

# MIGRANT FORUM IN ASIA NEWSLETTER



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR ADVANCING MIGRANTS STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

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## UN set to deliberate migration and development at the second high level dialogue; MFA gearing up to engage the process



United Nations agencies, international organizations, civil society and trade unions convening at the 11th Coordination Meeting on International Migration, United Nations, New York, 21-22 February 2013.

The second UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (UN HLD) is set to take place at the UN Headquarters in New York on 3-4 October 2013. Monitoring and engaging policy discussions and inter-governmental forums are central to the advocacy and capacity building work of MFA. The UNHLD is one of these international, inter-governmental venues for the discussion of migration and development policies. The United Nations agencies, UN Member States, international organizations, civil society, trade unions and the private sector convene to debate, share perspectives and reach resolutions on migration policies and their connection to development and migrant rights.

The first UNHLD in 2006 aimed to discuss the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development and identify appropriate ways to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts. The UNHLD as well had strong focus on policy issues, including the challenge of achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Among the recommendations of the UNHLD was the creation of a permanent forum on migration. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was a vigorous supporter of the HLD and believed that it should mark the beginning of inter-governmental discussions about migration and development. From the UN-led process

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which was the HLD came the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The GFMD is no longer a UN led process but a non-binding intergovernmental forum that looks at developing a practical agenda on maximizing the gains from migration and development. At the 2006 UNHLD, the Government of Belgium signified its intention to host the first GFMD in 2007. To date, there have been six GFMDs held that were hosted by different national governments.

In 2008, the UN General Assembly decided to follow up the 2006 UNHLD. The General Assembly decided to hold a second High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development during its sixty-eighth session, in 2013. On 19 May 2011, the General

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From left: Ms. Manuela Tomei from the ILO, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants Mr. Francois Crepeau and Mr. William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia during their interventions at the 11th Coordination Meeting on International Migration, UN New York, 21 February 2013.



Assembly organized a one-day informal thematic debate on international migration and development in New York. Results of the 2011 meeting aimed to contribute to the process leading to the second UNHLD in October 2013.

The dialogue's overarching theme is: "Identify concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications." The dialogue will have four plenary sessions with four roundtables, or thematic areas: (1) Assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development and identifying relevant priorities in view of preparation of the post 2015 development framework; (2) Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, with particular reference

made since the first UNHLD in the global discussions about migration policies, and to identify issues that still need more data, research and improvements on national, regional and international policies. The MFA network seizes this moment and gathers with governments to debate on the agenda of migration and development with emphasis on the human rights approach and multilateral cooperation.

In 2013, MFA is holding consultations with its members and partners to prepare the network for its active participation in the official dialogue.

A one day informal interactive hearing with CSOs and the private sector will be organized and led by the President of the UN General Assembly. This is scheduled to happen on 15 July 2013. The President of the UN General Assembly in consultation with member states will draw up a list of CSOs, members

of the academe and the private sector who can participate in the interactive hearing. Members of CSOs with ECOSOC status in the UN will also be considered for participation. MFA will feed into the interactive hearing the results of the consultations of the network.

### Looking back at the first UNHLD

The first UNHLD included delegates from over 140 UN member states. The preparatory process included two panel discussions and one day of civil society hearings, organized by the President of the General Assembly (PGA). One panel discussion was held in New York City and one in Geneva. The panel

MFA) was held on 11-14 September 2006 and gathered together almost 100 individuals from 45 organizations from Asia, North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and the Pacific.

MRI presented a statement to the UNHLD conveying the network's conviction that only when the human rights of all persons in the countries of origin, transit and destination are guaranteed and respected can a sustainable, fair and legally legitimate development in societies be attained.

The dialogue put forward recommendations for future engagements which included: information dissemination to all key network partners about the



"Migrants quilt" carrying slogans on human rights and migrants rights displayed at a street rally during the first UNHLD in 2006; a session at the the Global Community Dialogue on Migration, Development and Human Rights, parallel to the first UNHLD.

discussions included delegates from UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The informal interactive hearings involved delegates from NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector.

Civil society participation was restricted at the first UNHLD; only 12 members, 8 from non-governmental organizations, were allowed to take part in the HLD roundtables. This limited involvement excluded CSOs from the process. CSOs believed that the voices and perspectives of the communities who will be most impacted by the policies and outcomes of the HLD were not adequately and comprehensively represented.

