



Cultivating the Right to Development: Migrant Agency, Structural Inclusions, and Transnational Peacebuilding

Migrant Forum in Asia | June 2026

This document contains the consolidated reflections and Inputs from the Migrant Workers' Consultation with Surya Deva, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development. The consultation was convened by Migrant Forum in Asia.



Executive Summary

The Declaration on the Right to Development (RTD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1986, asserts that development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which, every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development. Historically, however, state-centric, capital-driven development paradigms have marginalized the very populations whose labor underwrites global wealth.

This MFA submission operationalizes the localized expertise, lived realities, and institutional critiques voiced by grassroots migrant rights advocates, civil society leaders, and migrant workers during the special consultation convened on 26 May 2026, with Surya Deva, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development. It argues for a fundamental structural shift: migrating away from a framework that treats human mobility as a transactional mechanism or enterprise of economic labor export for development, toward a rights-based, migrant-supportive paradigm that

recognizes migrants as equal development partners and primary social actors. This bridges the gap between mobility and growth, and it emphasizes the recognition and protection of rights, promotion of social inclusion and meaningful participation, while also pursuing and harmonizing economic growth with environmental sustainability through a complementary shift toward a planet-centered development paradigm as advocated by the current Special Rapporteur.

Divided into two core operational sections – Participation in Development and Peace for Development – this submission details the systemic barriers silencing marginalized workforces, analyzes the disruptions caused by regional geopolitical conflicts, integrates direct testimonies from the ground, and sets forth detailed, actionable recommendations to align global migration corridors with international human rights, structural equity, and transnational justice.

The intention is to provide the MFA network's and our community partners' (from the Grassroots Forum on Migration Governance) inputs to the Special Rapporteur for consideration of inclusion into the two reports for presentation to the UN Human Rights Council and the General Assembly.

I. Introduction: The Injustice of the Commodity Paradigm

In the 40th year since the Declaration of the Right to Development, questions persist about the role migration plays within the broader development enterprise. With its multidirectional impact, migration has been a driver for poverty alleviation, human capital transfer, and labor market efficiency – simultaneously uplifting countries of origin through remittances and knowledge transfer, while sustaining growth and innovation of developed host nations. Despite this, the struggle remains.

While multilateral frameworks celebrate the economic contributions of migrant workers – such as through massive flows of financial remittances sustaining families and stabilizing developing economies – the weak governance structures themselves consistently strip these workers of their political agency and human dignity. As highlighted by grassroots representatives from the Global Migrant Workers Network, an overlapping interest often exists between state structures and profit-driven recruitment agencies. State policies often focus on the economic benefits of labor mobility and financial returns, while private intermediaries prioritize deployment objectives. In this context, the essential protections for migrant welfare and dignity can sometimes be overshadowed by macroeconomic and broader priorities.

This dynamic also inflicts what may be referred to as "epistemic injustice" upon mobile workforces: it reduces complex human beings with families, cultures, dreams, and political aspirations into disposable, transactional units of labor. Migrants are treated as economic commodities rather than human beings with rights and dignity. They are welcome for their labour, but systematically excluded from the civic spaces, social safety nets, and legal



protections of the states they actively build and the economies to which they contribute.

When poverty, structural unemployment, domestic inequality, systemic corruption, and climate crises force individuals to cross international borders to survive, migration ceases to be an exercise of self-determined human development. Instead, it becomes a symptom of structural development failure.

