

# Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015

Focus on the most vulnerable:  
Women Household Service Workers



## Letter from the Chairman Richard Gordon



Migration is one of the biggest issues hounding the world today. Not only is it one of the biggest, but it is also one of the oldest issues, dating back during the time of Moses when he led the Jews out of Egypt to escape persecution by the Pharaoh. Throughout the world's history, migration has always been happening usually brought about by wars, persecution and poverty. In Asia, the Chinese migrated to Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Korea and to other countries in the region because of the persecutions and wars in their homeland. During the time of the Apartheid in Africa, a large number of the non-white South African population were shipped out and sold as slaves. Through migration too, new countries have been born or discovered. The mighty country that is now America was populated by migrants from Europe and elsewhere. Likewise, after the Philippines was discovered by the

West, it also became the object of invasions and migrations.

Even today, migration is still often brought about by wars, persecutions and poverty. People leave their homeland to escape internal conflicts or even war with other nations. Likewise, poverty also drive them into seeking greener pastures. Often, migration, especially illegal migration bring about more problems, though there is also a positive side to it. Worldwide, stories about migrants facing legal prosecution in various host countries, migrant workers being abused, maltreated, violated or raped often make the headlines.

Today, the woeful plight of migrants, particularly the 52 million women working as household service workers who are most vulnerable to abuse, maltreatment and other violations, compel the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to focus on the issue. In 2009 we created the migration policy in Kenya, today it is time that we take a constructive step towards alleviating the suffering of these migrant workers. We must do our duty as Red Cross and Red Crescent – we must make sure that we protect those who cannot protect themselves. We have no business being in the Red Cross Red Crescent if we cannot do that to our fellow men and women, for the vulnerable. These are tenets of the Red Cross, protect the vulnerable, alleviate human suffering, uplift human dignity. If Henri Dunant demanded rules in war, we can demand, we can commit ourselves to rules in migration.

RICHARD J. GORDON  
Chairman  
Philippine Red Cross

# Letter from the Secretary General Elhadj As Sy



The Manila Conference was an opportunity to reflect on and discuss the scope and complexity of labour migration. It was a chance for us to come together, as a Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and as a network of partners, to explore how we could do more to support people who face daily exploitation, discrimination and xenophobia.

We learned that there are an estimated 232 million labour migrants, including about 100 million domestic workers, the majority of whom are women. We discussed the economic benefits that these people bring to their own communities, and the support and services they offer to their host communities.

We also recalled that behind all these numbers, and behind all the economic and political analysis, there are people. There are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters and our sons. This situation is about people who leave their homes in a search for a better life for themselves and their families. It is about women who raise children, who cook for them, care for them, who worry for them and who, when the job is finished, miss them terribly.

Our work is strengthened when we remember this, when we put people at the centre of all that we do.

One of the key areas emphasized during the conference was the value of partnerships. We must strive for better co-operation. We are unique among all actors in that, through our National Societies, we are present at all stages, alongside migrants as they prepare to leave, as they travel and as they arrive. When they are exploited, when they are cut off from their families and isolated; we are there. The question then is: are we doing enough? Can we do more? I believe we can, if we work together.

We should not only look within ourselves. We also need to encourage co-operation with external actors, such as the private sector, whose skills and expertise can add immense value to the work we do.

The Manila Conference has also underlined the importance of recognizing and embracing the benefits of new technologies such as social media, to guide us towards achieving our goal. Technology and communications are critical to connecting people all around the globe, and it allows us to reach those most vulnerable.

I would like to salute the leadership of Richard Gordon, the Chairman of the Philippine Red Cross, and express my gratitude and thanks to everyone who participated in this conference and made it a success.

The conversations we had and the stories we shared were truly inspiring. I left confident that together we will achieve the commitments laid out in the Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers. So let us continue to work towards these actions and continue to look for the right words and the right solutions, to give a voice to the voiceless and to ensure that no one is ever considered invisible.