As a response to the limited participation of civil society at the first UNHLD, the Global Community Dialogue initiative of Migrants Rights International (MRI) and its global members and partners (including

global forum; early preparations for civil society activities and fund raising for bigger mobilization and better coordination among partner organizations; more participation of grassroots organizations and migrants organizations; ECOSOC accreditation to ensure the participation of more network partners in the inside events of the UN; country processes and engagements to be started by national organizations; and strengthening the network of grassroots organizations at the global level. ■



## **Taking action to end violence against women: MFA network commemorated International Women's Day**

MFA recalled in its 8 March 2013 statement the milestones gained to protect and promote the rights of women migrant workers as reflected in international human rights and labor rights treaties such as CEDAW, CMW and ILO C189, and in national laws that aim to ensure women's rights. However, the world is currently facing a moment where barriers to fully implementing these laws and accessing justice for rights violations endanger the empowerment and human dignity of women migrant workers.

These barriers to women migrant workers' rights include violence and discrimination because of their gender, nationality and status as workers. Such violence and discrimination do not and should not have a place in this day and age unless countries and societies allow them to persist.

MFA called on States to:

- Adhere to their commitments to protect and promote the rights of women, including migrant women by ratifying and properly implementing the core human rights treaties particularly CEDAW and the Migrant Workers Convention
- Ratify ILO Convention No. 189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers – recognizing the rights of domestic workers, including migrant domestic workers
- Stop the criminalization and detention of undocumented or irregular migrant workers and instead uphold and protect their basic rights

Members and partners of the network also organized particular activities to commemorate International Women's Day. In Singapore for instance, HOME was on air with Batam radio FM 105.1 Mhz for a series of six talks on HIV/AIDs and Women's Health. The radio program ran throughout March. On 6 March, radio listeners were invited to call in to share about their rights to freedom, justice and hope and a life free from violence. The last of the series was on 27 March which focused on migrants' health.

On 17 March, HOME held "HOME's Got Talent" to celebrate Women's Day. The event showcased the creative skills of the members of the HOME family, be it singing, dancing, performing monologue and the like.

HOME ended the month of International Women's Day with the Day Off Forum with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) on 31 March 2013. The forum aimed to increase understanding on and claiming domestic workers' rights to a day off under work permit regulations. It was announced in 2012 by MOM that a weekly rest day for migrant domestic workers is required while providing employers the flexibility to compensate migrant domestic workers with extra pay if the workers agree to work on their rest day. The new weekly rest day requirement applies to migrant domestic workers whose work permits are issued or renewed from 1 January 2013.

HOME also took the occasion of International Women's Day as an opportunity to address the Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yakob through an open letter. In the letter, HOME urged Singapore to take action on the Concluding Observations of the UN CEDAW Committee and stop discrimination against migrant domestic workers. Though the imposition of a mandatory weekly rest day for domestic workers this year was commendable, concerns abound for migrant domestic workers notably that the rest day is only 8 hours and not 24 hours and the flexibility given to employers continually deny their domestic workers a weekly day off for a small payment in lieu. The letter also emphasized that domestic workers are workers and the usage of the term must be popularized. Finally, the Singapore government is urged to ratify ILO C189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers and the UN Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking.

Prior to International Women's Day, Dr. Renu Rajbhandari of WOREC described in her article "End modern day slavery!" the travails experienced by Nepali migrant workers. Despite official decrees denouncing slavery, it thrives even today, not only in Nepal but throughout the world. Modern day slavery can be found in sponsorship systems where the worker is tied to the employer and is bound by the terms of the latter, making the worker exposed to abuse and violations of labor and human rights. Read the article in full here:

<http://www.worecnepal.org/blog/rameshbhandari/end-modern-day-slavery> ■

## Workshop on the Kafala System in the GCC Countries held in Dhaka

*With reference from RMMRU and ngonewsbd.com*

MFA member in Bangladesh Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) organized a two day session on the Kafala system, for government functionaries and civil society organizations to develop a better understanding of the system and to help them incorporate key messages about the system in their pre-decision, pre-departure and other training programs. The workshop was held with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui of Dhaka University presented the key recommendations of the workshop. The participants felt that the Government of Bangladesh takes up negative aspects of Kafala System bilaterally with various labor receiving countries as well as multilaterally in regional consultative processes and the UN forum. It also called for abolition of individuals to act as kafeels. The participants also called for making the Bangladeshi missions to be more efficient and resourceful in serving migrants. The workshop further recommended CSOs to disseminate information about the Kafala System among aspirant migrants.

Among the speakers were Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. Dr. Khan underscored the need for increased cooperation between sending and receiving countries for improved protection of migrant workers. He also said, as sending country, Bangladesh needs to raise stakeholders' concerns with labor receiving countries with adequate sensitivity.