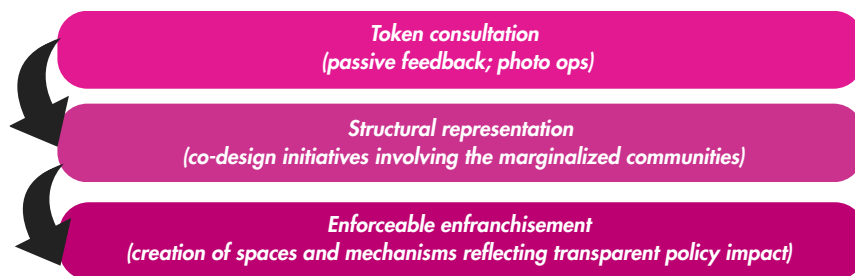
To address this imbalance, the right to development framework must be re-evaluated through a dual lens of human rights-based and planet-centered sustainability. While the 1986 Declaration correctly places the human person at the absolute center of development, demanding that development projects expand human freedoms and capabilities rather than optimize capital accumulation, this people-centered model must be harmonized with environmental sustainability too. Real development, therefore, means creating a safe community, sustainable livelihood, dignity, social protection, and opportunities for people – all of which require respect for planetary boundaries. Moreover, within our

current geopolitical climate, migration governance cannot merely protect economies. It must transition to prioritize the protection of people and the planet.

This consolidation of inputs acts as a structural roadmap to shift the global discourse from tokenistic inclusion to deep, institutional transformation, ensuring that the marginalized find their voices reflected in the corridors of international power – with the support of institutions, mandate holders, other stakeholders and network partners, as well as duty-bearers sensitive to the conditions and plight of the most marginalized and receptive to pathways of collaboration and constructive discourse.

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II. Participation in Development: From Tokenism to Binding Agency



Active, free, and meaningful participation is not a secondary, decorative feature of the right to development; it is its core engine. During the May 2026 consultation, MFA network members shared the observation that while there is widespread rhetorical commitment to the principle of 'nothing about us without us,' and while certain marginalized communities have been periodically invited to consultations, their voices have largely remained absent or unheard in decision-making and policy-making spaces. In previously experienced engagements between policymakers and marginalized communities, for example, the peoples' representatives sometimes function as visual metrics to fulfill institutional requirements, participating in photo opportunities, but lacking

institutional requirements, participating in photo opportunities, but lacking structural influence and representation in the negotiation and formalization of policy and decisions.

Ultimately, the push for inclusion is not merely a numbers or optics game, as it is understood that not all marginalized individuals or grassroots sectors can be part of every conversation. Instead, it is a call for considered and constructive representation – of individuals who are aware, informed, organized, and deeply engaged, enabling them to, likewise, contribute constructively and make a substantive, beneficial impact on behalf of the broader marginalized community.

A. Structural Barriers and Pathways to Meaningful Participation

The barriers preventing active, free, and meaningful participation on the ground are structural, deliberate, and self-reinforcing. They cut across legal, political, linguistic, and socioeconomic lines.

1. Institutional Exclusion and De Facto Statelessness in Policy Formulation

The inclusion of migrants and marginalized communities in decision-making deliberations and policy-making platforms is not merely a procedural preference; it is a fundamental justice requirement. For instance, the exclusion of migrant workers and other stakeholders from the negotiation and formulation of Bilateral Labor Agreements (BLAs) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) presents a profound gap. As these legal agreements directly govern their working conditions, wages, health care, and terms of employment and stay, their consultation, engagement, and representation are essential to ensure the agreements reflect their lived realities and protect their rights. During the consultation with the Special Rapporteur in May 2026, grassroots advocates from the East African and Asian corridors shared that when these policies are engineered behind closed doors, based on state-level compromises without authentic grassroots representation, the resulting frameworks often lead to severe rights violations. This institutional exclusion creates a precarious void, rendering migrants politically invisible – they lack local civil and political standing in their country of destination while being physically disconnected from legislative protections in their country of origin. Therefore, their direct and meaningful participation and representation are the only mechanisms to bridge this institutional gap and align policy with labor and human rights.

2. Restrictive Sponsorship Frameworks and the Weaponization of Civic Fear

In many prominent destination regions, such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and specifically the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, participation is directly undermined by structural fear. While some advancements have been made by states to address labor concerns, these efforts have proven insufficient to dismantle deep-seated systemic barriers. Restrictive sponsorship models still effectively bind a worker's immigration status to a single employer. The core challenge remains a migrant having to contend with multi-layered fear – fear of losing jobs, salaries, legal status, and the essential opportunity to remit money to families, among others. This pervasive fear prevents workers from seeking redress for grievances or accessing justice mechanisms. Under these frameworks, raising a claim for unpaid wages, contract substitution, or physical abuse is often treated not as a legitimate legal right, but as a breach of immigration discipline, placing a worker's entire survival and family livelihood at immediate risk.

