by the Embassy.

In order to establish a working relationship, as well to conduct information sharing, CARAM Asia organized a visit with the Indonesian Embassy officials. Discussions took place on the possibilities of formalizing the PAOS (Post Arrival Orientation Seminar) as well as the future of Indonesian workers, with regards to laws and regulations in Malaysia. An eye-opening visit with the shelter was also organized

CARAM Asia recognizes the importance of educating domestic workers on their rights and how to claim these rights while providing information as to where domestic workers can seek assistance in times of need. Therefore, “Know your Rights” brochures were created, printed, and widely distributed to the women participants of Pre-departure and Post-arrival trainings, as well as the survivors approaching Tenaganita to garner legal and social support.



It is a reality that over the years, domestic work has been excluded from many clauses under the Employment Act, resulting in gross violations of domestic workers’ rights, which contributed to “horrendous” working conditions. Ke Arah 189, a coalition of NGOs; namely Persatuan Sahabat Wanita, North South Initiative, Tenaganita, Serantau, and Ammpo Sentro, organized a Press Conference on the Proposed Employment (Domestic Employee) Regulations forwarded to MOHR in June 2019. The coalition of NGOs fighting for the rights of domestic workers pressed the Human Resources Minister for greater

commitment to the development of a standalone Domestic Workers Act.

With hope for an accountable and transparent recruitment plan to be established, a joint press statement was issued by CARAM Asia, Tenaganita, and North South Initiative, calling on the Governments of Malaysia and Bangladesh to strictly regulate and reform the recruitment process with transparency and integrity in order to provide adequate protection for migrant workers.

A Consultation Meeting with Stakeholders on Domestic Workers’ (DWs) Rights and the Law was held, that discussed the input of the grassroots DWs, in order to then strategize on the submission of the input from the NGOs to the Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR). The meeting also discussed the tools of a campaign, for example, press statements and meetings with experts.

Migrants Refugees and Immigration Affairs Committee (MRIAC) held a discussion and finalized the action plan for events and programs that were previously discussed in 2018 on medical insurance for migrant workers, as well as levy and accommodation cost deductions from migrant workers’ salaries.

Ke Arah 189 organized a Domestic Workers Coalition Meeting (Towards the International Labour Organisation [ILO] Convention 189) and discussed the subject of planning for the community and NGO’s input into the Domestic Workers Regulations which was proposed by the Government.

Earlier in the year, Malaysia hosted a joint working group meeting in Kuala Lumpur to work out the new recruitment plan for Bangladeshi migrant workers who come to Malaysia to work. In line with this, CARAM Asia, Tenaganita, and North South Initiative had formulated and then submitted 10 recommendations to regulate the recruitment process at the Joint Meeting, and strongly urged both the governments of source and destination countries to urgently put in place a new recruitment plan which will provide migrants with rights protection.

## 02 Enhancing Access to Services for Women Migrant Workers

Health and legal services are often inaccessible to migrant workers due to a variety of complex access barriers. Major themes include affordability and financial constraints, the need for legal documents like valid passports and work permits, language barriers, discrimination and xenophobia, physical inaccessibility, and employer-related barriers. In 2019, efforts were made by CARAM Asia and its partners to increase Migrant Workers’ access to these services.

## Activities by Solidaritas Perempuan (Indonesia)

Pre-departure orientations were organized by Solidaritas Perempuan (SP) in Indonesia as a project partner. In this orientation, the potential women migrant domestic workers were informed about protection systems at local levels and their rights as migrant workers. Free legal aid was also provided to the returnee women migrant workers in order to address any abuses that may have occurred.

## Activities by Tenaganita

### Legal Aid and Case Referral Services

Tenaganita provided free legal referral services for Indonesian women domestic workers who were survivors of violence, who have undergone and are still undergoing abuse and violation of rights such as; sexual abuse, non-payment of wages, no job contract, etc. Cases were filed and/or referred to:

- ❖ Relevant Courts by lawyers;
- ❖ Police, immigration department, labor court, etc., according to the need and requirement of each case.

80 young lawyers were trained to assist migrant workers in providing legal aid support for the Indonesian migrant workers in total.

