

Report on the

Implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (2019-2020)

Partners

ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC)

South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC)

African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa)

International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific (ITUC-AP)

Arab Trade Union Confederation (Arab-TUC)

Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)



Preamble

This report is a synthesis of the engagements of six regional organizations that came together to advance and improve the spaces for the protection of the rights of migrant workers, including domestic workers who are often “hidden” yet exposed to more significant abuses and violations. The engagement period ran from 2016 (formation stages) to 2022 (signing of Memorandum of Understanding and implementing the agreed action points). The role and support of the International Labour Organisation, especially that of the Director-General and Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV) staff is highlighted.

Background

Organized labour believes that migration is and will remain a global human phenomenon that is historical and natural. For labour migration, mobility will continue to help address the demand and supply gaps to ensure that the wheels of the global economy continue to turn. Sadly, while global wealth continues to grow, the share of workers, including migrant workers continues to decline as those of a tiny minority expands in an obscene, astronomical proportion. The global wealth distribution crisis coupled with structural challenges of developing economies, endemic poverty and inequality, violent conflicts and political persecution, and climate change effects are forcing and pushing people to move. Albeit, most are moving irregularly.

Labour migrants most of whom are moving to fill skills gaps; especially low and medium-skilled workers are exploited in the recruitment process. The majority are exposed to exploitation at the stage of recruitment from their home country and are 8 (out of 10) times more likely to continue to experience exploitation and abuses in their countries of destination/work locale. This is primarily the case for labour migrants heading to, living, and working in the Middle East, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states inclusive.

When the global extrapolation of migrant handling is analyzed, what comes out is the unfair and inhumane treatment meted out to migrants and members of their families. Labour migrants do not fair better. Still, the easy tendency to weaponize migration for electoral gains remains, as we have seen most conservative and nationalist-leaning politicians across Europe and North America do. Thus, migration has assumed and

remained a “hot potato” political issue. No wonder the ascendancy of the unhelpful narrative of a “global migration crisis”. For organized labour, we affirm that there is no migration crisis, rather what we have is a “global migration governance crisis”. Therefore, to desist from mere lamentation of the global migration crisis, six regional organizations came together to forge a common front of action to improve protection for migrant workers. Equally, the collaboration aims to contribute to effective global migration governance that will aid voluntary movement against zero-sum migration.

Rationale and action

The six Trade Union organizations discussed and expressed their firm commitment and developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU acknowledged that women and youth constitute a growing majority of migrant workers, who by and large, are mainly on their own. Most remain outside the trade union movement. They are over-represented in precarious work and exploited by recruiting agents and employers. They do not have a voice and representation in their workplaces and must endure poor working and living conditions. Similarly, with concerns that migrant workers’ rights continue to be trampled upon, abused, and denied in ways that undermine their physical integrity, social self-worth, psychological sanctity, mental rectitude, and economic empowerment. These abuses manifest in low and abysmal wages, delayed and withheld wages, beating and torture, slavery, and vestiges of the worst forms of slavery, starvation, violence and harassment, excessive working hours and very little rest time, racial attacks and xenophobia, hopelessness in the absence of legal redress to injustices.

The parties to the MOU, therefore, agreed to create better and improved spaces, opportunities, and environments for the better defence, protection and promotion of migrants and their families’ rights through.

- Joint and coordinated efforts to promote and facilitate organizing.
- Advocacy and campaign engagements
- Training and education
- Communication, reporting and documentation
- Support services provision

To cooperate and carry out joint trade union campaigns to advance trade union solidarity and to strengthen cooperation among the parties for the protection of both migrant and local workers, including harmonization of their working and living conditions, through the agreed, but not limited to the following actions.

Action 1: To work for increased ratification of ILO Convention No.97 and No.143, and the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of the Families (1990), as well as ILO Conventions dealing with public and private employment agencies; as well as to work for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 189 to promote decent work for domestic workers.

Action 2: To push for legislation, amendments, and model employment contract for migrant workers based on compliance with provisions of international labour standards and enforced through regulations and labour inspection to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers.