Speakers at the press conference also included Ms. Tahsina Ahmed of SDC, Ms. Mehru Vesuvala, a social worker from Bahrain, Adv. Prasad Kumaran from Oman, and Dr. Ray Jureidini from Qatar Foundation. More than forty participants representing government, civil society organizations and the media took part in the two day workshop.

Under the Kafala system a migrant worker's immigration status is legally bound to an individual employer or sponsor (kafeel) for their contract period. The migrant worker cannot enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from the kafeel. The worker must be sponsored by a kafeel

in order to enter the destination country and remains tied to the kafeel throughout their stay. The kafeel must report to the immigration authorities if the migrant worker leaves their employment and must ensure the worker leaves the country after the contract ends, including paying for the flight home. Often the kafeel exerts further control over the migrant worker by confiscating their passport and travel documents,



Speakers attend a press briefing on a workshop on "Kafala System in the GCC Countries." Photo courtesy of RMMRU

despite legislation in some destination countries that declares this practice illegal. This situates the migrant worker as completely dependent upon their kafeel for their livelihood and residency.

MFA published a policy brief in 2012, "Reform of the Kafala (Sponsorship) System," where the network provided recommendations that reflect a rights-based approach to labor migration. Read the policy brief here: <http://www.mfasia.org/resources/publications/464-mfa-policy-briefs> ■

## Human rights defender faces trial in Thailand for highlighting labor situations of migrant workers through evidence-based research

Andy Hall, a prominent advocate of migrants' rights in the ASEAN region, is currently facing a criminal defamation lawsuit filed by Natural Fruit, a pineapple processing factory in Thailand. Mr. Hall recently exposed through evidence-based and reliable research the human rights abuses committed by Natural Fruit to its employees in its Pranburi plant in Prachuapkirikhan Province of Thailand.



Andy Hall at the Peoples' Global Action 2011, Geneva. File photo.

directly and using other indirect means to contact the factory's management. In December 2012 the researchers then also sent a letter of allegation regarding Natural Fruit to Thai authorities and various international agencies and governments but did not receive any responses to their correspondence prior to the publication of their report in January 2013.

As a result of this research, Natural Fruit filed a criminal defamation case against Andy Hall for "broadcasting false information" under the Criminal Code and Computer Crime Act of Thailand. The lawsuit's charges can result in a two year maximum imprisonment. An additional case was also filed by Natural Fruit claiming 300 million baht (US\$10 million) in damages from Mr. Hall.

MFA has received information that despite some improvements at Natural Fruit following the release of Finnwatch's report, the conditions for workers at this factory, as in many pineapple processing factories in Thailand, remains poor and of serious concern.

As a regional network working on migrants rights, MFA calls urgently for the following:

Andy Hall made significant contributions to a report published by Finnwatch in January 2013. The report entitled, *Cheap has a High Price: Responsibility Problems Relating to International Private Label Products and Food Production in Thailand*, delves in to the extensive and systematic labor rights violations of Natural Fruit, occurring as of November 2012, including excessive hours and mandatory overtime with little to no rest periods; physical and psychological mistreatment; provision of false information prior to employment; illegally low wages; withholding of passports; unauthorized salary deductions; exposure to harmful chemicals without adequate protective equipment; under or non-compensation for workplace injuries or deaths and employment of child labor.

In November and December 2012, Finnwatch and Mr. Hall requested for interviews and feedback from Natural Fruit on their initial research findings both

- The Thai government as well as concerned international stakeholders should take all means at their disposal to ensure Natural Fruit withdraws immediately all lawsuits filed against Mr. Hall.
- The Thai government and all customers of Natural Fruit should ensure independent investigations and audits, alongside the researchers and concerned stakeholders, of the existing working conditions of workers at Natural Fruit.
- In an environment where an activist exposes the exploitation of migrant workers, it is urgent that their work be supported by actions of due diligence and justice on behalf of all of those concerned. ■



## Labor rights movement and associations show support for Andy Hall

Several organizations are showing support and solidarity for Andy Hall. Since Natural Fruit announced the lawsuit it filed against the migrants' rights advocate, the following organizations, associations and movements released statements and petitions urging authorities to drop charges against Mr. Hall and uphold the labor rights of workers and freedom of expression of rights defenders.