There was documentation of 52 Indonesian migrant women cases, free legal aid was provided to 12 women domestic workers and their cases were filed in the relevant courts through the use of hotlines as well as land- lines, a total of 1573 calls were received.

Temporary Shelter Home services were also provided to survivors of violence for protection and stay in Malaysia by Tenaganita and Indonesian women were rescued and given care as well as counselling.

# 03

## Capacity Building of Partners, Stakeholders & Communities

Capacity Building Trainings and Workshops that touch on the laws, policies, and regulations that apply to migrant domestic workers are an important aspect of creating labor reforms concerning migrant workers. Through these trainings, participants were given a variety of hands-on training, ranging from case handling procedures to avenues of support.

A Capacity Building Training for Community Service Providers on Case management for NGOs, CSO, CBO, and trade unions was held in July. Attended by 42 participants, this training focused on case handling procedures and built the capacity of community service providers on case handling procedures, in order to facilitate women migrants' access to justice, avenues of support, related laws, policies, and rights of women migrant domestic workers. During this training, participants were given exposure to the realities of the domestic workers in Malaysia and a better understanding of the Malaysian labor laws, remedies, and services available for migrant women.

A one-day Generic Indicator and 5 capacities of CARAM Asia training was facilitated by the FNV, and a consultant was made available to all implementing partners for an assessment by way of a set of questions, of which 27 partners reflected on and answered to.

A consultation Meeting on the Employment Act Amendment was held with Trade Unions and NGOs. The topics covered under the meeting discussed the government's proposals and the future. The Ministry's and NGO's recommendations were also touched upon and a Joint Press statement was released titled "Stop Piecemeal Reforms, Engage Stakeholders." DWWG is represented by 55 trade unions and NGOs.



UN Women, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the Safe and Fair Programme, organized a regional dialogue in Bangkok. The dialogue was aimed at exchanging existing practices and lessons learned that were promoted, at national and sub-national levels, on coordinated quality services for Violence against Women (VAW), addressing the needs of women migrant workers, and jointly identify future milestones on coordination.

The theme for the workshop was "Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN Region", a Regional Dialogue on coordinated quality services for ending violence against migrant women.

This workshop also increased access to coordinated quality services for women migrant workers who have experienced violence in countries of destination, including services related to health, labor, social welfare, police, justice sector, and embassy officials, and allowed them to share experiences, approaches and best practices related to coordination mechanisms and structures implemented at the regional, national and provincial level.



***Task Force on  
Migration, Development  
and Globalization(MDG)***

# Task Force on Migration, Development and Globalization (MDG)



## Brief Introduction of the Task force MDG

Migration is globular in nature and is heavily affected by neoliberal policies and structures which impact migrant workers' health outcomes and well-being.

This program aims at linking and filling the gaps in the current migration and development discourses by adequately addressing the impact of migrant workers' health in the context of globalization.

Activities include strengthening the analysis, perspectives, and awareness on globalization/ World Trade Organisation (WTO) / International Financial Institutions (IFIs) policies on migration and health; the impact and implication of migrant workers' health through the privatization of healthcare and developing global action on debt and poverty to reduce all vulnerabilities in migration.

*"CARAM Asia contributed globally and strengthened its potential by participating in events and programs organized by International Organizations, UN agencies and other actors in the field such as United Nations Regional Network, Clean Clothes Campaign, Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) and ESAP who working on enhancement of migrants life as CARAM Asia.*







## ***Safe and Fair Regional Workshop, Bangkok***

CARAM Asia actively participated and contributed its expertise and experience to the Safe and Fair Regional Workshop in Bangkok, a regional dialogue organised by UN Women under the ILO.

The aim of this dialogue was the exchange of existing practices and lessons learned promoted at the national and sub-national level on coordinated quality services for VAW addressing the needs of women migrant workers and jointly identify future milestones on coordination. The theme for the workshop was “Realising women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN Region.”

The 3-day Regional Dialogue allowed the sharing of existing practices, lessons learned, knowledge in the field of prevention and response to violence against women migrant workers (VAWMW) with government officials, CSOs, NGOs, and women’s networks’ representatives, service providers, and other key stakeholders.

