**INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

**Migrant Women Forum Statement**

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

– Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Today marks International Human Rights Day – a day observed each year to commemorate the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This landmark document was the first global enunciation of the rights of all human beings, enshrining the principles of equality and non-discrimination in the realization of these rights, which are to be extended to all regardless of nationality, religion, ethnicity, gender, or legal status. We dedicate this day to those who have lost their lives especially during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Migrant Women Forum calls for a social contract for all migrant workers especially women. A social contract can be understood as an implicit arrangement that defines the relationship between the government and citizens, between labour and capital, or between different groups of the population. Essentially, a social contract reflects a common understanding on how to distribute power and resources in order to achieve social justice (ILO, 2016). The core elements of the social contract involve the safety net administered by government, and paid for by citizens and business, and the employment rules governing relationships between enterprises and workers. The social contract also defines the relative roles of employers and government as they relate to social protections, employment rules, and taxation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted millions of migrant workers in destination countries, many of whom have experienced job loss or non-payment of wages, been forced by employers to take unpaid leave and confined to poor living conditions. With this, Migrant Women Forum calls for justice for wage theft of women migrant workers especially those in the informal sector and unpaid care work. It is imperative that they be compensated for the long hours they have devoted and sacrificed to fill the needs of their employers.

As a network, we call upon the actors who have inhibited women’s rights and access to sexual and reproductive health which should be accessible, affordable, and efficient. They are barred from information and services that are made available for them. We incessantly demand for this to be accessed by women migrant workers.

We also call on justice and the accountability of perpetrators of gender-based violence. This ranges from maltreatment including inhumane living conditions, insufficient nutrition or starvation, to physical punishment, violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or rape. Women migrant domestic workers are exceptionally vulnerable to these kinds of abuses, and monitoring mechanisms do not exist.

In the absence of a true commitment among states to uphold the principles of equity and non-discrimination that are enshrined in all international human rights instruments, we must work to build the migrant rights movement in solidarity with other social movements around the world to challenge the systems that prevent the realization of human rights for all.