

## **Thai Trade Union Action Plan to Enhance the Protection of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families**

The Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT), Thai Trade Unions Council (TTUC), National Congress of Private Industrial Employees (NCPE) and the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) have been active in promoting labour rights protection for all workers in Thailand, regardless of their nationality.

On 20-21 February 2012, these unions and the ILO held a workshop on the role of trade unions in the protection of the rights of migrant workers. The workshop served as a forum to raise awareness on issues faced by migrant workers, including child labour and forced labour; and to promote cooperation with trade unions in countries of origin and other countries of destination.

The main outcome of the meeting was the development of an Action Plan for 2012-2013 based on the four pillars established by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). The Action Plan will be implemented with the support of the ILO TRIANGLE project<sup>1</sup>, the IPEC project<sup>2</sup> and the ILO Regional Specialist on Workers' Activities.

**Development of a Joint Policy on the Role of Trade Unions in the Protection of Migrant Workers:** The Phuket Declaration, adopted by the trade unions in 2005, will be updated in line with the group discussions at the workshop.

### **Pillar 1: Promoting a Rights-Based Migration Policy**

1. Play a proactive role in the Committee Considering Alien Workers under the Alien Employment Act 2008 and the National Committee on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour
2. Submit joint proposals to amend laws and policies on labour migration, child labour, labour rights, social protection for migrant workers, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Sub-region from Labour Exploitation. The project is a five-year initiative (2010-2015) funded by the Australian Government Aid Program (AusAID).

<sup>2</sup> Combatting the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Shrimp and Seafood Processing Areas in Thailand. The project's target areas include Samut Sakhorn, Surat Thani and Songkhla. The project runs from 2010 to 2014.

3. Promote ratification of ILO Convention 87 and Convention 98, and the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining for migrant workers
4. Promote ratification of the migration conventions (ILO Convention 97, ILO Convention 143, UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families)

### **Pillar 2: Networking**

1. Build networks between Thai trade unions and unions of countries of origin<sup>3</sup>, by signing an MOU, sharing information, putting forward joint approaches to migration management and rights protection, and holding regular meetings and ad hoc meetings on specific issues
2. Use the internet and social networking to enhance communication among the trade unions in Thailand and also with trade union in countries of origin
3. Build links between trade unions and NGOs working with migrant community in order to improve the responsiveness of unions to the needs of migrant workers, and promote trade union membership
4. Promote greater regional cooperation on migration and migrant worker issues through the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour and the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC)

### **Pillar 3: Organizing and Outreach**

1. Provide support services to women, men and child migrants through the Migrant Worker Resource Centre (MRC) in the LCT/TTUC office in Samut Prakan<sup>4</sup>
2. Establish mobile help-desks and hotlines to provide information and assistance to workplaces in which migrant workers are present
3. Identify and train women and men migrant leaders to improve outreach to migrant communities
4. Organize migrants and Thais in enterprises without trade union presence
5. Form sub-committees of migrant workers within TTUC/LCT and NCPE to more effectively represent migrant workers and respond to their specific needs

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<sup>3</sup> Beginning with the Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Federation of Trade Unions – Burma (FTUB), Seafarers' Union of Burma (SUB) and later with the Cambodian trade unions.

<sup>4</sup> The MRC opened in February 2012 with support from the ILO TRIANGLE project.

#### **Pillar 4: Advocacy and Education**

1. Provide education and knowledge for migrant workers and union members about migrants' rights, safety at work, child labour, forced labour, etc.
2. Support a campaign for occupational safety and health and Safe Work for Thai workers, migrant workers with special attention on the protection of young workers
3. Organize special events for migrant workers, including cultural events – e.g. on May Day and International Migrants Day (December 18)
4. Mobilize and train young Thai trade unionists on migration, child labour, forced labour, OSH and other relevant issues
5. Advocate with employers and others to set up child care centres within the workplace – a common cause for migrants and Thai workers
6. Collaborate with vocational training centres to provide language and skills training to migrant workers