Furthermore, the workshop strengthened technical knowledge and skills on the coordination and delivery of quality services to women migrant workers and referral mechanisms throughout the migration cycle. This workshop was also aimed at increasing access to coordinated quality services for women migrant workers who have experienced violence in countries of destination (including services related to health, labor, social welfare, police, justice sector, and embassy officials) share experiences, approaches, and best practices related to coordination mechanisms and structures implemented at the regional, national and provincial level; build a common understanding and technical knowledge on prevention and responses to VAWMW, especially in the context of labor migration; share key lessons learned, national priorities and recommendations and identify key policy priorities and strategies to enhance quality coordinated services for WMWs.



## ***Thailand National Tripartite Preparatory Workshops for the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour & 12<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN Forum Migrant Labour (AFML)***

CARAM Asia participated in both National tripartite preparatory workshops and the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour AFML (2019).

Firstly, Thailand National Tripartite Preparatory Workshops are part of AFML preparatory process. Thus, the workshops were held in eight ASEAN Member States (AMS) which are Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. While, CARAM Asia participated in 'National Tripartite Preparatory Workshop' that held at Bangkok on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

These meetings were supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme which is a collaboration between Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) with the objective to take stock of stakeholders' progress in implementing the recommendation of previous AFML and to discuss the themes and subthemes of the 12<sup>TH</sup> AFM as well as to prepare national recommendations on the future of work and migration in ASEAN. Finally, to adopt policy positions and recommendation for the 12<sup>th</sup> AFML meeting. As planned, these preparatory meetings in several countries met the objectives and ease the implementation process of upcoming 12<sup>th</sup> AFML event.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, CARAM Asia participated in 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) held on 25-26 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand while carrying the overall theme 'Future Work and Migration'. This event was hosted by the Government of Thailand, the current chair of the ASEAN and the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN of the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW).

Basically, annual AFML is an open platform for review, discussion and exchange of good practices and idea between governments, workers, employer's organisation and civil society stakeholders regarding the key issues faced by both women and men migrant workers in Southeast Asia. Consequently, this thought and ideas aid in developing pragmatic recommendations and solution that improvise the implementation of the principles of the ASEAN declaration on Protection and promotion of the rights of Migrant workers by coming out with better national and regional activities for migrant workers.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore at 12<sup>th</sup> AFML, the participants focused on reviewing the implementation of the recommendation from the previous AFML meetings, while discussing about the sub themes of the forum which are the challenges on Sustainable, Fair and Equal Protection while another one was on challenges on migrant employability. As an outcome, participants spotlighted practical recommendation and solution for the issues that have been discussed to the relevant stakeholders and ministries for further analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) {Website}, [http://www.oit.org/asia/events/WCMS\\_713650/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.oit.org/asia/events/WCMS_713650/lang--en/index.htm), (accessed by 23 June 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Social Republic of Vietnam Ministry of Labours, Wars Invalids and Social Affairs {Website}, <http://english.molisa.gov.vn/Pages/News/Detail.aspx?tintucID=224291>, (accessed 23 June 2021)



## *ASIA Pacific Peoples' Forum for Sustainable Development 2019*

The ASIA Pacific Peoples' Forum for Sustainable Development (APPFSD) was held on March 24-26th in Bangkok, Thailand as a preparatory meeting for the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). This is to consolidate the civil society positions and recommendations for a regional sustainable agenda. Essentially, APPFSD was organized by the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM), a civil society platform that aims to enable stronger cross-constituency coordination and to ensure that voices from the Asia Pacific are heard at the regional and global level.