*Democracy for Burma* also calls on Natural Fruit to drop the charges against Mr. Hall and posted the labourstart campaign on its website:

<http://democracyforburma.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/support-andy-hall-and-sign-petition-thailand-drop-the-charges-against-labour-rights-activist/>

*Front Line Defenders* has issued urgent appeals and news items on behalf of Andy Hall:

<http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/AndyHall>

*Building and Wood Workers International (BWI)* and *Uni Global Union* have a joint campaign "demand[ing] Natural Fruit to immediately drop its malicious and aggressive law suits against Andy Hall and that the Thai government should ensure an urgent third party audit takes place at Natural Fruit premises." The unions started an online campaign where individuals and organizations can take action by sending a message to Natural Fruit and the Thai authorities:

[http://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show\\_campaign.cgi?c=1765](http://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign.cgi?c=1765)

*The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)* wrote a letter to Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, expressing its serious concern for the criminal lawsuit filed by Natural Fruit against Andy Hall. ITUC pointed out in the letter that the charges against Mr. Hall are based solely on legitimate human rights work in particular his research on the working conditions of workers in Natural Fruit. "These legal actions are an attempt to silence human rights defenders in Thailand, who, peacefully and legitimately, exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, in order to defend and promote human rights." ITUC urges the Thai authorities to: (1) drop the two criminal charges against Andy Hall as they incriminate legitimate and

peaceful human rights work; (2) ensure that the right to freedom of opinion and expression as guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Thailand has been a state party since 29 Oct 1996, is duly respected; and (3) guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Thailand are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from any restrictions, including judicial harassment.

*International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)* issued a statement condemning supermarkets in Europe that benefit from marketing fruit juices sourced from companies with "outrageously poor and illegal labor conditions." Referring to the case of Mr. Hall, IUF general secretary Ron Oswald made the IUF's position clear, "This situation highlights the real price of cheap juice just as similar cases in Thailand and beyond highlight the more general challenge of the real price of cheap food. Companies in mature markets who have profited from this now have to face up to their responsibilities and engage with workers and their representatives to raise standards in their supply chain. The IUF is working to identify exactly which companies have been using pineapple concentrate from Natural Fruit and which supermarkets have been selling cheap juice as a result. Neither these processors nor the supermarkets they supply can be allowed to just walk away."

*State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation of Thailand (SERC)* in its press release on 3 April 2013 stated that "the campaigns for migrant worker rights led by Andy Hall are always straightforward. He has always aimed to campaign without any intention of destroying or punishing anyone. The objective of his work is solely to protect labor and migrant rights so as to promote the treatment of these workers in accordance with international standards. Indeed, Andy's work has benefitted every stakeholder involved including governments, employers, factories and particularly migrant workers themselves...many factories which Andy has engaged have been much cooperative to improve rights violation situations." SERC, an affiliate of ITUC, has requested the latter to assist Mr. Hall. SERC also calls on Natural Fruit to drop all charges against Mr. Hall, the Thai government

to act and resolve the case and the domestic and international communities to campaign for the cause of human rights defenders, particularly this time Mr. Hall.

The *Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA)*, an organization of shrimp fisherfolks, shrimp processors, and other members of the domestic industry in the eight warmwater shrimp producing states of the USA, sent a letter on 7 March 2013 to the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large Luis CdeBaca of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, expressing SSA's concern on the allegations against Mr. Hall. Part of the letter stated that, "Regardless of differing views regarding the existence, prevalence, or continuation of abusive labor practices in Thai export-oriented industries, efforts to silence investigation, reporting, and discussion of the issue through intimidation must be condemned. These criminal charges are inconsistent with public statements made by the Thai government regarding its proactive efforts to police abhorrent labor abuse." Read the full letter here: <http://www.shrimppalliance.com/new/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/3-7-13-SSA-Letter-to-Ambassador-CdeBaca.pdf>

The *Thai Food Processors' Association* has publicly come out in support of Andy Hall through a statement it released on 29 March 2013. In the statement, "TFPA and its members welcome independent researches, including the recent report by Finnwatch, which may report on weaknesses in the social responsibility programs of the food industry in Thailand. This will assist TFPA and its members to coherently implement further action plans in order to comply with social compliance requirements of importing countries and to uphold greater social standards." The statement can be found here:

<http://acrath.org.au/3367/thai-food-processors-association-opposes-child-labour/>

Finally, Finnwatch, a non-profit organization in Finland which published Mr. Hall's research, raised in its statement released on 1 April 2013, the following critical points:

- Legal actions against Finnwatch researcher are an attack against human rights defenders and freedom of expression."
- It is important that the EU, in the context of the ongoing negotiations as well as in its other interactions with Thailand, raises the above-mentioned human rights issues and uses all the

means in its power to encourage Thailand to respect human rights and the freedom of expression.