Elhadj As Sy  
IFRC Secretary General

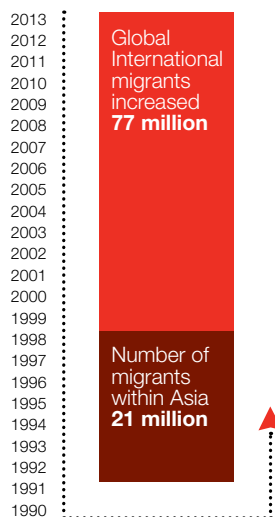
# Statistics on Labor Migration within the Asia-Pacific Region

## Global Profile of Labor Migration

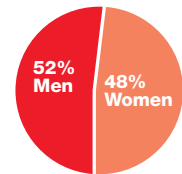
- In **2013**, there were **232 million international migrants** world-wide<sup>1</sup>



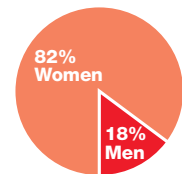
- From **1990 to 2013**, globally the number of international migrants increased by over **77 million**; within Asia the number of migrants rose by **21 million**<sup>2</sup>



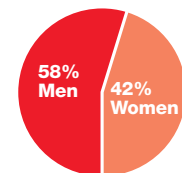
- In **2013**, women comprised **48 per cent** of all international migrants worldwide<sup>3</sup>



- Of all the international migrants, women represent **83 per cent** of the **52-100 million** domestic workers worldwide<sup>4</sup>

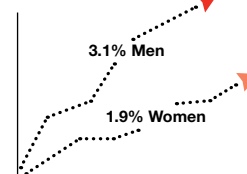


- In **2013**, **58 per cent** of all migrants in Asia were men<sup>5</sup>



- The annual increase in the number of male migrants in Asia (**3.1 per cent**) is greater than the number of female migrants (**1.9 per cent**). The increase in male migrants in Asia was fuelled by the strong demand for migrant workers in the oil-producing countries in Western Asia.

Demand for migrant workers



<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013). Of those, over 105 million were labour migrants (ILO).

<sup>2</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013).

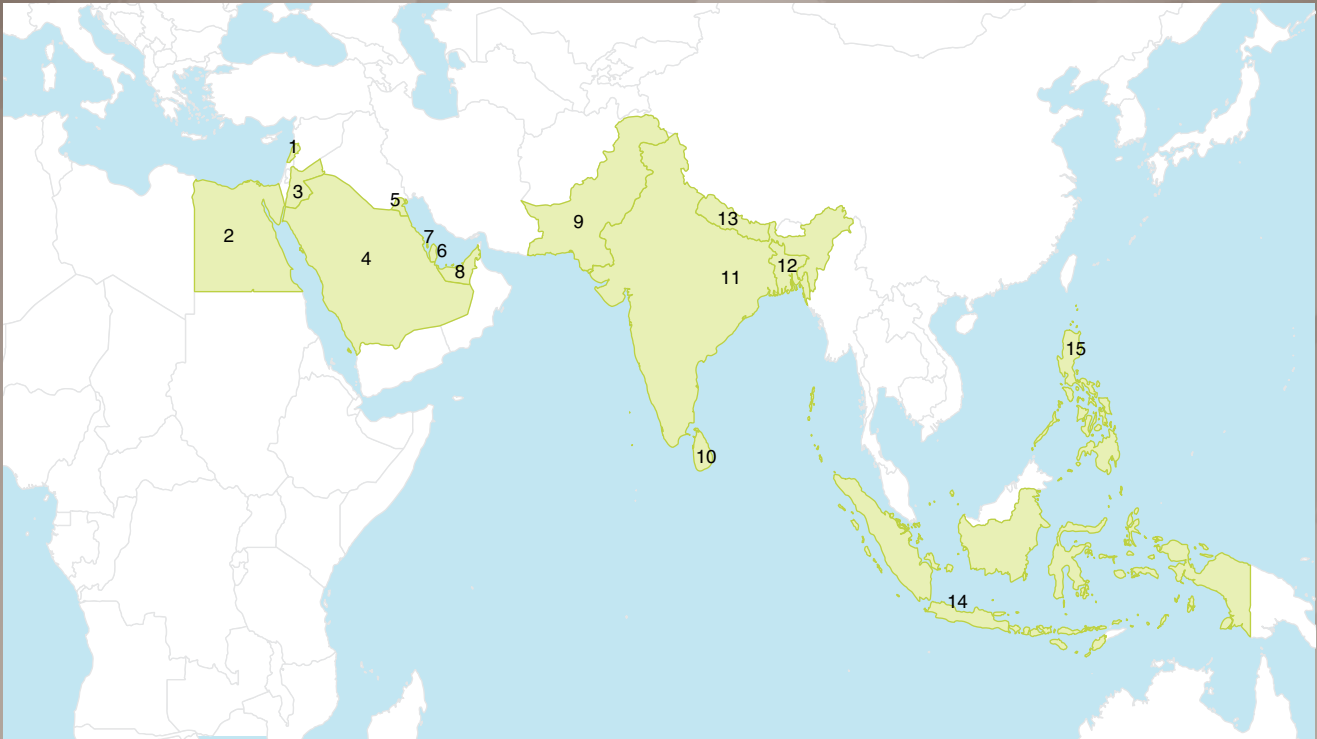
<sup>3</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013).

