

**Forum:** Special Conference (SPC)

**Question of:** Implementing measures to protect the rights of migrant workers

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## Introduction

With the world becoming more globalized, there has been an increase in citizens leaving their homes in search of employment. Migrant workers are highly significant to the global economy, as they do not only contribute to the economies of their destination countries, but also help enhance the economies of their countries of origin through the remittances they send home. For instance, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that there were 169 million international migrant workers in 2019, who constituted 4.9 percent of the global labor force in destination countries.<sup>1</sup> However, while these migrant workers are highly vulnerable to a myriad of risks and dangerous working conditions, they fail to receive adequate social protection. Denied equal rights as national workers, migrant workers often experience major exploitation, discrimination, harassment, and human trafficking in their destination countries. As these migrant workers are highly important to the economy of the world as a whole, it is incredibly crucial to ensure the protection of their fundamental rights.

In the status quo, there are several factors that cause individuals to cross borders for employment and income in rising numbers. Migrants often leave their communities primarily due to unprecedented changes in demographic patterns, including birth and death rates, as well as extreme poverty and a lack of employment opportunities in their countries of origin. On top of these factors, other drivers of worker migration include unfavorable political conditions, natural calamities, large family-size, and low wages.

Because of all these factors, migrant workers relocate themselves and search for jobs in countries where there is high economic growth and a strong demand for labor, seeking to receive higher income while fulfilling labor shortages. However, this does not always mean that migrants move from less economically developed countries (LEDCs) to higher-income countries. In fact, the World Economic Forum suggests that approximately half of all migrant workers would rather move among developing countries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers," 2021.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_808935.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Migration Can Support Economic Development." World Economic Forum, n.d.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/migration-myths-vs-economic-facts>.

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Regardless of the countries they move to, many migrant workers face heightened risks in host countries, compared to non-migrant workers. This is because migrant workers are likely to receive jobs in the informal economy, consisting of economic activities where workers are not protected or regulated by the state. In addition, migrant workers are also overrepresented in highly dangerous jobs within sectors such as construction, mining, and agriculture, and manufacturing.<sup>3</sup> With these jobs, migrant workers work longer hours for lower wages than domestic workers, and are subject to violations of their rights, including abuse and exploitation. This is especially detrimental to undocumented migrants who lack work authorization, or the approval to work in certain sectors of their host countries, as they encounter more risks regarding the loss of their jobs.<sup>4</sup> Many of the health risks that migrant workers face can be largely attributed to environmental hazards in their occupational setting. Also, in light of the global pandemic, the migrant workers' living and working conditions make them more exposed to the contraction of COVID-19, which can still pose a threat to their health as well.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, the pandemic has also made migration more difficult for these workers trying to get both in and out of their countries of origin, considering border closures in many countries.

In order to protect the rights of migrant workers, there have been several measures taken in the past. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) was adopted in 1990 by the UN General Assembly as a comprehensive approach to protect the migrant workers' fundamental rights, setting international standards for the treatment and welfare of migrants in spite of their status.<sup>6</sup> The Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families from 2013 to 2016 has also served the purpose of “developing and strengthening national labor laws, migration policies, and recruitment regulations and practices that are oriented towards achieving decent work for migrant domestic workers.”<sup>7</sup> This especially had a focus on female migrant workers, who are often subject to bigger risks, taking into account the feminization of labor migration in past decades. The 2017 ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers established a framework for cooperation in protecting migrant workers in both sending and receiving nations of ASEAN. It also aimed to ensure the treatment of migrants throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> “Occupational Fatalities among International Migrant Workers.” Occupational Fatalities among International Migrant Workers, n.d. <https://publications.iom.int/books/occupational-fatalities-among-international-migrant-workers>.

<sup>4</sup> “Migrant Workers Face Heightened Risk of Death and Injury: New Iom Report.” International Organization for Migration, n.d. <https://www.iom.int/news/migrant-workers-face-heightened-risk-death-and-injury-new-iom-report>.

<sup>5</sup> “Migrant Workers and Their Occupational Health and Safety - Annual Reviews,” n.d. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040617-013714>.

<sup>6</sup> “International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.” OHCHR, n.d. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers>.

<sup>7</sup> Commission, European. “Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and Their Families.” Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families, September 30, 2013. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/projects/WCMS\\_222567/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/projects/WCMS_222567/lang--en/index.htm).