3. Information Blocks: The Digital Divide and the Necessity of Human Intermediaries

Systemic exclusion is also maintained through language and communication barriers, despite some welcome state efforts toward information dissemination. Host states regularly publish new labor decrees, legal reforms, and health regulations in local official languages, such as Arabic, and where translations have been provided in major sending-country languages like Filipino, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, Hindi, or Urdu, there still remains a gap in terms of access to information. In some cases, detailed information regarding labor rights, minimum wage scales, and legal aid resources is often confined to centralized administrative offices or through digitized platforms, rather than

widely and directly disseminated to workers on the ground in a pedagogy that informs and empowers.

While the digitization of information and content is a step forward, it is insufficient to ensure access due to a persistent digital divide, even among those migrants or other marginalized communities with mobile phones or internet connection. Access to resources, after all, is not merely about availability or translation; it requires ensuring people can truly access, understand, and appreciate the information and services made available. Therefore, human interaction must complement digitized information through intermediary support, accessible channels to process inquiries, requests, or complaints, and interpretation services. It has become evident through migrants' and other stakeholders' experience and testimonies that this lack of clear, human-supported feedback channels prevents workers from reporting exploitation or verifying whether their inputs have had any impact on policy decisions.

4. From Dependency to Agency: A Framework for Locally-Led Structural Empowerment

Migrant-led organizations and grassroots advocates must move beyond the traditional and outdated development model defined by passive dependency on multilateral agencies and donor-driven funding, towards an innovative pathway of locally-led development and structural empowerment. In this paradigm, meaningful inclusion means actively listening to and considering lived realities, addressing specific needs, and identifying and supporting the goals defined by marginalized communities themselves. This approach builds skills, capacities, networks, and strengths from the ground up, ensuring both financial and non-financial resources are accessible to those who need

them and enabling communities to leverage their indigenous knowledge and shared expertise to forge their own development pathways. This empowerment centers on three critical priorities: first, achieving robust participation and representation in formal governance; second, forging engaged collaboration with organized trade unions to build collective bargaining strength while being regarded as workers with equal rights; and third, ensuring that all participation and collaboration are rooted in locally-led initiatives that are faithful to ground-up perspectives and truly informed by grassroots realities, rather than being simply dictated or managed by institutions or those with financial resources.

B. Concrete, Actionable Policy Recommendations for Participation

- **Institutionalize Proactive and Meaningful Inclusion**

Center people, migrants, their rights, and the planet in the development discourse. Implement consultation mechanisms that involve migrant workers, other stakeholders, and grassroots organizations' informed, engaged, and organized representatives from the outset, moving away from token participation. Encourage large, established CSOs to shift from a paternalistic and patronizing model (speaking for) to a truly participatory one (giving up board seats and leadership roles to members of the marginalized community themselves). Derive inspiration from the Indonesian model of facilitating multi-stakeholder discussions to support village-based governance for migrant worker-protection, for example.

This brand of meaningful inclusion requires a step towards structural representation where migrants, alongside other marginalized communities and other relevant stakeholders, are active participants and co-designers of the policies affecting them.



**"Migrant Care Indonesia's Initial Notes",
The Vulnerability of the
2024 Elections Abroad: A
Threat to the Democratic
Rights of Indonesian
Migrant Workers**

- **Mandate the Co-Design of
Bilateral Labor Governance**

National governments in both origin and destination states must legally mandate that all BLAs, MOUs, and transnational labor policies are co-designed with informed and organized grassroots migrant rights groups, trade unions, and civil society representatives or, at the very least, that these are negotiated and decided in consideration of the voices, lived realities, and identified needs of the peoples and communities most impacted. Labor agreements should be signed or renewed only after the terms and provisions have been submitted to public opinion and collaborative, participatory reviews by independent and organized migrants' communities together with CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.