Action 3: To promote, including coordination with affiliates to establish information centres for migrant workers to provide both potential migrants, and migrants, with information materials in the native languages (1) on migrant workers' employment and living conditions and social benefits entitlement; and (2) on migration, employers' obligations, the national security system, and national laws.

Action 4: To facilitate and coordinate through our affiliates the provision of services, advice and assistance to migrant workers coming from countries of origin in cases where legal support, denouncing abusive practices and providing legal remedies is needed, and for broadened services to migrant workers.

Action 5: To improve communication and links between and among regional organizations and with migrant worker communities to promote migrant worker involvement in trade unions, and dissemination of information of relevance and importance to migrant workers.

Action 6: To identify and raise issues of migrant workers such as gender concerns, the

lack and awareness of social dialogue, recruitment fees and other related costs borne by migrant workers, prohibition of confiscation of travel and identity documents and promotion of labour mobility, trafficking forced labour including the status of migrant workers' social protection aspects, measures facilitating the regularization of the status of migrant workers in irregular situations at their national tripartite labour mechanisms, and to ensure the involvement of trade unions in the development of bilateral agreements between governments of sending and receiving countries.

Action 7: To push through advocacy for cooperation between the governments of sending and receiving countries to enhance governance of migration; in the field of establishing avenues for labour migration, strengthening labour inspection, legal cooperation in the case of human trafficking and forced labour and other abusive situations, and issues of maintenance of social security entitlements.

Action 8: Work to achieve better and improved regulation of activities of recruitment and employment agencies and subcontractors, as part of an effort to deepen fair recruitment practices such as the effective exploration of the Migrants Recruitment Advisor.

Action 9: To address occupational health, safety, and housing concerns of migrant workers. Particularly those in precarious conditions, as well as to promote assessable and portable social protection measures for migrant workers including, women workers engaged in domestic work and the promotion of labour mobility for such precarious workers.

Action 10: Seek improvement in Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements that would provide for the enjoyment of human and labour rights of migrants through social dialogue engagement that includes social partners.

Based on the above-mentioned actions, the parties discussed, planned, and implemented the following activities between 2019-2020.

Activities and results/outcomes

S. No.	Action	Proposed Activities	Activities Conducted	Results/Outcomes
ADVOCACY				
1.	Ratification Campaign (Action 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of trade union guides for ratification and migrant organizing: ACTRAV, IDWF, ASEAN TUC. Target countries: AFRICA: Sierra Leone C97 and C143, Madagascar C143 and C189 and Guinea C97 ASEAN TUC: Malaysia and Indonesia on C189 Arab TUC: Morocco and Tunisia on C97 and C143 SARTUC: Nepal C97, C143 and C189 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relaunch of the African Trade Union Migration Network (ATUMNET) in September 2018. The Network was established in July 2016. The ATUMNET comprises of focal persons (46, men and women) from 40 countries, and 6 Global Union Federations (GUFs) in Africa. The network developed an action plan that was prioritised. Lobby engagements with different arms of the government in Sierra Leone, Morocco, Somalia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Benin, Botswana, Tunisia, Togo, Tunisia, and Mauritius. Participated in the development of an ILO-ACTRAV guide on ratification campaign. Media engagement. SARTUC established pressure groups and organized campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following countries ratified the conventions prioritised – Morocco (C97); Madagascar (C189); Mauritius (C190); Somalia (C97, 143, 155, 181 and 190); Tunisia (C187); Sierra Leone (C97, 143, 155, 181, 187, 189). Labour standards, ratification, application and enforcement are now highly accepted and being pursued within the African Union Labour Migration Governance circle. Trade unions' knowledge, skills and capacities on how to be active in the application and enforcement of ratified conventions are on the steady rise. In the case of Nepal, there is ongoing advocacy and lobby to the Nepal government to introduce/amend domestic legislation to make them consistent with C97, C143, and C189. The other regional SARTUC affiliates advocated and lobbied for the ratification