Two hundred participants from 27 countries from 5 sub-regions in Asia have attended the Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development. With the theme, 'Strengthening People's Power for Development Justice in an Unequal and Divided World', it opened with participants representing from different constituencies such as NGOs, Women, Youth, Social and Community Enterprise, Farmers, Trade Union/Workers, Science and Technology, Indigenous Peoples and forth. To be a part of APFSD, CARAM Asia joint APPFSD to enjoy and exercise the benefits of the forum<sup>3</sup>

The forum aimed to accomplish a number of objectives as follows:

- ❖ Foster the sharing and learning from the variety of experiences of organizations and constituencies
- ❖ To enhance capacity of civil society participants on sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels
- ❖ To provide opportunities and modalities for engaging these processes, including identifying and dealing with key systemic issues/barriers to the achievement of sustainable development
- ❖ To help build an understanding of sustainable development
- ❖ To link the work of various other CSO campaigns, peoples' movements, grassroots constituencies, scientific and academic communities across national borders
- ❖ To conduct dialogue on the structure and content of the APFSD with its theme 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in Asia and the Pacific', to formulate joint positions, as well as strategizes interventions at the APFSD, HLPF, UN Environment Assembly, The UN General Assembly and other processes
- ❖ Reflect on the work and structure of Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism and agree on joint actions and follow up to civil society positions.<sup>4</sup>

APPFSD agenda was compact with extensive workshops, dialogues, sharing sessions and brain-storming activities. As an outcome, at the people's forum, Asia Pacific civil society organization able to explore common ground and actions, developed common messages and coordinated strategies for more effective participation in national, regional and global intergovernmental process on sustainable development.

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<sup>3</sup> ESAP {Website} <https://www.unescap.org/events/asia-pacific-forum-sustainable-development-2019>, (accessed by 23 June 2021)

<sup>4</sup> (See footnote 3)



## 6<sup>th</sup> ASIA Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development 2019

The Sixth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) which was held in Bangkok from 27 to 29 March 2019. Basically, APFSD is a regional preparation for the July UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2019). The theme for 6TH APFSD was 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality' and on the cluster of SDGs to be reviewed at the UN HLPF 2019- in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/299:

- ❖ Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ❖ Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- ❖ Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- ❖ Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- ❖ Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- ❖ Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.<sup>5</sup>

The APFSD addressed the regional perspectives on the implementation, follow-up, and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including an in-depth review of the theme and cluster of goals that mentioned above and supports the country presentations of voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to be presented at upcoming HLPF and the assessment of the progress of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>6</sup>

On the day of event, more than 850 participants were attended, including representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, international organizations, civil society organizations and other entities. CARAM Asia also joint APFSD particularly, during the five parallel round tables sessions that discussed about 'Empowering Migrants through safe, orderly and regular migration in Asia and the Pacific and decent work, inclusiveness and equality for migrant's workers in South East Asia'. During the session, participants provided focused follow-up and reviewed the implementation of each goal as well as agreed on recommendations that were delivered during plenary session.

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<sup>5</sup> (See footnote 3)

<sup>6</sup> (See footnote 3)



## ***Policy Dialogue On The Implementation Of The ASEAN Consensus On The Protection And Promotion Of The Rights Of Migrant Workers***

CARAM Asia attended 'Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers' that held on 9th September 2019 in Bangkok which was organized by the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG), a grantee of the ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT project. Along with CARAM Asia, there were around 50 representatives from civil society organization and stakeholders participated. Such as, Thailand's Ministry of Labour, parliament, industry associations, academia, the ASEAN Committee for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), ASEAN member states and the International Labour Organization (ILO).



*Mr. Wiwat Jirapanwanich, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Labour, Thailand given an opening remarks*

They convened in Bangkok to engage in a full day of a policy dialogue on how to strengthen implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers in Thailand. More precisely, the dialogue aims to build a platform for participants to discuss and share about the best practices and lessons learned for implementing the ASEAN Consensus at national and regional level as well as to increase engagement on the implementation of the Consensus, in partnership with civil society.<sup>7</sup>

Through the discussion, participants able to explore feasible implementation of the ASEAN Consensus across three main aspects which are the participation of migrant workers in the implementation of the Consensus, access to social protection

and justice for migrant workers and family members, and lastly on fair and ethical recruitment. An outcome obtained from the meeting was participants able to spotlight a set of recommendation pertaining to national level implementation of ASEAN Consensus, including a mechanism for participation of civil society and migrant workers to the Thai government and ACMW for further consideration.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> T.M.U.S Asean, U.S. Mission to ASEAN {Website}, <https://asean.usmission.gov/national-consultation-and-policy-dialogue-on-the-implementation-of-asean-consensus-on-migrant-workers/>, (accessed by 23 June 2021)