<sup>4</sup> (ILO).

<sup>5</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013)

<sup>6</sup> (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013)

## STATISTICS ON LABOR MIGRATION WITHIN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION



**1. LEBANON:** As of 2013, there are currently over 250,000 women migrant workers in Lebanon (ILO). The majority of the migrant workers come to Lebanon from: Ethiopia, Philippines and Sri Lanka (UN Women).

**2. EGYPT:** Migrating population from Egypt in 2013 reached more than 3.4 million, whereby more than half (2.9 million) migrated to MENA countries, with the top 3 destination being Saudi Arabia (1,298,388), UAE (711,894) and Jordan (276,950) (UNDESA).

**3. JORDAN:** There are an estimated 1.5 million migrant workers currently in Jordan (ILO). The majority of migrant workers in Jordan originate from come from Egypt as well as several countries in South-East Asia, such as: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia. The most common employment sectors for migrant workers are: agriculture, construction, garment, tourism and hospitality and domestic work (ILO).

**4. SAUDI ARABIA:** There are over 9 million migrant workers currently in Saudi Arabia (HRW). A rough breakdown of the origin of these migrant workers is as follows: India: 1,452,927; Egypt: 1,005,873; Yemen: 894,109; Pakistan: 1,005,873; Bangladesh: 447,055; Ethiopia: 28,618. Foreign labour comprises 89% of the private sector labour force in Saudi Arabia (ILO).

**5. KUWAIT:** There are approximately 1.5 million migrant workers currently in Qatar (IOM). A rough breakdown of the origin of these migrant workers is as follows: Bangladesh: 210,000; Egypt: 320,000; India: 390,000; Indonesia: 11,000; Iran: 98,000; Pakistan: 123,000; Philippines: 86,000; Sri Lanka: 210,000; Syria: 123,000 (IOM). Foreign labour in Kuwait comprises 93% of the private sector labour force (ILO). The majority of Kuwaiti households (90%) employ a foreign domestic worker, in total employing over 620,000 migrant domestic workers, accounting for over 21.9% of the country's total work force (Migrant Rights).

**6. QATAR:** There are approximately 1.15 million migrant workers currently in Qatar (IOM), comprising roughly 94% of the overall population (ILO). A rough breakdown of the origin of these migrant workers is as follows: Egypt: 88,000; India: 250,000; Iran: 150,000; Nepal: 175,454; Pakistan: 250,000; Philippines: 125,000; Saudi Arabia: 20,000; Sri Lanka: 88,000.

**7. BAHRAIN:** More than 458,000 migrant workers work in Bahrain, who are primarily from South Asia, forming around 77% of the country's work force – most working in unskilled or low-skilled jobs, in industries such as construction, retail, wholesale and domestic work in 2012. (Human Rights Watch).