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entire migration process of a migrant worker, including recruitment, as well as entry into and departure from their countries.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established in 2015, Goal 8, “Decent Work and Economic Growth,” has included “Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment” as Target 8.8 of the goal.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates the importance of also protecting the rights of migrant workers, other than those of national workers only.

Despite past efforts to sustain the rights of migrant workers, the number of these workers are only expected to rise in the future, which calls for an urgent need to further ensure their protection. In fact, over the past ten years, migrant workers represented 47% of the increase in the United States workforce and 70% of Europe’s workforce.<sup>10</sup> If migrant workers face constant human rights violations and are not able to perform their work to the fullest, this could lead to an adverse impact on the economy of not only one country, but the world as a whole, as migration is a process that involves several nations. Although migrant workers have long been contributing to the economies of both their country of origin and country of destination, they still lack social security and experience severe mistreatment up to this day. Under these circumstances, it is in the committee’s interest to construct fervent measures to protect the rights of migrant workers worldwide. As this agenda requires the efforts of both migrant sending and receiving nations, this long-standing issue can only be effectively tackled with global cooperation and strong bonds of unity.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Migrant Worker**

According to Article 2(1) of the ICRMW, a migrant worker is “a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, they move about from one nation to another, for the specific purpose of employment or exercising an economic activity.<sup>12</sup> A migrant worker is not the same as an immigrant, who always crosses an international border, looking for permanent residency in another country. There has been an increasing

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<sup>8</sup> “ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of ...,” n.d.

<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ASEAN-Consensus-on-the-Protection-and-Promotion-of-the-Rights-of-Migrant-Workers1.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> “Sustainable Development Goals: United Nations Development Programme.” UNDP, n.d. <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>.

<sup>10</sup> “World Employment and Social Outlook | Trends 2022,” n.d.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_834081.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_834081.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> “Migrant Worker.” Migration and Home Affairs, n.d. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/migrant-worker\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/migrant-worker_en).

<sup>12</sup> Directorate, OECD Statistics. OECD Glossary of statistical terms - foreign migrant workers definition, n.d. <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1047>.

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number of migrant workers globally, yet because of the unsafe working conditions and rights violations they continue to encounter today, it is evermore important to provide proper protection.

### **Country of Origin**

The country of origin, under the context of migration and this agenda, is the country of former habitual residence or country of nationality of a person or group of people who have migrated abroad.<sup>13</sup> The country of origin for many migrant workers are developing countries that have major issues with extreme poverty and a lack of employment opportunities, which are the main drivers of migration and the ongoing increase in the number of migrant workers.<sup>14</sup>

### **Country of Destination**

The country of destination is the country in which migrant workers move to from their country of origin. The country of origin for many migrant workers are countries that have high economic development and demand for human labor. The largest number of international migrants in 2020 resided in Europe, with a total of 87 million,<sup>15</sup> but workers do not always migrate from developing to developed countries, but also to other developing countries. It is in the countries of destination where migrant workers face high risks of exploitation, discrimination, and hazardous working conditions that negatively impacts their standard of living.

### **Undocumented Migrants**

The United Nations Population Division defines undocumented migrants as “individuals who enter a country often in search of employment without the required documents or permits, or who overstay the authorized length of stay in the country.”<sup>16</sup> Undocumented migrants are not referred to as illegale migrants, but because they do not have work authorization in their countries of destination, undocumented migrants are less likely to receive adequate social protection and are even more vulnerable to risks and mistreatment.

### **Remittances**

Remittances are private international transfers of money that migrants individually or collectively make. Migrants send back part of their earnings back to their country of origin in order to support their families. For many developing countries, they have represented the largest source of foreign income.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Key Migration Terms.” International Organization for Migration, n.d. <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>.

<sup>14</sup> “Causes and Impact of Labor Migration: A Case Study of ... - Core.ac.uk,” n.d. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6653126.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> “International Migration 2020 Highlights.” United Nations. United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/en/desa/international-migration-2020-highlights>.

<sup>16</sup> “Annex 2 Definitions of Labor Migrants - NCBI Bookshelf,” n.d. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK379428/>.

<sup>17</sup> Ratha, Dilip, and DILIP RATHA is head of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development and lead economist. What Are Remittances?, n.d. <https://www.imf.org/external/Pubs/FT/fandd/basics/76-remittances.htm>.