As a regional network of CSOs, trade unions of migrant workers, migrant associations, and advocates dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers, MFA may serve as one such institution or structural platform ensuring grassroots participation for a consultation or review mechanism. The network can mobilize its membership to conduct collaborative, participatory reviews, consolidate data and lived realities from the communities on the ground, and serve as intermediary to offer vetted representatives to engage in policy discourse.

- **Implement Enforceable
Transnational Voting Infrastructure**

Countries of origin must ensure full political enfranchisement for their overseas populations by establishing secure, accessible infrastructure for absentee voting. Following the examples of the Philippines and Indonesia, sending states must remove bureaucratic barriers to ensure that citizens abroad can shape the domestic political configurations that drive labor migration out of necessity in the first place.

MFA members in the Philippines and Indonesia may present and offer an education or capacity building tool – like a 'best practice blueprint' – focusing specifically on eliminating the bureaucratic barriers and accessibility issues that limit overseas voting, with emphasis on actual successes and lessons learned (effective information dissemination among migrant groups, voter registration, voter turnout, etc.) as well as continuing challenges faced (consular services, support mechanisms, and broader access to information – including human accompaniment to support digitization initiatives).

- **Decouple Immigration Enforcement from Labor Inspection:**

Destination states must build a firewall between labor inspectorates and immigration enforcement agencies. Migrant workers must have access to labor courts, human rights tribunals, and confidential grievance portals without the risk of their data being shared with deportation authorities. Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and independent union leadership must be legally guaranteed to all workers, irrespective of their nationality or visa status.

- **Deploy Decentralized Digital Communication and Accountability Tools:**

Multilateral agencies (ILO, IOM, UNDP) and state governments must collaborate to build decentralized, multilingual information systems that connect all incoming migrants directly to local immigration systems, independent legal aid networks, and labor tribunals. All policy updates, legal changes, and minimum wage adjustments must be digitally published in the native languages of primary migrant groups. Crucially, these systems must include tracking mechanisms so communities can see exactly how their feedback influences policy decisions.

Beyond digitization efforts, there is a complementary need to align decentralized digital communications with the necessity of human intermediaries, which will serve as the critical human bridge for digital access, comprehension, appreciation, and effective implementation. Commitment to training and deployment of grassroots leaders, migrant associations, and CSOs through a web of on-the-ground, rooted-within-communities type of networks of digital access intermediaries is

critical. These intermediaries will provide face-to-face assistance, interpretation services, and navigational support required to translate digitally published information (policy updates, legal changes, minimum wage scales, etc.) into accessible, understandable knowledge for marginalized workers, directly offering one concrete and viable way in overcoming the digital divide.

MFA, through its network, contributes to and collaborates with states, institutional bodies, and other stakeholders in their efforts to integrate digital tools into capacity building programs. Training on new decentralized information systems and grievance portals, for example, may also be incorporated into existing information education and capacity-building programs. This is another step forward in ensuring that the technology built is not just available online, but that migrant workers and other marginalized sectors are trained to effectively use the tech to access services, process inquiries, and utilize the legal aid networks made available to them.

- **Direct and Independent Resource Access for Primary Development Partners:**

Migrant-led, alongside other grassroots community-led, organizations will be better supported and sustainably empowered by the provision of direct pathways to access both financial and non-financial resources. International donors, multilateral agencies, and UN bodies have, time and again, been urged to consider broadening their funding architectures, shifting or targeting resource allocations, and channeling a set percentage of development assistance directly to independent, grassroots, migrant-led civil society organizations, as well as other marginalized networks. However, true structural empowerment requires moving

beyond this traditional donor-dependent paradigm. We must instead foster an ecosystem where direct funding is coupled with the intentional cultivation of grassroots skills, capacities, networks, and strengths,

enabling these organizations and local movements to leverage both financial and non-financial assets to co-create and lead their own development pathways.