**8. UAE:** In 2013, the UAE had the fifth-largest international migrant population in the world with 7.8 million migrants (out of a total population of 9.2 million), particularly coming from India (2,852,207), Bangladesh (1,089,917), and Pakistan (953,708), Egypt (711,894) and Philippines (477,139) comprising over 90 percent of the country's private workforce. (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division).

**9. PAKISTAN:** More than 7 million Pakistanis have worked abroad since 1971 to 2013, out of these, 94% have sought employment in the GCC countries, with 80% concentrating in Saudi Arabia and UAE. Overseas Pakistanis sent large amounts of remittances, reaching US\$ 15 billion (ILO).

**10. SRI LANKA:** Over 1.5 million Sri Lankan nationals are working abroad as labour migrants. Major destination countries for Sri Lankan labour migrants are: Bahrain, Jordan, S. Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE (ILO). Women comprise half of the total migrant labours (ILO), with women domestic workers comprised 42% of the migration flows from Sri Lanka in 2010 (Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment). As of 2013, the amount of remittances from overseas Sri Lankan workers has totaled over 6.7 million USD (IOM).

**11. INDIA:** Of all the total of 14 million Indian migrant workers currently living and working abroad, nearly half take jobs in a MENA country in 2013, predominantly in UAE (2,852,207), Saudi Arabia (1,761,857) and Kuwait (730,558) (UN DESA). Migrant workers contributed to the remittances of approximately US\$ 70 billion in 2012.

**12. BANGLADESH:** More than 7 million nationals currently work abroad as labour migrants. Major destination countries are: Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Bangladesh receives vast amounts of remittances each year from its migrant workers – approximately US\$ 24 billion in 2012 alone, representing 12% of the GDP of the year. About 67% of all Bangladeshi migrant labour work in one of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia or UAE (ILO).

**13. NEPAL:** Over 2 million Nepalese nationals are working abroad (excluding the number of migrants working in India), 15% of whom are women. The major destinations of 62% of the migrating labour are states in the MENA zone. The remittances sent by the migrant workers contribute 22.4 per cent of GDP in 2012 (ILO).

**14. INDONESIA:** Approximately 6 million workers presently working overseas, who sent around US\$ 7.35 billion in remittances to the Indonesian national economy in 2013. Major destination countries are: Jordan, Malaysia, Qatar, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. Approximately 75% of Indonesian migrant workers are women, with the vast majority working as domestic workers (ILO).

**15. PHILIPPINES:** A total of 10,455,788 Filipinos were working and living overseas as of 2011. Of those, 45% are overseas Filipino workers who are expected to return at the end of their contract of employment. The highest number of temporary overseas Filipinos is found in West Asia (2,717,046) mostly in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain (ILO). As of 2013, the amount of remittances from overseas Filipino workers totaled over 24 billion USD, representing 12.65% of GDP in 2012 (ILO).

# Red Cross Red Crescent Manila Conference on Labor Migration

## 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).

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**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](mailto:gwendolyn.pang@redcross.org.ph) or Anne E Leclerc, Head of the IFRC South-East Asia Regional Delegation at [anne.leclerc@ifrc.org](mailto:anne.leclerc@ifrc.org)



# Agenda

## DAY 1 / TUESDAY 12 MAY

08:30 – 09:00

### Opening program

Invocation - National Anthem  
 Philippine Red Cross Hymn  
 Reading of the Seven Fundamental Principles  
 Welcome Remarks - Dr. Gwendolyn Pang,  
 Secretary General, PRC

09:00 – 09:30

### Guest speaker

**Hon. Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz, Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippines**

“Perspective and Protection Mechanisms for Migrant Women Household Service Workers: Learning from the Philippines Model”

09:30 – 10:30

### Opening addresses

**Dr. Mohammed Bin Ghanen Al-Maadheed, President, Qatar Red Cross Society (QRCS) and Chairman, Doha Dialogue on Migration 2014**