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However, if migrants do not receive adequate wages for their work, this could have a detrimental effect on migrant workers' families who are reliant on them.<sup>18</sup>

### **Reintegration**

Reintegration is a process that enables returning migrant workers to regain their physical, social, and legal security necessary to maintaining life, livelihood and dignity.<sup>19</sup> Reintegration is important, given that many migrant workers face challenges adjusting themselves back into their societies. They may face sociocultural issues, or have trouble integrating back into the labor market, educational system, and more. While protecting the rights of migrant workers, it is not only crucial to consider these rights while they are working abroad, but also while migrants are returning back to their countries of origin after completing their work abroad.<sup>20</sup>

### **Xenophobia**

Xenophobia refers to attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject or exclude individuals, based on the perception that they foreigners to the community, society or national identity.<sup>21</sup> With a rise in migrant workers across the world, there is also an increase in xenophobia within countries of destination, which exacerbates discrimination towards migrant workers, discouraging the protection of their rights.<sup>22</sup>

## **Timeline of Key Events**

### **1949 - Migration for Employment Convention**

The ILO established the Migration for Employment Convention, endorsing member states to guarantee specific rights to migrant workers, such as “free and adequate employment assistance, facilitation of departure, journey and arrival of migrants, access to medical services, equal treatment of migrant workers in terms of labor rights, right to remain in the destination country in cases of injury or illness, freedom to transfer and savings abroad.”<sup>23</sup> This was one of the first key conventions in which the ILO explicitly focuses on migrant workers, rather than labor rights as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “International Migrant Remittances - OECD,” n.d. <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/38840502.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> “Regional Study on Late Birth Registration, Issuance,” n.d. <https://www.refworld.org/es/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> “Regional Study on Green Jobs Policy Readiness in ASEAN,” n.d.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_810078.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_810078.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> “World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and ...,” n.d.

[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban\\_text\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban_text_en.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> “International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia - Refworld,” n.d. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/49353b4d2.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> “CMW Timeline.” Step It Up: Dignity. Rights. Development, n.d. [https://cmw25.org/?page\\_id=33](https://cmw25.org/?page_id=33)

<sup>24</sup> Convention C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), n.d. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB>.

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### **August 14, 1978 - August 25, 1978 - First World Conference Against Racism in Geneva**

First World Conference Against Racism in Geneva was organized by the The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), aiming to address racism and discrimination.<sup>25</sup> An important part of this conference was that it addressed xenophobia and its impact on migrant workers, and improved the protection of their rights through an international convention.

### **December 18, 1998 - The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)**

The ICRMW was a significant international convention in regards to this agenda, as it expanded migrant workers and members of their families additional rights, particularly in terms of employment and treatment on an equal footing with nationals of their destination countries. Another important aspect of this convention is that it ensured the protection of fundamental rights for all migrant workers regardless of their status, by guaranteeing rights for undocumented migrant workers who face higher challenges compared to documented ones.<sup>26</sup>

### **September 2006 - United Nations First High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development**

The United Nations General Assembly held the first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which was a major milestone in fostering international cooperation on migration. It explored methods for examining the advantages of migration for development.<sup>27</sup> These multilateral talks are highly significant as nations better understand how migrant workers positively contribute to development, which called for a more urgent need to ensure the protection of their rights.

### **September 15, 2008 - September 16, 2008 - First ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor**

The first ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor tripartite platform addressed issues faced by migrant workers from and within the ASEAN region, with additional involvement of civil society organizations.<sup>28</sup> This set the foundation for the subsequent ASEAN Forums on Migrant Labor, and as of today, there are 14 of them, each of which have different themes in improving the protection of migrant workers' rights.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "First World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination." United Nations. United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/racism/geneva1978>.

<sup>26</sup> "Situation Report." The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families | Situation Report, n.d.

<https://sitreport.unescap.org/protection-rights-migrant-workers/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers-and>.

<sup>27</sup> "First High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development | Population Division." United Nations. United Nations, n.d.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/events/first-high-level-dialogue-international-migration-and-development>.

<sup>28</sup> "Worker, Helper, Auntie, Maid? - International Labor Organization," n.d.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_537808.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_537808.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> "The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor." TRIANGLE in ASEAN: The ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor, September 2, 2021.

[https://www.ilo.org/asia/WCMS\\_214213/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/WCMS_214213/lang-en/index.htm).

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With the increase in migrant workers within Southeast Asian countries, this was an important event in protecting their rights.

