

RCRC Manila Conference on Labor Migration

12-13 May 2015

Introduction

Over the past decade, the number of people leaving their home countries to seek work and a better life overseas has risen at a dramatic rate. Poverty, security, conflict and a simple human desire to build better futures are among the key drivers behind this modern-day phenomenon. Worldwide, there is an estimated 232 million migrant workers living outside their home countries. Of these workers, 1 in 5 people are engaged in domestic work; and of all domestic workers, some 43.2 million or almost all of them are women.

Labor migration however is not just an issue of people movement. It intersects with human rights, the protection of dignity, and access to health, development, education and freedom from fear. The increase in labor migration is accompanied by a rise in exploitation and other abusive labor practices by employers and employment agencies. As the demand for cheap labor continues to entice millions of young men and women into potentially risky scenarios, humanitarian agencies are confronted with a clear need to support states in providing protection and support to labor migrant communities.

Given the visibility of these issues in society and in the media, there is consensus among governments and other stakeholders including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, on the need to work together to address social protections under relevant labor laws, and to strengthen policy frameworks. There is also a need to provide

programs which protect the rights, reduce vulnerabilities and support the best interest of migrant laborers, particularly the most vulnerable female domestic workers.

To achieve this, strengthened partnerships within and across countries are needed in order to ensure the working experience for foreign workers in host countries is good, fair and beneficial for all parties concerned.

The RCRC Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015

The inaugural Manila Conference on Labor Migration will take place over two days in Manila, the Philippines, from 12-13 May 2015. The event will bring together a diverse collection of experts and interested parties from specialist international organizations, aid agencies, local non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions. The conference will provide a forum for discussions about labor migration with a specific focus on female domestic workers. Representatives from Ministries of Labor and Foreign Affairs are also invited to participate in the hope that their presence will encourage greater discussion and local and inter-regional collaboration between the authorities and the humanitarian sector.



The RCRC Manila Conference on Labor Migration in May 2015 is part of a series of migration-related events that are under the umbrella of the Doha Dialogue on Migration 2014. The Doha Dialogue began in May 2014, and was followed by the Regional Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue in Yangon 2015.

A series of presentations and panel discussions will explore the various issues relating to the humanitarian aspects of labour migration as well as the matter of partnerships and networking among the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Other topics for discussion will include the use of modern technology to better protect migrant workers, and the next steps needed to ensure the working experience for migrant workers overseas is fair and humane.

Specific objectives of the 2-day event include:

1. Strengthen collaboration and partnership for the protection of labor migrants, with a specific focus on female domestic workers, by bringing together experts across Asia Pacific and the Middle East North Africa.
2. Identify current challenges faced by female domestic workers, and best practices to reduce their vulnerability, with the aim of strengthening humanitarian services for labor migrants.
3. Advocate more strongly for the protection of migrant's rights and access for humanitarian support in both sending and receiving countries.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network. The Movement is neutral and impartial, and provides protection and assistance to people affected by disasters and conflicts. The Movement is comprised of three main bodies: the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 189 member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including the Philippine Red Cross Society (PRCS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

.....

For further questions and information on the RCRC Manila Conference 2015 please visit the website <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/migration/> and contact either Gwendolyn Pang, Philippine Red Cross Secretary General at gwendolyn.pang@redcross.org.ph or Anne E Leclerc, Head of the IFRC South-East Asia Regional Delegation at anne.leclerc@ifrc.org