III. Peace for Development: Conflict, Mobility, and Structural Justice

Sustainable development, from a planet-centered lens, and human security, rooted in the rights-based approach, are deeply intertwined with regional peace. Conversely, genuine peace cannot be maintained under conditions of extreme economic exclusion, structural inequality, human rights violations, and the decline or degradation of the environment. Geopolitical conflicts are not distant political events; they are major disruptions that tear through international labor migration corridors. In active conflict zones, the structural vulnerabilities of migrant populations are instantly exposed, transforming what was intended as a development trajectory into a desperate fight for survival.

The central role of and responsibility placed on women in both times of peace and conflict is, likewise, particularly important to highlight. As a consequence of endemic and deeply ingrained inequalities, women migrant workers are among the most heavily impacted, least protected, and slowest to recover. However, a gendered lens on violence and conflict also reveals that women, including women migrant workers, given adequate support, training, and resources, still emerge as crucial agents of peace and development.

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A. Analysis of the Intersection of Conflict and Mobility

When armed conflict or political violence breaks out, the systemic inequalities that marginalize migrant workers, especially women, under normal conditions are severely magnified, leading to extreme vulnerabilities. The gendered impacts of these four structural failures, listed below, are not merely incidental; they are cyclical. Because women migrant workers enter the labor market with pre-existing structural disadvantages – smaller asset bases, limited mobility due to domesticity, and social expectations of caregiving – they are the first to suffer the consequences of conflict, the least and last to be supported during the emergency phase, and the most heavily burdened by the debt and reintegration crises that ensue.

1. Systemic Stratification and Structural Abandonment in Emergency Responses

Women migrant workers, particularly those in the domestic work sector, face hyper-visibility in labor, but invisibility in civil defense. Moreover, in times of war, national emergency protocols also routinely display deep nationalist biases. Host states focus their civil defense assets, emergency communications, and evacuation infrastructures almost exclusively on their own citizens, leaving foreign workforces completely unassisted. As observed in active conflict zones in the Middle East – such as Lebanon – women migrant workers are frequently left out of official emergency plans and are often isolated within the private domestic sphere where they are functionally “locked in” while conflict erupts and others scramble toward pathways for security or survival. While nationals are provided with safe shelter and coordinated evacuation routes, these migrant workers are often barred from public bomb shelters, denied emergency medical treatment, and abandoned by employers who flee while leaving migrant women domestic workers locked inside private residences. This structural abandonment is exacerbated for outdoor, construction, and agricultural laborers, whose daily visibility leaves them highly exposed to military violence, yet they are completely denied the institutional protections provided to corporate or office workers.

2. Mass Forced Displacement, Wage Theft, and Debt Bondage

When conflicts force the mass evacuation or sudden return of migrant populations, workers are rarely repatriated with dignity or financial resolution. Instead, wartime disruptions are often weaponized by employers to commit large-scale wage theft.



Migrants are forced to flee active war zones under extreme pressure, leaving behind months (or even years) of unpaid wages, uncollected benefits, and end-of-service financial compensations. Upon return to their countries of origin, they face severe financial crises. They return home empty-handed and remain saddled with high-interest loans taken out to pay upfront recruitment fees. This traps entire families in cycles of generational debt bondage and deep poverty.

The loss of income as a consequence of conflict is not merely a financial setback, but a trigger for severe rights violations and entrapment – with women migrant workers among those having to face a dual crisis. As they fall victims to wage theft, they remain liable for the high-interest debt bondage initiated and incurred during recruitment and deployment. The overlapping and compounded direct impacts of conflict on these migrant workers typically ensure that they find themselves in the most insecure situations without safety nets and viable options, and further exposed to more exploitative conditions.

3. Post-Conflict Reintegration Crises and the Failure of Sending-State Economies

The economic shock of conflict extends far beyond the war zone, severely impacting countries of origin across Asia and Africa. Sending states are rarely prepared to handle the sudden, unstructured return of tens of thousands of citizens simultaneously. The immediate loss of foreign remittance flows cuts off the main source of income for millions of households, while domestic labor markets are unable to offer alternative employment opportunities.