### **February 1, 2013 - July 31, 2016 - Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families**

The Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families uses an evidence-based and policy-oriented approach to protect the rights of migrant workers, focusing on ten countries through five main migration corridors, including Ukraine-Poland, Zimbabwe-South Africa, Indonesia-Malaysia, Nepal-Lebanon, and Paraguay-Argentina.<sup>30</sup> It is also highly significant due to how it takes into account female migrant workers, who are frequently exposed to greater hazards compared to male migrants. Considering how a large number of migrant workers are female, this programme was important in the protection of female migrant workers' rights.

### **2015 - Ongoing - Sustainable Development Goals**

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly set 17 goals to be achieved by the year 2030, called the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>31</sup> Goal #8 is titled “Decent Work and Economic Growth,” and its mission is to “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.”<sup>32</sup> While addressing sustained and inclusive economic growth, the violations of migrant workers' rights have always been an important issue of concern, and thus, this suggests that in order to improve living standards, the rights of migrant workers need to be protected, besides that of national workers only.

### **December 2019 - Ongoing - COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Coronavirus disease, known as COVID-19, is a highly infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and has become a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is a crucial event to consider for this agenda, as it was highly detrimental to migrant workers' rights. The pandemic did not only cause countries to close their national borders, which makes migration a lot more difficult, but it also had a profound negative impact on the global economy, disrupting the flow of remittances and the transfers of money made by migrant workers. The living and working situations of migrant workers also increase their risk of contracting COVID-19, which is a threat to their health.

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<sup>30</sup> “Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and Their Families - ILO: Global Forum on Migration and Development.” Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families - ILO | Global Forum on Migration and Development, n.d. <http://www.gfmd.org/pfp/ppd/2161>.

<sup>31</sup> “The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development.” United Nations. United Nations, n.d. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

<sup>32</sup> “Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8).” United Nations Western Europe, June 29, 2020. <https://unric.org/en/sdg-8/>.

## Position of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies

### **International Labor Organization (ILO)**

ILO is a United Nations agency founded in 1919 that aims to promote social and economic justice, as well as decent work for all individuals by setting international labor standards. The ILO's tripartite system also allows equal voice to workers, employers, and governments, in order to ensure that the interests of the social partners are closely represented in labor standards and in forming policies and programs.<sup>33</sup> With many previous efforts to protect migrant workers worldwide, including the The Global Action Programme on Migrant Domestic Workers and their Families, the ILO is an influential body that can continue to help protect migrant workers' rights.

### **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

IOM, established in 1951, is the principal intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working in four areas of migration management, such as migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. Working closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners, IOM aims to protect migrant workers through the promotion of international migration law, policy discussion and advice, the defense of migrants' rights, migration health, the gender aspect of migration, and more. IOM is a significant body that promotes cooperation of efforts on international migration issues.<sup>34</sup>

### **World Bank**

The World Bank's involvement in international migration is concentrated on how migration and remittances affect developing nations' economies. Up until now, the main emphasis has been on gathering trustworthy data and expanding on the knowledge about the possible advantages and disadvantages of migration, even at the household level. The World Bank has also been working on reducing the cost of remittances and seeking towards better channeling of these resources, being actively engaged in addressing issues of international migration.<sup>35</sup>

### **Myanmar**

Myanmar is a developing country in which people have long used migration as a survival strategy for protection and livelihood, and has many migrant workers abroad, especially in other countries within the Southeast Asian region. However, on top of struggles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021

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<sup>33</sup> "About the ILO," n.d. <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> "Who We Are." International Organization for Migration, n.d. <https://www.iom.int/who-we-are>.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Global Migration Group." UNHCR, n.d. <https://www.unhcr.org/global-migration-group.html>.

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military coup in Myanmar has had a negative impact on migrant workers. Under military rule, many people trying to leave the country for work abroad face more obstacles, such as encountering bureaucratic delays and state-imposed barriers. Additionally, with the failing economy of the country, the 4.25 million Myanmar migrants living overseas are under more pressure to send higher remittances home to their families.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, this suggests that protecting migrant workers are highly crucial for countries like Myanmar, in the midst of political and economic instability.