- Thailand must step up its efforts to protect human rights defenders and to ensure that organizations, researchers, activists and journalists promoting human rights may carry out their work free of harassment.
- All legal actions against Andy Hall must be dropped, and Thailand's authorities must immediately launch an investigation into NatGroup's operations.

The statement can be read in English, Finnish and Thai, here:

<http://www.finnwatch.org/uutiset/93-legal-actions-against-finnwatch-researcher-are-an-attack-against-human-rights-defenders-and-freedom-of-expression>

To read the research *Cheap Has a High Price*, access it here:

[http://prachatai.com/english/sites/default/files/Finnwatch%20final%20report%20summary%20\(English\).pdf](http://prachatai.com/english/sites/default/files/Finnwatch%20final%20report%20summary%20(English).pdf) ■

As of this writing, the trial of Mr. Hall is set on 10 April 2013, and evidence would be heard on 28 April 2013.



## UN Women convened a regional consultation on safe mobility of women migrant workers

*With reference from UN Women South Asia*

On 21-22 March 2013, 90 participants from 11 countries from South Asia and the Gulf region gathered in Colombo to find ways to address the challenges faced by women migrant workers. With support from UN Women, the consultation was organized by an inter-governmental group: the South Asia Core Group on Gender Responsive Labour Migration Management.

A considerable number of MFA members and partners from Bahrain, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka and the MFA Secretariat were invited to take part in this auspicious deliberation with other civil society organizations, governments and the private sector.

The two-day consultation resulted in the following recommendations:

- Better data to document and acknowledge the contributions of women migrant workers
- Better information and support services to prepare them for their travel abroad
- Stronger collaboration between Governments in South Asia to ensure better working conditions for women migrants
- Integrated response to cases of violence against women during migration from departure, transit to return.

Dr. Nurul Islam from the Bangladesh Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment was quoted as saying, "It is extremely important that women migrant workers are aware of their rights and entitlements – this will lead to multiple benefits in their professional and personal lives – they will be less vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation. We strongly believe that pre-departure orientation is crucial for women migrant workers." Dr. Islam is the co-chair of the Asia Core Group on Gender Responsive Labour Migration Management



Participants of the consultation took time for a photo. Photo courtesy of Mahendra Pandey, PNCC.

Ms. Ranjana Kale, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and Co-chair, also Co-Chair of the Asia Core Group on Gender Responsive Labour Migration Management stated, "It is crucial to make migration an experience of dignity – by making migration safe and reducing vulnerabilities of women migrant workers. We have to ensure that the positive aspects of migration in which both the sending and receiving countries have a role to play to promote safe migration of women. International migration being a cross-border issue, the challenges faced by women migrant workers are best addressed through regional co-operation." ■

## The Human Rights of Migrant Workers: DTP being conducted for civil society advocates in Nepal

This year, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) will be working together to co-facilitate, monitor and evaluate the inaugural Nepal National Diplomacy Training Program, a yearlong initiative designed to further the migrants' rights movement in Nepal. The five-module program works with key civil society leaders to improve their advocacy skills and develop a 2013 collaborative strategic campaign. It is the first time MFA and DTP

different sectors, trade unions, government officials and staff of national human rights institutions across the region. The goal of the DTP program is to build and develop the capacities of civil society and government agencies for them to effectively promote and protect the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. The training program enhances the advocacy and lobbying skills of participants and equips them to apply these skills at the national, regional and



Participants listen to session led by the program facilitators; Groups collaborate to identify ways to develop realistic campaign strategies to address some of the key issues migrant workers face in Nepal.

have conducted an intensive, country-specific training program and are looking for support to design and implement the program throughout the year.

The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) is the oldest established training program for human rights defenders and community advocates in the Asia-Pacific region. It is affiliated with the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales in Australia. DTP has successfully delivered regional and in-country capacity building programs over the past 18 years in countries including Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan.

Since 2004, MFA and DTP have been working together on an annual migrant workers' program in Asia and the Pacific, bringing together migrants' rights advocates, civil society groups and organizations from

international arena of human rights advocacy and campaigning.

On 8 – 11 February 2013, in collaboration with other key leaders in the Nepal migration field, the first module was conducted at the Park Village Resort in Kathmandu, Nepal. The session focused on finding the keystone issue that would enable the group to vastly improve the quality of life of Nepali migrant workers. Each session was led by a different resource person who speak about their personal experiences with advocacy work, working in the destination countries, how to properly document cases, and determine what core issues they would like to address as a collective throughout 2013.

