



COALITION FOR MIGRANTS RIGHTS (CMR)



ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR (APL)



ASIAN MIGRANT CENTRE (AMC)



MIGRANT FORUM IN ASIA (MFA)



HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

**ASIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS ASSEMBLY**

*Domestic Work is Work! Women's Work is Work!*  
*Building an Asian Migrant Domestic Workers' Regional Alliance and Strategic Action Agenda*

**STATEMENT OF UNITY**

*Adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Domestic Workers Assembly, 17-18 June 2007, Pasig City, Metro Manila, Philippines*

We, 70 participants representing migrant domestic workers, leaders, migrant organizations and unions, together with our partners from civil society, trade unions, and the peasant and social movement, have come together to organize the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Domestic Workers Assembly on 17-18 June 2007. The Assembly was organized by the Coalition for Migrants Rights (CMR) and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) with the support of the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC), Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL), Human Rights Watch (HRW), UNIFEM and ILO.

We have gathered together to discuss, analyze, strategize, plan, coordinate and jointly act on national, regional and global issues, agendas and positions of migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in Asia. Our objectives of the assembly are as follows:

1. To **bring together** migrant domestic workers' (MDW) groups/representatives, migrant organizations, trade union partners, migrant NGOs, advocate, and allies across Asia to discuss common issues, positions, strategies and a joint platform for action for MDWs.
2. To **identify** strategic issues, agendas, recent policy changes/trends; discuss current strategies and responses; identify common strategic action agendas and opportunities for advocacy and joint action.
3. To **analyze** gains/successes, gaps/needs, challenges, opportunities and difficulties/obstacles to organizing work, advocacy and empowerment of MDWs.
4. To **collectively discuss** the need for a regional MDW alliance or action network to serve as joint platform for self-representation of MDWs, analysis of issues/problems, formulation of common responses/strategies, and implementation of joint action plans/priorities at the national, regional and international levels.

5. To **develop** strategic and priority agendas and plans of action for MDWs in Asia.
6. To **plan and prepare** for MDWs' interventions and activities at the Global Forum for Migration in Brussels in July, 2007; and help in the preparations and convening of the global meeting of DWs as one of the parallel events in Brussels.

We affirm the following positions and principles and will promote them as our strategic positions and demands:

- Domestic work is work!
- Recognize migrant domestic work under national labor laws!
- Women's work is work!
- Migrants' rights are human rights!
- Recognize the social and economic contributions of MDWs!
- Uphold and respect the rights and dignity of MDWs
- Asian migrant domestic workers unite!
- Equal pay for equal work!
- Abolish discriminatory policies against MDWs!
- Adopt international standards of protection for MDWs!
- Adopt fair, protective and enforceable standard contracts for MDWs!
- Stop all forms of abuse against MDWs, including physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and other gender-based forms of abuse!
- Regulate recruitment agencies and stop their exploitative fees and practices!
- Recognize and ensure MDWs' right to health, safety and dignity!
- Ensure proper compensation and redress for abuses and violations against MDWs!

The following are the priority issues confronting MDWs in Asia that we would like to jointly address now and in the coming years. We will also bring these issues at the 2007 and 2008 Global Forum on Migration and Development:

*1. Issues at pre-departure stage:*

- Recruitment practices and requirements; including making recruitment agencies responsible for abusive and exploitative practices and requirements;
- Pre-departure training and preparation;
- Employment contracts;
- Post-arrival support and assistance;
- Savings, financial and economic capacity and preparation; helping in the values formation of MDWs and families, especially on resource management and reintegration preparation;
- Psycho-social interventions and support for returning migrants;
- Reintegration opportunities, support, and government programs;
- Social and community support for returning migrants;
- Advocacy against unreasonable bans and restrictions on hiring of MDWs.

*2. Issues onsite and in the workplace:*

- Labor and immigration policy problems;
- Abusive and exploitative practices of recruitment agencies;

- Wage issues and problems;
- Absence of non-standard, unfair or poor provisions, non-enforcement, violations and other problems in relation to MDW employment contracts;
- Living and working conditions;
- Healthcare and reproductive health;
- Abuses, violence against women, gender-based abuses;
- Cultural, social and religious difficulties;
- Labor rights; MDW capacity to organize, mobilize, unionize; no channels of consulting or representing MDWs.