Returning migrant workers lack livelihood alternatives and for women, this is compounded by gendered social expectations. Returning women face a double burden of needing to secure employment while continuing to fulfill their primary caregiving and nurturing roles. Without gender-responsive reintegration, these women are often forced to choose between more dire poverty or hazardous re-migration.

4. The Erasure of Human Rights by Militarized Multilateral Responses

When international actors respond to conflicts in the Global South, they heavily privilege militarized interventions over human-centered development and structural accountability. Powerful nation-states frequently channel billions of dollars in military assistance, arms shipments, and weapon systems into conflict corridors, fuel lines, and geopolitical proxy wars, which drives further displacement and infrastructure destruction. Concurrently, transnational justice frameworks rarely prosecute corporate or state actors for labor exploitation, human trafficking, or the abandonment of foreign workforces during times of political tension or war. This systemic lack of accountability treats these severe

lack of accountability treats these severe violations as unfortunate, unpreventable side effects of conflict rather than actionable violations of international law.

Militarized interventions prioritize security hardware over human-centered development, which often correlates with increased gender-based violence (GBV). In conflict corridors, the breakdown of law and order disproportionately exposes women to sexual violence – frequently untreated or under-reported in these circumstances. Militarized responses that lack gender-sensitive protections essentially erase the specific risks women face. Furthermore, by failing to integrate women's voices in accountability frameworks, these militarized responses ensure that GBV committed during crises remains unpunished and unaddressed

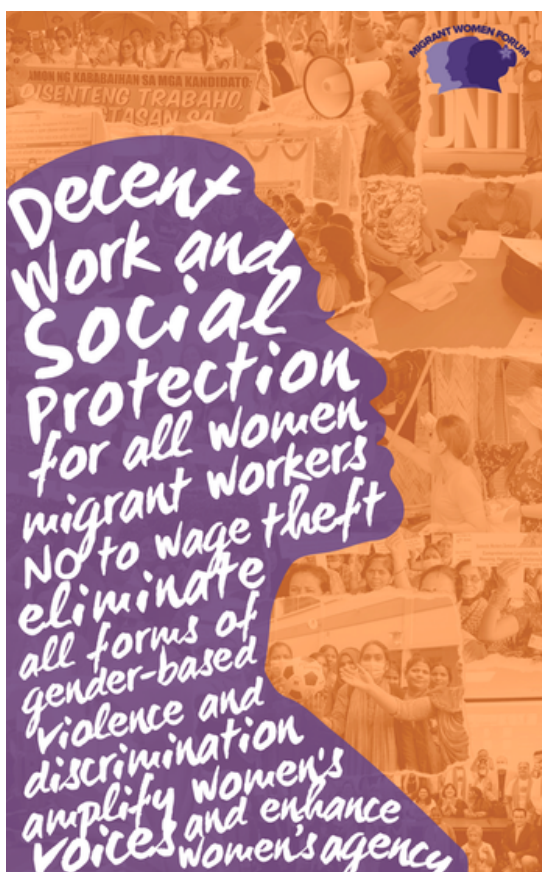
B. The Crucial Role of Women Migrant Workers as Agents of Peace and Development

While women migrant workers are disproportionately impacted by conflicts, a nuanced peace for development framework must move beyond viewing them solely as victims. Given adequate support, training, and resources, women, including women migrant workers, emerge as crucial agents of peace and development in their communities and across borders.

By centering the lived realities of women migrant workers and supporting their capacity to organize, policy frameworks can recognize and leverage their role in transnational peacebuilding, making development sustainable and rights-based.

For the MFA network, empowering women migrant workers is not simply a reactive intervention but a foundational mandate.