### **Thailand**

Thailand is the country of destination for many of its neighboring countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. Regardless, studies have revealed severe human rights violations of foreign migrant workers in Thailand, such as worker exploitation, physical assault, forced labor, and the denial of freedom of movement. In Thailand, 82% of migrant domestic workers and 45% of young migrants working on fishing boats stated they were required to work for more than 12 hours per day and often seven days per week, yet despite the rigorous amount of work, the majority of workers were paid below the legal minimum wage.<sup>37</sup> Hence, it is clear that the rights of migrant workers need to be protected and sustained in destination countries like Thailand.

### **United States of America**

The United States of America is one of the most popular countries of destination for migrant workers worldwide, consisting of 28.5 foreign workers.<sup>38</sup> Although there are immigration laws and policies that protect the rights of migrant workers, they have not been put into effect. In 2020, it was noted that more than 7 million undocumented workers were employed by employers who were aware of their legal status. The current Biden administration acknowledged the importance of these employees for the nation's recovery after the pandemic, but neglected the measures put in place to protect these workers from poor wages and excessive working hours. In fact, 37% of illegal workers have worked for wages that are below the minimum wage and 76% have worked for no wages at all.<sup>39</sup> In a country like the United States whose workforce is made up of a large number of migrant workers, it is incredibly necessary to protect these workers' rights.

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<sup>36</sup> Editor, Focaal Web. "Khin Thazin and Stephen Campbell: How the Myanmar Coup Has Impacted Migrant Workers Abroad." FocaalBlog, June 7, 2022.

<https://www.focaalblog.com/2022/06/07/khin-thazin-and-stephen-campbell-how-the-myanmar-coup-has-impacted-migrant-workers-abroad/>.

<sup>37</sup> "More than 68 per Cent of the Employed Population in Asia-Pacific Are in the Informal Economy," May 2, 2018.

[https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_627585/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/asia/media-centre/news/WCMS_627585/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>38</sup> "Immigrants in the United States." American Immigration Council, September 21, 2021.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-the-united-states>.

<sup>39</sup> Ia-Forum.org. How the United States violates the rights of Undocumented Workers - International Affairs Forum, n.d.

[https://www.ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternal\\_Document.cfm?contenttype\\_id=5&ContentID=9267](https://www.ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternal_Document.cfm?contenttype_id=5&ContentID=9267)

### **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

The United Arab Emirates is another popular destination country for many migrant workers, yet these migrant workers often face serious violations of their rights. Although foreign nationals account for more than 88.5 percent of the UAE's population, the UAE labor law does not provide protection for migrant workers who are subject to a variety of risks including unpaid salaries, long work hours without breaks, and physical or sexual assault by employers.<sup>40</sup> Despite several reforms to increase domestic worker protection in 2017, migrant workers in the UAE still remain vulnerable. Additionally, while authorities recently set out new fixed salaries for migrant workers, these salaries discriminate by nationality. With a large population of foreign migrant workers, the UAE is another country that requires attention in protecting their rights.

### **Suggested Solutions**

The number of migrant workers is expected to rise due to various reasons, including the declining labor population, the continued rise of globalization, and the increasing economic gap between and within countries. Moreover, the worldwide flow of labor is seen as beneficial for both migrant sending and receiving countries with appropriate responses at the international and regional levels. However, the current situation is far from ideal in the case of migrant workers, due to the many forms of exploitation and unpleasant working conditions they still have to endure. Thus, there is an urgent need to improve upon past efforts and devise new solutions to tackle the issue at hand.

In order to protect the rights of migrant workers and fully address the issue, delegates must consider the diverse factors that are associated with it and devise strategies in which migrant worker rights can be sustained globally. While crafting solutions, delegates should also ensure that migrant workers are protected throughout their entire migration journey, whether it be before, during, or after their migration to a destination country. The lack of migrant worker rights is a highly complex and multifaceted issue, which means that there can be many aspects taken into account for possible solutions.

Before their departure from their country of origin to country of destination, migrant workers are often unaware of the dangers and risks they might encounter after leaving the borders. Without migrant workers being informed about what challenges they could face themselves, they are subject to even more violations of their rights, as they would tend to endure more exploitation and unjust acts in their host countries. With this considered, delegates should devise measures to create educational opportunities for

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<sup>40</sup> "World Report 2019: Rights Trends in the United Arab Emirates." Human Rights Watch, May 24, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>.

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migrant workers so that they are fully aware of their surroundings in their host country, as well as the migration process. It is crucial for nations to ensure that migrant workers gain an understanding of the risks, yet also the benefits of migration and working abroad. With such education, migrant workers can also acquire better jobs, as they have gained more country-specific information on their countries.