“A Global Response to a Silent Humanitarian Crisis”

**Mr. Richard Gordon, Chairman and CEO, Philippine Red Cross and Chairman, Manila Conference on Migration 2015**

“Hidden and Vulnerable: Raising a Voice for Migrant Women with Emphasis on Women Household Service Workers”

10:30 – 11:00

### Coffee Break/Press Conference

11:00 – 13:00

### Panel “Challenges and Issues in protecting Migrant Women Household Service Workers”

**Chair:** Mr. Jagan Chapagain, IFRC Director, Asia Pacific Zone

**Moderator:** Divya Gopalan, journalist

#### Panellists:

- Marilen Soliman, National Project Officer, UN Women, Philippines
- Anis Hidayah, Chief Executive, Migrant Care
- Aasha Lama, Founder of AshahH4 Foundation Nepal
- Dr. Lalu Muhammad Iqbal: Director of the Protection of Indonesian Citizens and Indonesia Legal Entities

13:00 – 14:30

### Lunch



## AGENDA

**14:30 – 16:30**

### **Panel “Human Face of Migration”**

**Chair:** Director General, Mr Tissa Abeywickrama, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society

**Moderator:** Divya Gopalan, journalist

#### **Panellists:**

- Jolovan Wham: Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics
- Mr. Marco Boasso, Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Simla Ramphul, Migration Adviser for Asia, ICRC Kuala Lumpur
- Sue Le Mesurier, Migration Unit Manager, International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies
- Gov. Elcy Kieth L. Debildos, President, National Youth Council, Philippine Red Cross

**16:30 – 17:00**

### **Group photo**

**19:30 – 21:30**

### **Welcome dinner**

## **DAY 2 / WEDNESDAY 13 MAY**

**09:00 – 09:15**

### **Recap of the previous day's discussion (Master of Ceremony)**

**09:15 – 09:45**

### **“No One Should Work This Way” Photograph Exhibit**

Karen Emmons, journalist and exhibition curator

**09:45 – 10:15**

### **Coffee break**

**10:15 – 13:00**

### **Panel “Creating a Red Cross Red Crescent Humanitarian Lifeline”**

**Chair:** Mr. Richard Gordon, PRC, Chairman and CEO

**Moderator:** Journalist (name tbc)

### **How Government and Red Cross Red Crescent Work Together to Protect the Migrant Women Household Service Workers**

#### **Panellists:**

- Atty. Noel Fernandez, Special Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Migrant Workers Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines
- Hon. Hans Leo Cacdac, Vice Chairman, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
- Ms. Rebecca J. Calzado, Administrator, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)
- Dr Fawzi Amin, Secretary General Bahrain Red Crescent
- Atty. Danilo Concepcion, Dean of College of Las, University of the Philippines,
- Ms. Zenaida Beltejar, Manager, Welfare Services, PRC

### **How Technology Can Make Us Effective in Helping Migrant Women Household Service Work**

- Mr. Sujit Baksi, President BSG, Tech Mahindra
- Mr. Orlando Oxales, Stratbase

## AGENDA

13:00 – 14:00

**Lunch**

14:00 – 15:00

**Open forum: The Strength of Partnership**

**Chair:** Pak Ritola Tasmaya, Secretary General, Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia-PMI)

**Moderator:** Giorgio Ferrario, IFRC Head of Delegation for Indonesia

**Panellists:**

- Asia Pacific Migration Network
- Aasha Lama, Founder of AshahH4 Foundation Nepal
- Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
- Dr. Lalu Muhammad Iqbal, Director of the Protection of Indonesian citizens (WNI) and Indonesia legal entities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Krishna Djelani, Deputy Director of the Protection of Indonesian Citizens (WNI) and Legal Entities Indonesia (BHI) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

15:00 – 15:30

**Message of Hon. Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Society**

15:30 – 16:30

**Closing session and Press briefing**

**Chair:** Mr. Richard J. Gordon, Chairman and CEO, PRC

- Manila Declaration
- Signing of Cooperation Agreement





*“All our discussions about migration would benefit greatly if we put human beings at the centre.”*