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed “Union toolkit on campaigning for domestic workers’ rights in Southeast Asia”. • Lobbying with legislators and other stakeholders to ratify relevant ILO conventions (C189 and C190 before the military coup in Myanmar, C190 in Indonesia, and the Philippines). 	<p>of respective conventions as per their commitments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Union toolkit on campaigning for domestic workers’ rights in Southeast Asia” is ready for validation. • Women and young union leaders became part of the expanded campaign to ratify C190 in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines.
2.	<p>Legislation, amendments and model employment contract</p> <p>(Action 2, Action 8 and Action 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Standardized model employment contract. • Pursue and follow up on Labour Law Reforms (Jordan and Qatar). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATUMNET participated in the development of the African Union Declaration for the promotion of the rights of migrants and members of their families. The issues of employment and employment contract are contained in the Declaration. • ATUMNET participated in and made inputs into the UN GCM African Regional Review processes that took place from March – September 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AU Declaration has been adopted. • Working relationship among tripartite social partners in Africa on labour migration governance is gaining steady improvement. • A working arrangement on how to prepare for and follow up on the International Migration Review Forum for 2022 has been agreed upon within the AU-LMAC process – a testament to the improving working relationship.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard employment contract is developed and widely disseminated to the different stakeholders. • SARTUC is continuously lobbying for the representation of workers through regional platforms like SAARC. • ASEAN TUC participation in the yearly ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML), a regional tripartite plus platform discussing issues and preparing recommendations for migrant workers from and within ASEAN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Leone has developed and adopted a model migrant employment contract. • The employment contract was disseminated during the preparation meeting with the Nepal government for the Colombo Process. • Increase TU participation in lobbying in regional platforms such as SAARC. • AFML recommendations included the following: • Provide migrant workers with clear and transparent contracts or proper documentation with terms and conditions of employment in a language they understand based on national legislation and policies (12th AFML, 2019); • Maximize digital technology in the online processing of employment documents, and ensure its accessibility to migrant workers to reduce physical contacts in time of pandemic (13th AFML, 2020); • Non-charging of recruitment and other fees, and any COVID-19 associated costs in all stages of the recruitment cycle, this needs to be made clear and operationalized through employment contracts to safeguard migrant workers from the aforementioned costs (14th AFML, 2021).
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3.	End Kafala and exit permit system. (Action 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor implementation of Qatar Agreement, including domestic workers. • Expose abuses in countries where Kafala System exists. • Organize national demonstration (focusing on countries with Kafala System). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Day for the Remembrance of the Dead and Injured used to focus attention on the Kafala reform campaign in Africa. • Wrote, published, and disseminated 3 statements on the progress of the Qatar Kafala reforms¹ whilst calling on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to emulate² the same. • Monitor the implementation of the Qatar Agreement including the provisions on domestic workers. • Review and highlight the issues of abuses and exploitation of the workers where the Kafala System exists. • ATUMNET's contribution to the development of the AU's Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAS). • Engagement with African governments to open, operate and share embassy presence in the Middle East for consular and support services to Africa's labour migrants there. • Protested the racist attacks against African migrants by the UAE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qatar made additional reforms by making health and safety provisions for construction migrant workers; not to work when the temperature is excess; increase of minimum wage for migrant workers in Qatar. • Qatar's reform process continues to be collaborative and inclusive. ATUMNET is impressed and commends the progressive reforms made so far. Please see the links in the footnote. • AU-LMAC is now working with Qatar on ways it can learn from the reform to improve its advocacy with other GCC and Middle East countries. • Saudi Arabia has commenced the review of its Kafala system. However, we are worried that its process is not a collaborative one. • The AU's Guide on BLMA's has been adopted. • Kenya has opened and operates an embassy in Doha now. It has also assigned labour attaché to the Embassy. • The reform gains have continued to hold despite attempts to derail and reverse it by some elements within.
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¹ <https://leadership.ng/ituc-africa-commends-qatar-for-improving-rights-of-migrants-workers/>