Established in 1994 by women migrant workers and activists, MFA has consistently worked to dismantle the structural barriers that render women migrants invisible. Over the decades, the commitment has evolved from direct service to a comprehensive empowerment strategy that centers women as the primary authors of their own development and peacebuilding agendas. MFA has institutionalized this advocacy by facilitating leadership platforms – such as the Migrant Women Forum (MWF) – and mobilizing cross-border movements – from the successful advocacy for ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers to ongoing campaigns against GBV and for systemic migrant rights. By providing training in organization, negotiation, and political mobilization, MFA does not just "include" women migrants; the network actively dismantles paternalistic models to ensure that women are the architects, leaders, and strategic voices in the corridors where their rights and futures are decided.



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The agency of women migrant workers is evidenced by their proactive contributions to governance, which challenge the narrative of vulnerability. For instance, through SBMI's village-based governance program in Indonesia, women migrant leaders overcame initial institutional resistance to become co-designers of community protection systems. Similarly, the advocacy led by women domestic workers' unions and associations together with the MFA network to secure ILO Convention 189 proves when supported with organization and training, women migrants are effective architects of international law. By institutionalizing these platforms – moving from grassroots village governance to global rights advocacy – women migrant workers are demonstrating that they are not just victims to be protected, but essential partners in building sustainable peace and inclusive development.

C. Concrete, Actionable Policy Recommendations for Peace for Development

- **Incorporate Migrants into Mandatory National Crisis and Emergency Frameworks**

Countries of destination must consider to explicitly include non-citizens, regardless of their sector or legal status, into all national disaster management, crisis response, and civil defense protocols. Foreign workers deserve legally guaranteed equal access to emergency housing, medical relief, public bomb shelters, and state evacuation systems. Emergency alerts and crisis updates must be broadcast simultaneously in the primary languages of the local migrant population and across vast and accessible platforms available to everyone affected, especially through coordination with sending countries' embassies and consulates – that migrants in distress often turn to for information or assistance.

- **Establish an Enforceable Transnational Wage Insurance and Claims Fund**

Under the guidance of the ILO and the UN, international financial institutions should consider building an international escrow fund financed by mandatory contributions from employers and recruitment intermediaries during the initial hiring process. If an unexpected conflict or emergency forces evacuation, this fund must immediately disburse unpaid wages, end-of-service benefits, and compensation packages directly to the affected workers, bypassing local employer insolvency.

- **Launch Transnational Justice Mechanisms**

Sending and receiving states must jointly establish and fund independent legal defense networks within diplomatic missions. Consular offices must retain dedicated local legal counsel equipped to enter police stations, detention centers, labor camps, and local courts to secure justice for stranded, injured, or exploited citizens. These legal assets must be empowered to launch cross-border lawsuits against employers or states that violate labor agreements or abandon workers during crises.

- **Design Institutional Reintegration and Wage-Competitive Infrastructure**

While some governments have initiated skills-matching programs for returning migrant workers, these efforts often prove insufficient because they fail to address the fundamental wage gap between destination and origin countries. Returning migrants frequently encounter domestic labor markets that offer lower compensation and fewer opportunities for their specialized skills, rendering successful reintegration elusive. Consequently, re-migration remains the only viable path for survival. Countries of origin must, therefore, transform their domestic development frameworks to go beyond superficial skills-matching; they must prioritize the creation of wage-competitive domestic opportunities that genuinely leverage the advanced industrial skills and cross-cultural capacities of returning workers, rather than forcing them back into migratory cycles out of sheer financial necessity.

- **Democratize Global Governance and Institutionalize Grassroots Agency**

Global governance structures – including the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), and International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) review processes – must be fundamentally repurposed from top-down, state-centric models to a ground-up approach. Meaningful inclusion requires a shift from strictly government-to-government dialogue to direct, substantive engagement with migrants, grassroots organizations, and peoples of the Global South. These governance spaces must be redesigned to ensure that voices emanating from real conditions, needs, and lived experiences are accorded equal footing. True structural equity demands transforming power dynamics to grant marginalized communities – the primary actors of migration – the substantive authority to shape the policies that govern their lives, rather than merely serving as passive observers or token participants.