Each day focused on a different aspect of the migration process specific to Nepal. The first day focused on introductions, expectation setting, the



Facilitators exchanging thanks for their work on rights advocacy; Program participants and organizers pose for a picture outside the main program room

current policies related to migration, key issues faced in implementing these provisions, and establishing fundamental requirements for achieving long-term change. The second day of the program addressed the steps required to achieve change, applying the lessons learnt to the migrants' rights movement, and tools that could be used in designing an advocacy strategy. On day three, more information about the situation of migrant workers in the destination countries was given followed by participants developing their own examples of possible campaign strategies for 2013. The final day of the program focused on the importance of case documentation and building a strong basis for advocacy work.

for trends or patterns in the kinds of cases they were receiving as well as gain a better understanding of the key issues Nepali migrants are facing. The purpose of this exercise was to confirm that multiple contracts was the main issue that the majority of migrant workers are confronting while also exploring to see if there were other matters that would need to be addressed or considered in the second session. ■

During the first session, participants concluded that the recruiting process should be the focus of their 2013 advocacy efforts. As part of the recruitment system, multiple contracts were highlighted as the most difficult issue organizations deal with, and thus, should be the focus of the second module on 3 – 6 May 2013.

Since the first module, participants have been working together to conduct a situational analysis of the issue of multiple contracts in Nepal. As each group focuses on different issues affecting migrants and their families, the situational analysis serves as a preliminary step to identifying how to address such topics through their campaign strategy for the remainder of the year.

As many of the groups also work with migrants and their families who find themselves in difficult situations, each organization conducted a case analysis to look



## Women & Global Migration Working Group at the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Parallel to the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Women & Global Migration Working Group, the Anglican Refugee & Migrant Network, Center for Women's Global Leadership/Rutgers University, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Migrant Forum in Asia, National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (US), NGO Committee on Migration, Pan African Network in Defense of Migrant Rights, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), United Methodist Women and World YWCA convened a workshop on 7 March 2013 entitled "Violence Against Migrant Women and the Human Rights Framework."

The Commission on the Status of Women is "the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide"(UN Women). The 57th session ran from 4-15 March 2013 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The 2013 theme of the session was "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls."

The Women & Global Migration Working Group (WGMWG) is a group of migrant women's organizations, trade unionists and faith-based groups who have been meeting as a women's caucus in international venues including the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights for several years. WGMWG carries out joint campaigns and make migrant women visible in international policy-making arenas. MFA is a founding member of the working group.

The workshop aimed to:

- Identify unique problems migrant women face regarding violence
- Explore how existing international

documents/treaties commit to protections for migrant women regarding violence

- Strategize on how to use those international instruments for national advocacy to affirm migrant women's rights

The following day, WGMWG along with the International Trade Union Confederation, United Methodist Women, Association for Women's Rights in Development, and the Center for Women's Global Leadership, with over 100 co-sponsors organized an International Women's Day rally at the UN. It was a spectacular gathering of women's rights activists and the winter weather in New York did not pose an obstacle to rights activists and governments meeting at the UN to discuss the struggles faced by women around the world. ■



Members of the WGMWG at the 8 March rally. Photo courtesy of Bruce Reyes-Chow.

## MFA network seeks a rights-based approach to migration for the post-2015 development agenda



Siti Mariyam from Indonesia addressing the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons meeting in Bali, March 2013. Photo courtesy of Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP).

The target date to achieve the Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching in 2015. The UN system, governments, and relevant stakeholders began debates as early as 2010 on the contents and form of the post-2015 agenda. In 2011, the UN Secretary General established a UN System Task Team on the post-2015 Development Agenda, comprising of UN organizations, the World Bank and IMF which are tasked to do analytical work in support of the preparation for the post-2015 agenda. In 2012, the Task Team released a report *Realizing the Future We Want for All*.

The report provided the first set of recommendations on the outline of the post-2015 development agenda. It also served as a reference point for further consultations including the role of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. The Panel is mandated to guide the post-2015 development framework. It is holding four meetings in 2013 and will submit recommendations to the Secretary General on May 2013. The meetings took and are taking place in: New York (Sept 2012); London (Nov 2012); Monrovia (January 2013); Bali (March 2013); and New York (May 2013).