Moreover, each country has their own laws and regulations that ensure the protection of migrant worker rights, preventing these workers from many risks, including exploitation, poor working conditions, insufficient wages, forms of violence and more. However, in many countries, laws made for migrant workers have not been followed or obeyed. Also, as mentioned previously, there have also been several international conventions that set frameworks for countries to cooperate with one another in protecting migrant worker rights. However, despite the whole array of agreements on an international scale, the rights of migrant workers are becoming more flouted or disregarded as the number of these workers rise. To address this, governments should improve existing laws and ensure that they strictly adhere to them. Governments also need to have the political will to ratify them and, most importantly, make sure they are respected within their borders. Because appropriate standards already exist, it is not highly necessary for governments to enact new laws, but it is crucial for them to make sure that already existing laws are altered and updated so that migrant rights are respected. These laws should also ensure that the rights of migrant workers are protected the same way that of non-migrant national workers are. While doing so, it is also important that governments comply and act in accordance with the ILO's labor standards for migrant workers, to ensure that their rights have been protected effectively. Accountability measures can also be put in place for nations that have ratified conventions and treaties, but have not implemented much in their countries.

Another issue of concern when it comes to the protection of migrant worker rights is related to undocumented migrants. For many migrant workers, there are barriers in accessing migration documentation, regarding residence permit and the authorization to work, making them susceptible to higher risks in their host countries. A way that this could potentially be addressed is streamlining the legal processes before the departure of migrants, by reducing the required paperwork and eliminating redundant bureaucratic phases. This will decrease the number of undocumented migrants as it incentivizes migrants to relocate themselves safely through legal channels, positively changing the legal status of many migrant workers, which will reduce risks such as exploitation, abuse, and low wages. With the COVID-19 pandemic still existing until today, this could also make it easier for many migrant workers to leave their countries to work abroad with the authorization to work in their host countries.

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It is also crucial for delegates to consider that a migrant worker's journey does not end immediately after their return to their countries of origin after working abroad. It is still the nation's responsibility to help these migrants reintegrate back into their societies after working in a foreign country for a certain amount of time. As migrant workers return, they may face problems with social adjustment, integration into the educational system, and integration into the labor market. Many of them also lack community support and have trouble searching for new associates or friends. To address this, governments, in partnerships with non-governmental organizations and private firms, should establish reintegration programs or strengthen existing ones. This would not only foster sustainable reintegration for migrant workers, but also give them support in regaining their social and cultural characteristics necessary to maintaining their livelihoods after they return back to their countries of origin.

Furthermore, xenophobia has been an issue in the majority of migrant host countries, and the prejudice against individuals who seem to be foreigners are necessary to take into account in the context of migration and this agenda. In their countries of destination, migrant workers abroad have long faced discrimination in their workplaces, making them vulnerable to more risks. With the increasing number of migrant workers around the world, there is also a huge rise in xenophobia, which discourages individuals from host countries to fervently implement measures that protect migrant worker rights. In order to tackle this issue, delegates should come up with solutions on a national scale to reduce xenophobia and discrimination against migrant workers. They should address stereotypes and concerns facing migrant workers in host countries, and devise measures to share general information about migration to further spread awareness and inform citizens to prevent discrimination on a societal level. Delegates can also have a focus in spreading awareness about female migrant workers, who face more hardships compared to male migrants throughout the migration process. In many host countries, females are subject to higher risks as migrant workers and often encounter more violence, abuse, sexual assault, and exploitation. Thus, reducing these risks for female migrant workers and the protection of their rights should be an aspect of consideration in constructing solutions to this agenda.

As the world becomes more globalized and migrant labor is on the rise more than ever, it becomes more crucial that the international community has their attention on migrant worker rights. With migrant workers playing a huge role in economic development and significantly contributing to the global economy, it is incredibly important to ensure the protection of their rights through their entire process of migration. Although there has been a series of fervent measures implemented previously to protect their rights on both the national and international scale, it can be said without a doubt that migrant workers still face a myriad of risks while working abroad and there still remains a need to effectively tackle this issue

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at hand. The government alone cannot be devising measures to protect migrant worker rights; they must also cooperate with the private sector and civil society in combating this issue, while both migrant sending and receiving nations merge with each other. A truly effective response to this issue, and a highly constructive one, must include the efforts of all member nations, as well as all sectors of governance within those nations, with powerful bonds of unity.

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