² <http://ituc-africa.org/ITUC-Africa-welcomes-Qatar-s-labour-industrial-reforms-calls-on-Saudi-Arabia.html>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ITUC-Africa leadership inspection visit to Qatar – the high-level delegation was led by the General Secretary of the ITUC-Africa. It had the ITUC President, President of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), and President of the ITUC-Africa as part of the delegation. The team met with African workers in Qatar. It also met with the ILO Project Office, the National Human Right Committee of Qatar representative of the BWI in Qatar, the Ministry of Labour and the Qatari Parliament. A press conference was issued at the end of the visit.• Raised the issues of workers such as violence against women in the workplace, child labour, and child and women trafficking through various dialogues and discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There a steady progress towards the full attainment of freedom of association right.• Working and living conditions of migrant workers have improved tremendously as attested to by the workers themselves.• Workplace accidents and fatalities have drastically reduced. This was buttressed by the ILO OSH team on the ground and evidence of these are documented.• The willingness and readiness to continue to improve by the State of Qatar is an opportunity to continue to explore.
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4.	UN working groups (Action 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Unions will participate and provide input during the consultation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATUMNET members from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Botswana and Public Services International (PSI) contributed to the collation and compilation of "Trade Unions contributions to Fair Recruitment Practices" publication. This initiative supported ILO MIGRANT and ILO-ACTRAV. ATUMNET participated in and made profound contributions to the AU's process of developing a Guide on Bilateral Labour Migration Agreement. Ongoing Advocacy for the cooperation between the governments of CoO and CoD through regional and international forums such as the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased TU participation and made the voice heard.
5.	MRA website and newsletter (Action 3 and Action 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include MoU's between unions and countries in the MRA. Updates on legislation. Showcase actions under trade union MoU's such as gender-based violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous popularisation of the MRA in the different Africa Labour Migration engagement processes (within the AU-LMAC; UN GCM Africa Regional Review). Training on the MRA for trade union activists in Kenya. The MRA is now live (launched) in Ghana. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MRA's popularity is steadily growing on the African continent. The MRA has now been launched and is being utilised by migrant workers and trade unions in Kenya. More potential labour migrants and returnee migrants are now approaching the trade unions in Kenya for information and assistance on how to undertake their recruitment process. This is contributing to

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards linkage of IRIS (certification) and MRA to accelerate the fair recruitment agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the effective utilisation of the MRA in Ghana. • Good progress being made to develop and launch the MRA in Nigeria, Uganda and Ethiopia. Efforts are also in top gear to capacitate trade unions' migration focal persons, and activists on how to effectively utilise the MRA. • SARTUC has developed a network through social media such as Facebook and its organisational website. • Provided Pre-departure orientation directives (PDOD) for translation in their native language and disseminated in their respective countries. 	<p>the increase in awareness and knowledge of the potential labour migrants. and reducing cases of abuse and exploitation, especially pre and during departures. Returnee migrants are also being assisted in their reintegration efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ghana TUC is using the MRA to assist potential migrant workers on how to go about their recruitment challenges and thus contributing to less exploitation and abuses suffered by migrants. • Provided information to the potential migrants and migrants in South Asia. • The MRA is steadily spreading in Africa, thus contributing to trade unions' visibility on their engagement to contribute to fair and ethical recruitment. • More migrant workers are associating with trade unions, and they are visibly speaking up on the issues around fair recruitment. • Improved communication and links between and among the regional organisations and with migrant workers' communities in South Asia.
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6	<p>Lobby Colombo process (countries of origin), and Abu Dhabi Dialogue (countries of destination), SARTUC-SAFE Cooperation).</p> <p>(Action 7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby and advocate for the review of ADD and commitment to social dialogue, which is to lobby with governments to include a position for a trade union in ADD. ADD draft position report slated for October 2019; popularize the ADD report through media. • Promote African countries in the process ADD; "Nairobi process". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATUMNET conducted an advocacy campaign for the establishment of a Colombo-like process in Africa for the coordination of labour migration governance among the Member States. • Lobbied the African Union to engage the ADD to demand Africa's institutionalised participation. • Made several presentations on the need for the ADD to be reviewed/stocktaking as contained in the 2018 study³ conducted by ITUC-Africa on Africa Labour Migration to the GCC States. • In April 2022, we got a commitment from the Commissioner of Labour of Kenya that the African (labour migration governance) Process is on, and that Kenya is leading it and committed to ensuring that it will succeed. • SARTUC conducted advocacy for the cooperation between the governments of CoO and CoD through regional and international forums such as Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suggestion/advocacy for a Colombo-like process in Africa is gaining very high traction within the African Union and Member States' circles. • African countries (Kenya and Ethiopia) are now members of the ADD. • TU position will be addressed. • Established a sound relationship between Employees and employers. • Workers' right protected. • Social dialogue and the immersion of trade unions in the process at all levels are steadily gaining traction.
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³ <http://www.ituc-africa.org/STUDY-on-AFRICA-LABOUR-MIGRATION-TO-THE-GCC-STATES-THE-CASE-OF-GHANA-KENYA.html>