<sup>8</sup> (See footnote 7)



***Task Force on Migration,  
Climate Change and  
Humanitarian Crisis  
(MCCHC)***

# Task Force on Migration, Climate Change and Humanitarian Crisis



## Brief Introduction of the Task force on Migration, Climate Change and Humanitarian Crisis

This task force is a new addition in CARAM Asia's thematic areas due to the increasing number of Climate Migrants. Climate Migrants who have been defined as persons or groups of people who for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment, as a result of climate change that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so either temporarily or permanently and who move either within their country or abroad (IOM 2008).

Variations in the world's climate have been happening for all of human history. However, with the passage of time, rising temperature, decreasing rainfall, rising sea levels, and increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions are leading to massive flooding, earthquake, landslides, and droughts, causing extensive damage to property, assets, and human life.

According to the United Nations Between 2008 and 2015, an average of 26.4 million people per year were displaced by climate or weather-related disasters. The science of climate change indicates that these trends are likely to get worse.

Asia is most at risk as it continues to be exposed to climate change impacts. Home to the majority of the world's poor, the population of this region is particularly vulnerable to dangerous climate impacts that push people to migrate. Hence Climate Change is currently also one of the drivers of migration. This task force was formed to understand and provide input from the perspective of migration, climate change, and humanitarian crisis and to advocate for the rights of Climate Migrants.

### Objective:

To understand and provide input from the perspective of migration, climate change and humanitarian crisis.

## Migration, Climate Change, and Humanitarian Crisis Plan

The strategy of the MCCCHC task force was to collate clear evidence that climate change is one of the driving forces in migration, collaborate with like-minded partners, and link up with the COFP.

Ongoing activities on climate change issues are the collection of policies and adaption strategies, lobbying and strategizing, capacity building workshops, and the publication and dissemination of information through various digital and physical mediums.

Solid preparation of ToRs for task force members ensured that they were equipped with information, best practices, and case studies. The task force also worked to collect secondary information, for example obtaining information from COP-23 (Germany) on migration and climate change. The collection of clear evidence of migration due to climate change, and the impact of these reports to COPF 24 is to be presented in COP-24, Fiji by CARAM Asia.

On the humanitarian crisis front, the strategic-planned activities were in lobbying, advocating, and calling on governments and other stakeholders to address crisis situations as well as to amend policies/acts in respective countries. Consultation workshops were held in response to regional crises, and an information dissemination strategy was planned in order to effectively bring awareness of these issues to a public front. In order to better prepare for the advent of crises, pre-planned statements for every humanitarian crisis that happened within the region were prepared.



# APPENDIX

## **Press Statements**

### **20 March 2019**

Joint Press Statement by the Decent Work Working Group which is represented by 55 trade unions and NGOs – “Stop Piecemeal Reforms, Engage Stakeholders”- on the Employment Act Amendments

### **19 April 2019**

Press statement – Employer acquitted of domestic worker Adelina’s death, walks free – Where is JUSTICE for ADELINA? (Adelina - 21 years old from a village in Indonesia tortured to death by her employer). The death case of Adelina was the result of the weak protections given from both countries (Indonesia as country of origin and Malaysia as destination country) to the migrant domestic worker, as they are vulnerable to being human trafficking victims.

### **26 April 2019**

Statement from the national commission on violence against women regarding the Malaysian High Court Decision that freed Adelina’s employer from charges. Releasing a violent perpetrator is a bad precedent, it spreads impunity and eliminates the women migrant workers’ rights to protection and justice. A petition to mount public pressure was started – “Justice for Adelina.”

### **15 June 2019**

Demand for Immediate Regulations to Protect all Rights of Domestic Workers and for full legal recognition of domestic Work as Work under all labor-related Acts in Malaysia – by KeArah 189 (a Coalition of Domestic Workers’ and Domestic Workers rights organizations, civil society organizations and trade unions).

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