In conclusion, MFA remains committed to continue collaborations with the UN bodies, UN mandate holders, other multilateral institutions, support networks, trade unions, migrant associations, and CSO movements in the pursuit of policy recommendations toward a robust peace for development framework. Toward advancing women-led peacebuilding and resilience, MFA actively contributes by building the capacity of women migrant workers to serve as agents of peace, moving beyond viewing them solely as vulnerable populations. In terms of driving transnational justice and accountability mechanisms, MFA continues to explore alternatives or complementary support services to existing platforms needed to protect migrants from conflict-driven exploitation. MFA utilizes its partnerships with legal experts and lawyers' groups, including existing relationships with consular missions, to support migrants' access to justice and legal remedies-related requirements. With access to justice as a precondition for sustainable peace, MFA continues to advocate for financial and legal mechanisms to counter wage theft and all other forms of labor exploitation faced by migrant workers.

IV. Strategic Recommendations Matrix

Governance Pillar	Strategic Action Policy Intervention	Primary Responsible Stakeholders
Institutional Representation and Global Governance Reform	- Codify binding co-design mandates for BLAs/MOUs - Repurpose global forums (GFMD, GCM/IMRF) to ground-up, equal-footing engagement - Ensure substantive authority for marginalized actors in policy discourse	National Ministries (Labor/Foreign Affairs) UN Entities GFMD/GCM/IMRF Leadership
Civic and Legal Protections	- Establish a strict firewall between labor inspections and immigration enforcement - Guarantee full freedom of association and collective bargaining - Decouple visa status from individual employers	National Judiciaries ILO
Transnational Justice and Remediation	Establish cross-border legal defense networks and mandatory wage insurance/claims funds to ensure immediate disbursement of unpaid wages and benefits during conflict-driven evacuations	UN Human Rights Council Regional Economic Blocs Consular Networks
Wage-Competitive Reintegration	Transition from superficial skills-matching to creating wage-competitive domestic opportunities that leverage returning migrants' industrial and cross-cultural capacities to prevent forced re-migration	Countries of Origin (COOs) / National Governments Development Agencies
Structural Empowerment	Foster ecosystems combining direct financial/non-financial support beyond donor dependency	UN Special Mandate Holders Multilateral Institutions Grassroots Networks Donor Communities

V. Conclusion: The Path Toward Structural Transformation

The rich testimonies, analyses, and structural insights shared during this MFA network consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur provide unassailable arguments for systemic change, addressing challenges through the dual lens of a rights-based and planet-centered development paradigm. Realizing the central goal of the 2030 Agenda – to ensure that no one is left behind – necessitates a fundamental shift: moving away from overly centralized donor approaches and tokenistic consultation models toward a framework of locally-led structural empowerment.

The international community stands at a critical historical crossroads. Sovereign states, regional economic bodies, and multilateral institutions must fundamentally recognize the political, social, and economic agency of migrant workers. This requires transforming global governance structures – such as the GFMD and GCM/IMRF – from top-down, state-centric forums into democratized spaces where migrants and grassroots communities from the Global South are not just observers, but hold equal footing and substantive authority. It also demands a transition from donor-dependent paradigms to ecosystems that cultivate grassroots skills, capacities, and networks through both financial and non-financial assets.

Furthermore, true structural transformation requires addressing the root causes of forced re-migration by shifting from superficial skills-matching to creating wage-competitive domestic opportunities that leverage the advanced capacities of returning workers, especially those seeking sustainable reintegration and reunification with their families and within their communities. This must be coupled with an unwavering commitment to women migrant workers as proactive agents of peace and development, ensuring that our emergency responses, reintegration programs, and policy frameworks are gender-responsive, rights-based, and informed by ground-up realities. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development bears a vital responsibility to echo these voices – ensuring that our structural roadmap is realized within the corridors of international power. By advocating for binding co-design mandates, independent legal defense networks, and firewall-protected labor rights, we can move away from a system of exploitation and reactive crisis management. Together, the global community can transform international human mobility into what it was always meant to be: a dignified, free, and self-determined expression of human development, social equity, and sustainable peace.



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Sustainable and Decent Social Protection Campaign



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Recruitment Reform



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Justice for Wage Theft



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