7	<p>Lobby for the inclusion of (Sub)-regional organizations in the existing labour migration social dialogue spaces and processes.</p> <p>(Action 7 and Action 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and implementation of Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLAs): e.g., Nepal – Malaysia Agreement (Africa-Qatar etc.); ASEAN consensus. Reporting and documenting the implementation of BLA's. Advocating for joint action by both sending and receiving countries to end forced labour and human trafficking in the labour migration supply chains and practices. Advocating for the establishment of a tripartite platform (SARTUC and SAFE and others). Push for formal recognition of (sub) regional organization in the social dialogue structure (ASEAN TUC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring implementation of Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLAs) agreement. Reporting and documenting the implementation of BLAs Advocating for joint action by both sending and receiving countries to end forced labour and human trafficking in the labour migration supply chains and practices Sharing and using the success example of formal recognition in the social dialogue structure (AU-LMAC). Continuing advocacy campaigns for the representation of workers through regional platforms such as SAARC and ASEAN. Conducted meeting of the TUCA's continental working group on migrants. TUCA presented the case of construction workers in Argentina, and domestic and mine workers in Panama. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITUC-Africa is a member of the African Union's Labour Migration Advisory Committee (AU-LMAC). Trade union participation in the AU-LMAC has contributed to better framing of labour migration issues and engagement on the African continent. Trade union reporting on forced labour practices on the continent is contributing to the "name and shame" tactics of fighting the menace. In Zimbabwe, Chinese companies and the Chinese Embassy in the country were forced to react to allegations of forced labour being used by Chinese firms operating in the country. 13 workers (10 females and 3 males) trafficked from Burkina Faso were assisted to successfully return home. 4 Bangladeshi workers trafficked to Togo were successfully rescued and repatriated home. Social dialogue and the immersion of trade unions in the process at all levels are steadily gaining traction.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing and using the success example of formal recognition in the social dialogue structure (LMAC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted inter-regional workshop on the convergence of Trade Union Cooperation on migrations.• Co-organised America's social Forum of Migrations which addressed issues such as gender, decent work, climate crisis, and the right to social inclusion and citizenship for migrants.• SARTUC has developed a network through social media such as Facebook and its organisational website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Asean TUC participated for the first time in the Virtual Open Session at the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW) Workshop and presented its priorities and proposals for partnering in their implementation (July 2020).• The Asean TUC is a member of the recently-formed ASEAN Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council whose work plan includes mutual recognition of skills and mobility of migrant workers from and within ASEAN.
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ORGANIZING