As part of the UN System, the UN Development Group chaired by UNDP is contributing to the process of framing the post-2015 agenda. It is leading a "global conversation" on the post-2015 agenda through a

series of national consultations and eleven global thematic consultations. These consultations aim to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders to review advances made on the MDGs and deliberate options for a post-2015 framework. UNDP identified eleven topics for these consultations which have prime significance to the post-2015 discussions: conflict and fragility; environmental sustainability; economic growth and employment; education; food security and nutrition; governance; health; inequalities; population dynamics; water; and energy.

In addition to face to face consultations, a Global Online Consultation, jointly initiated by the United Nations and Civil Society was launched on October 2012, covering the eleven themes with the intention to capture all the views of all groups of citizens.

Finally in September 2013, the UN General Assembly will hold a high level summit to review progress on the MDGs and map a forward-looking agenda.

The topic of migration, although not part of the main themes, is being aligned with the post-2015 program. MFA has been invited and contributed to a number of consultations with regard to the Post-2015 agenda. The thematic on Population Dynamics for instance held a consultation with civil society on 18-19 February 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland which aimed to provide a clearer vision on how to integrate population dynamics in the post-2015 framework. Civil society and trade unions focusing on migration and migrants rights contributed to the consultation and to the thematic report "A Call to Integrate Population Dynamics into the Post-2015 Development Agenda." A follow-up meeting on population dynamics took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

MFA members presented a statement at the meeting of the High Level Panel on Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda on 25-27 March 2013, in Bali, Indonesia. The statement, delivered by Ms. Siti Mariyam, a migrant domestic worker, addressed the High Level Panel and called on relevant stakeholders to ensure the protection of the rights of migrant workers. Without protection of such rights, there will be no complete progress on the world's development goals. ■

# Impacts of climate change on migrations part of Climate Space at WSF 2013

Tunisia's capital Tunis hosted the 2013 World Social Forum that ran from 26-30 March 2013. Tens of thousands of activists from over 100 countries were in attendance to oppose the current neo-liberal agenda and recommend more sustainable, humane and just alternatives. This year marked the first time that the WSF took place in an Arab nation.

A number of organizations and movements were in Tunis to have open dialogues and to come up with actions on women's rights, increasing debt, austerity measures in Europe, unemployment, trade and development, the conflict in Syria, the Palestinian struggle, the continuing uprisings in the Arab world, climate change, and migration among many others.

others

- Food sovereignty, agroecology and slow-food as solutions to climate change.
- The vital cycles of water and climate change: between the melting of glaciers, freshwater shortages and floods.
- Climate Jobs Now!: Towards a Low Carbon Economic Future
- False Solutions: Industrial bioenergy, GMOs, Synthetic Biology, Agro fuels, Geoengineering
- Commodification and financialization of Nature: Green Economy, Carbon Markets & REDD
- Faith communities and Mother Earth



Forum on Building the Resistance and Alternatives to Free Trade: On the Road to Bali Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, 28 March; Poster of the Migrations and Climate Change workshop. Photos courtesy of Mary Lou Malig and Migrants Rights International (MRI).

It was also the first time in a WSF where a dedicated Climate Space took place. The Climate Justice movement gathered 200-300 participants who participated in 14 discussion spaces:

- What went wrong in the climate negotiations? A dialogue between climate networks, trade unions, peasants, women, indigenous peoples, migrants, faith communities, indignados, OWS, Idle No More and others.
- Fighting fossil fuels and building new alternatives like energy democratization, public transport, and

- Systemic alternatives: "Vivir Bien", rights of nature, commons, happiness index and others
- The threats of Climate Security: discrimination, militarization and war.
- Confronting climate change in the Maghreb, Mashreq and all over the world
- Migrations and climate change
- Transnational Corporations, Free Trade and Investment Regimes and Climate Change: the real driving forces behind the scenes
- What New Strategies?

Climate Space  
Espace Climat  
المنتدى المناخ

## Migration and Climate Change

March 28, Thursday  
Slot 1 - 9:00 am - 11:30 am  
Venue: room P13 (Climate Space)

The Climate and Migration workshop will present an overview of the intersection of climate and the intersection rootcauses of migration, within a neoliberal global economic context. Presenters will present community perspectives of these from various regions around the world, and suggest work already being done to protect the rights of migrants under such climate distress. The workshop will seek to find opportunities to collaborate to address this as social movements around the world.

