



Asia Pacific Alliance
FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS



arrow
Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation
Forum



COALITION OF ASIA PACIFIC
REGIONAL NETWORKS ON
HIV/AIDS



Mekong Migration Network (MMN)

CSO STATEMENT:

MIGRATION, HEALTH AND RIGHTS, INCLUDING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

For the Civil Society Interactive Hearings and the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013

New York, 15 July and 3-4 October 2013

This statement is made by Asia-Pacific regional networks on behalf of civil society organisations and migrant workers:

Considering that migrant workers support themselves, their families and communities; that countries of origin, transit and destination receive significant economic benefits from migrant workers' labor and remittances; and that sustainable development is not possible without securing the health and rights of migrants, it is unconscionable that governments consider migrants' health and well-being as conditional, by either providing limited health services or through policies that deport migrants based on their health status.

Migrants leave home healthy and strong, but many return home in poor health. They may suffer from injury due to a workplace accident or due to violence, be weakened from fatigue or malnutrition, contract a contagious disease, suffer from an untreated health condition, or may die. These are the results of inequitable working conditions, loose monitoring systems, and discriminatory policies.

As approximately half of migrant workers from Asian countries are female, with many going into occupations that limit their liberty and may compromise their health, such as domestic work, the gender aspects and impacts of migration need to be considered. Special considerations need to be taken to prevent sexual harassment, violence and sexual abuse in and outside of the workplace, and to promote equitable access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.

In order to promote and secure the health and well-being of migrant workers, and thereby harness the benefits of migration and minimise its negative impacts, we call on member States and international organisations to affirm commitments made globally and regionally, including agreed conclusions made at the recent 46th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, and to take these issues forward to the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in October 2013 and all discussions related to the post-2015 development agenda.

We would like to propose the establishment and strengthening of migrant-friendly, gender-sensitive and rights-based policies and mechanisms at countries of origin, transit, destination and return to ensure the following:

- Migrant workers receive standard labour conditions as per laws and policies for nationals, ensuring fair wages, stipulated working hours and proper rest, maternity, paternity and sick leaves, and provision of proper occupational safety and health and social protection measures;
- The right to health is upheld by providing migrants universal health coverage, including equitable access to non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive and free or affordable health information, services, facilities, commodities and treatment;

- Lifting of any discriminatory policies based on health status, including HIV status and pregnancy, that may affect immigration, travel or employment status of migrants, or that impede their ability to access health services and treatment in the country where they are currently residing;
- Respect and affirm migrants' sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular for migrant women and girls, including but not limited to equitable access to rights-based, comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health information and services, which include comprehensive sexuality education, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV, provision of choice of full range of modern contraceptive methods, maternal health and safe abortion services, prevention and early detection and referrals for diseases of the reproductive systems, such as breast and cervical cancers, as well as prevention and addressing the consequences of gender-based and sexual violence, at all stages of the migration cycle;
- Policies and programmes are informed by evidence, through the consideration of population and migration trends and projections, development of rights-based migrant health indicators, and collection and analysis of disaggregated data, including for sexual and reproductive health and rights, while respecting the privacy of individuals and taking into account legal and ethical standards; and
- The empowerment of migrants, regardless of migration status, to make choices and decisions that affirm their human rights, bodily integrity, right to health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights at all stages of the migration cycle, through education and life-skills programmes; and ensuring inclusive and meaningful involvement of migrants, CSOs and unions as active partners in all matters related to migration.

This statement is endorsed by the following regional networks:

1. *Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA)*
2. *Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)*
3. *Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)*
4. *Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM-Asia)*
5. *Coalition of Asia-Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (Seven Sisters)*
6. *Mekong Migration Network (MMN)*