1	<p>Online complaint system</p> <p>(Action 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish (ASEAN, Africa, Arab TUC, TUCA and SARTUC) multilingual online complaint system to request assistance from the union. Collect complaints and mobilize and facilitate effective responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and awareness campaign amongst African migrant workers' communities in Qatar to take advantage of the judiciary mediation mechanism established by the government. Discussion has commenced on how to develop this. Specifically, ITUC-Africa, SARTUC and MFA with the support of the ILO Beirut Office are looking how to ensure this comes to fruition soon. The ITUC-Africa is involved in the wage theft campaign launched by MFA to address unpaid wages stolen from migrant workers hastily repatriated to their countries at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the MRA now has a section where migrant workers can safely submit their complaints. In collaboration with the ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme, the Asean TUC developed an online platform called ATUC Information System for Migrant Workers (ATIS) where focal points document and track the progress of migrant workers' complaints and inquiries about working overseas. ATIS 2.0, a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater accountability - Justice for migrant workers is being accelerated, which will contribute to the defeat of impunity. Wage theft has gained attention and traction as an issue that must be resolved and never allowed to happen again. Gradually, more migrant workers are beginning to access and utilise online mediation mechanisms. 256 complaints from Myanmar and the Philippines were recorded in ATIS 2.0. The complainants included 91 individuals (W:41; M:50) and 165 groups (W:303; M:617), affecting a total of 1,011 workers (W:344; M:667). Most complaints were from Myanmar (224 or 87.5%) with Filipinos being the second largest group (29 or 11.3%). About 56.6% (145) of complaints were about delays in deployment, 4.7% (12) were actual work being different from what was applied for, 4.3% (11) on termination of employment, and another 4.3% (11) were about undocumented workers. 84.7% (216) of the cases were resolved and monetary compensation was ordered in 67.7% (147) of the cases. The total amount of monetary compensation,
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Conclusion

This collaboration has once again attested to the efficacy of cooperation and the need to forge, maintain, and utilize it to advance common and mutual causes. The imperative of such a lesson was more felt and tangible during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic required a well-coordinated multilateral approach against the initial nationalistic, divisive, undemocratic, and narrow methods. Trade union organizations were able to quickly develop a typical response to the pandemic thanks to the existence and functionality of the collaboration. Of course, we quickly learnt the need to effectively insert migrant workers at the heart of the various responses we initiated.

In the same connection, several migrant workers are still hoping that they can get justice for the abuses they suffered in their host/destination countries. Most of them suffered forced detention, deportation and wage theft because of hurried and forced departures to their countries of origin. To ensure that no one is left behind in the COVID-19 recovery process, the collaborative organisations are working with other actors, notably Civil Society Organisations (Migrant Forum Asia), to advocate for fair and just accountable remedies, especially on wage theft. A global campaign on this is still ongoing.

Further, our joint efforts have also exposed the critical roles and relevance of labour migration and migrant workers to the growth of global prosperity. On this account, most female migrant workers, especially domestic workers that contribute largely to home care and social economy, remain largely “veiled” and continue to suffer more abuses and violations with limited remedies at their disposal.

We have noted that for our joint efforts to be sustainable and gain acceleration in the pace of the set goals, spaces for freedom of association for migrant workers need to be expanded and respected. When the right to freedom of association is undermined, deprived, and denied, other human and labour rights (freedom of expression, assembly, movement, sanctity of life, family, and access to a safe and healthy working environment) have lesser chances of being respected.

Ultimately, it is [migrant] workers that will stand up and defend their rights! In the interim, we continue to focus on improving the spaces to enjoy this right for migrant workers, especially in the Middle East. Yes, working-class solidarity shone through in the cause of our collaboration. It is so because we believe in the essence of our humanity, which is to care and look out for one another. An injury to one is an injury to all!

Finally, our collaboration has once again showed us the beauty and effectiveness of working-class unity and cohesion. Workers united cannot be defeated!

Appreciation

We wish to state outright that the effort to compile this simple report was to appreciate the contributions of the outgoing Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Mr Guy Ryder. He was a tireless champion for standards as tools to ensure protection for [migrant] workers, drive effective industrial relations and the attainment of fair and equitable distributive economic growth. Suffice to say that this compilation is our modest way of saying “thank you, Mr Guy Ryder, for your service, stewardship and support”.

We equally want to appreciate the tireless efforts and support of the ILO and ILO Bureau for Workers Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) staff. We are indebted to several of them, too many to count and recall by name. We thank you all for the great stuff you do every day, every time and everywhere. Thank you!