Moderator: Brid Brennan, Transnational Institute Workshop

### Program

Panel 1  
Alassane Dicko, Association Malienne des Expulses(AME) /  
Pan African Network in Defense of Migrants Rights (PANAMRI), Mali  
Jillie Bellarbo, Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers(CFMW), Transnational Migrant Platform(TMP),  
Europe  
Paula Iles, Espacio Sin Fronteras(ESF), Brazil

Panel 2  
El Mahdi Attar Semlali, Euro-Mediterranean Center for Migration(EMCMO) /  
Transnational Migrant Platform(TMP), Netherlands, Morocco  
TBA, La Via Campesina (LVC) region TBA

Workshop outcomes & Action Points  
To present to the Convergence of the Climate Space

Workshop Co-organisers  
Migrant Rights International(MRI)  
Transnational Migrant Platform(TMP)  
Transnational Institute



In each of these slots, concrete proposals of alternatives, strategies and actions were discussed.

The workshop on Migrations and Climate Change was held on 28 March 2013. The effects of climate change on migration has gained considerable prominence. Both slow and rapid onset events are predicted to severely affect communities' ability to live in many regions, particularly in coastal areas, river deltas, small islands etc., and affect the livelihoods of farming communities around the world. This is disproportionately felt by communities in the Global South and by working class areas in the North. For social movements, too much focus and time has been spent in trying to mis-classify "climate refugees" while not enough has been dedicated to looking at the real causes of climate changes through a critique of the global economic structures, and the real forces behind displacement. Some false solutions proposed by states such as REDD, will also further drive the displacement of communities. At the same time, racist and militaristic forces are using climate as a scapegoat to further criminalize migrants, create more restrictive borders, and militarize the Global South. The workshop delved into the intersection of climate and migration and set up proposals for global movements to converge on an agenda for collective action.

Organizers of the Climate Space were:

- Alliance of Progressive Labor, Philippines Alternatives International
- ATTAC France
- Ecologistas en Accion
- Environmental Rights Action, Nigeria Fairwatch, Italy
- Focus on the Global South|
- Global Forest Coalition
- Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
- Grupo de Reflexão e Apoio ao Processo do Fórum Social Mundial La Via Campesina
- Migrants Rights International
- OilWatch International
- Polaris Institute
- Social Movements for Alternative Asia
- Transnational Institute

Social Movements for Alternative Asia is a coordination of social movements in Asia across different sectors including peasants, workers, migrants, women, fishers, and activists working for social, political, environmental, and economic justice and sovereignty. The roots of the formation of the Social Movements for Alternative Asia is traced back to the 5th World Social Forum on Migrations in Manila, Philippines. Migrant Forum in Asia is a member and one of the organizations that facilitated its foundation. La Via Campesina, Gerak Lawan, Social Movements for Alternative Asia and other partners co-organized the forum on "Building the Resistance and Alternatives to Free Trade: On the Road to Bali Ministerial Meeting of the WTO" at the 2013 WSF.

The 2013 WSF closed with a Declaration of the Social Movements Assembly – World Social Forum 2013 29 March 2013, Tunisia.

More of the results of the 2013 World Social Forum here:

<http://www.fsm2013.org> ■

# MIGRANT FORUM IN ASIA MEMBERS



## EAST ASIA

Hong Kong: Asian Migrant Center (AMC), Coalition for Migrants Rights (CMR), Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU); Japan: Solidarity Network with Migrants in Japan (SMJ); Korea: Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea (JCMK); Mongolia: Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD); Taiwan: Hope Workers' Center (HWC); Hsinchu Catholic Diocese Migrants and Immigrants Service Center (HMISC)

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

Burma: Federation of Trade Unions (FTUB); Cambodia: CARAM Cambodia, Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD), Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW); Indonesia: Center for Indonesian Migrant Workers (CIMW), Jarnas Pekabumi, Konsorsium Pembela Buruh Migran Indonesia (KOPBUMI), Migrant Care, Seri Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI), Solidaritas Perempuan; Malaysia: Tenaganita; Philippines: Atikha Overseas Workers and Communities Initiative, Inc., Batis Center for Women, Inc., Center for Migrants Advocacy (CMA), Kanlungan Center Foundation, Inc., Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-anakan ng mga Migranteng Manggagawang Pilipino (KAKAMMPI), Unlad Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, Inc.; Singapore: Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), St. Francis Workers' Center, Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2); Thailand: Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF)

## SOUTH ASIA

Bangladesh: Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Association for Community Development (ACD), Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), WARBE Development Foundation; India: Center for Education and Communication (CEC), Center for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS), Migrant Forum India (MFI), Migrants Rights Council, National Centre for Labor; Nepal: All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA), POURAKHI, Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC); Youth Action Nepal (YOAC); Sri Lanka: Action Network for Migrant Workers (ACTFORM), Migrant Services Center (MSC), Women and Media Collective (WMC)

## WEST ASIA

Israel: Kav La'Oved

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