*3. Issues on return and reintegration:*

- Post-arrival problems;
- Savings, financial and economic capacity and preparation; value system of MDWs and families;
- Psycho-social intervention and support for returning migrants;
- Reintegration opportunities, support, government program;
- Social and community support for returning migrants.

We will continue to undertake joint advocacy, campaigns, organizing, capacity-building, lobbying and public actions at the national, regional and international level on the above MDW issues and positions.

Towards these ends, we will build and strengthen our national and regional alliances and actions. Our individual, organizational and collective efforts will include conducting training and awareness-raising among MDWs themselves, public education and media work, dialogues with governments, and strengthening linkages with trade unions, the peasant movement and other key sectors.

We affirm that MDWs contribute by their hard labor and remittances to the development of both receiving and sending countries, socially, economically and culturally.

We affirm the importance of taking leadership for our collective campaigns and struggles. We commit to strengthen our alliances so that we can self-represent, assert our rights and dignity, and implement priority plans and agendas for the effective protection of MDWs. We will continue the process of building the Asian regional alliance of MDWs, and help develop our global network and alliance.

We will specifically work to implement the attached Plan of Action that is based on recommendations arising from the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Domestic Workers Assembly.

Adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Domestic Workers Assembly, 17-18 June 2007, Pasig City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

**The Asian Domestic Workers Assembly was made possible through the support of the following:**



**International Labour Organization**



**United Nations Development Fund  
for Women**

**Participating Migrant Returnees:**

Remy Borlongan – Philippines  
Wilma Cagaoan - Philippines  
Malou Pundar – Philippines  
Jean Pundar – Philippines  
Aileen Penas – Philippines  
Muhammad Chairul Hadi – Indonesia

**Participating Organizations:****Bangladesh**

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK)  
Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE)

**Cambodia**

Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM-Cambodia)  
Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD)

**Hong Kong**

Alliance for Wage Increase (ALLWIN)  
Coalition for Migrants Rights (CMR)  
Association of Sri Lankans in Hong Kong (ASL) – CMR member  
Far East Overseas Nepalese Association (FEONA) – CMR member  
Filipino Domestic Helpers General Union (FDHGU) – CMR member  
Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU) – CMR member  
Hong Kong Coalition of Indonesian Migrants Workers Organization (KOTKIHO) – CMR member  
Thai Women Association – CMR member  
Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU)

**India**

National Domestic Workers Movement  
National Domestic Workers Movement – North East Region  
Migrant Forum India  
Migrants Rights Council

**Indonesia**

International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID)  
Migrant Care  
Jarnas Pekabumi – National Network of Economic Development Indonesian Migrant Workers & Their Families  
Solidaritas Perempuan  
Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI)  
Center for Indonesian Migrant Workers (CIMW)  
Congress Confederation of Trade Union (KASBI)  
Solidarities Migrant Scalabrini

**Korea**

Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea (JCMK)

**Macau**

Association of Indonesian Moslem in Macau (HALIMAH)

**Malaysia**

Bocah Dewe

Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC)

The National Human Rights Society (HAKAM)

**Mongolia**

Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD)

**Nepal**

All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA)

**Philippines**

Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)

Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiatives

Center for Migrant Advocacy – Philippines (CMA-Phils)

Kapisanan ng Kamag-anakan ng Migranteng Manggagawang Pilipino (KAKAMMPI)

Kanlungan Center Foundation, Inc.

Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, Inc.

Samahan ng Migranteng Pilipino at Pamilya Inc. (SAMAPI)

**Singapore**

Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME)

Singapore National Trades Union Congress

**Sri Lanka**

Action Network for Migrant Workers (ACTFORM)

Migrants Services Centre (MSC)

**Taiwan**

Hope Workers Center

**Tajikistan**

Saodat

**Regional Organizations**

Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)

Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)

Focus on the Global South

**International Organizations**

La Via Campesina

Human Rights Watch