**Elhadj As Sy**, Secretary General

*“ We must continue to work hard. When the world is no longer watching, and media is not around, the Red Cross Red Crescent must remain. We will be there for the most vulnerable.”*

**Richard J. Gordon**, Chairman of the Philippine Red Cross

*“Much has already been said about the lack of legislation and the weak protections afforded to migrant workers. Much has also been said about the risks and vulnerabilities they face. But I feel very strongly that we should also place an emphasis on two critical and often overlooked aspects of labour migration—dignity and respect.”*

**Al Muhanadi**, Secretary General of the Qatar Red Crescent Society

## Background

As the world continues to undergo a process of rapid globalization, factors such as conflict, poverty and growing inequalities have led to an increase in labor migration, notably from countries in Asia Pacific to destination countries in the Middle East. Millions of people from so-called 'sending countries' such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Nepal, continue to leave their homes in search of better pay and work opportunities in countries where their services are greatly received. This trend is unlikely to change and it is therefore the responsibility of governments and the humanitarian sector to ensure labor migrants are protected and treated fairly and with dignity as they undertake their work. In line with the Migration Resolution adopted at the 31st International Conference, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent the Movement has officially committed to playing a greater role in the area of migration.

The Manila Conference on Migration 2015 is one of a series of events being held under the Red Cross Red Crescent Doha Dialogue on Migration, which begun in May 2014. This laid the foundation for the Movement to become more active in providing assistance to migrant workers and to become more visible in labor migration advocacy and communication. This is an ongoing platform underpinned by an agreement to meet twice a year, once in the Middle East and once in Asia.

In June 14 2014, representatives from 15 National Societies – both 'sending' and 'receiving' countries, all directly affected by the impact of labor migration – met for the first time under this umbrella, to discuss their current work with migrant workers and to share concerns and success stories. They were joined by members of government and external agencies, an opportunity for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to be both more visible in the labor migration sector and to also explore potential for partnerships and advocacy at the national and international level. This event was followed by the Regional Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue in Yangon 2015 which was hosted by the Myanmar Red Cross Society.

### **The Red Cross Red Crescent Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015**

The inaugural Manila Conference on Labor Migration took place over two days, from 12-13 May 2015, in Manila, the Philippines. The event was hosted by the Philippines Red Cross and brought together a diverse collection of experts and interested parties providing a forum for discussions about labor migration. A specific focus of the conference was on female household service workers.

With representatives present from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Asia Pacific, the Middle East North Africa, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as 100 members of the Philippines Red Cross Chapters from across the country, the conference allowed the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to unify in a commitment to work towards the protection of female household service providers. External to the movement, representatives from UN Women, the International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization, local non-governmental organizations, government ministries and the media attended.

### **The key objectives of the conference were to:**

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.

### **Challenges and Issues identified**

Although both male and female migrants are affected by many of the issues raised during the conference, women face specific types of risk and these risks are present at all stages of the migration journey. Domestic work optimizes the feminization of migration, with more women taking on domestic worker roles than men. One of the key challenges is that domestic work is not recognized both legally and by society as a formal type of work. As a result, it is not afforded the same status as other types of employment, including the right safeguards and protections.

Challenges can begin even before a domestic worker has left their home country, so called 'sending' countries. Recruitment agencies may charge domestic workers recruitment fees which mean women work to pay back this fee, unable to leave due to their debt. Moreover, a lack of skills and training in domestic work, combined with a lack of understanding of the language and culture of the host country can leave migrants vulnerable and create misunderstandings and negative perceptions of migrants in host governments, employers and host communities.

### **Once migrants arrive in the 'receiving country' key challenges highlighted by participants at the conference include:**

- A lack of social networks and no knowledge of their rights put female household service workers in a vulnerable situation to abuse, sexual exploitation and harassment;
- The value of remittances to families back home means domestic workers end up staying in situations that could pose a danger to their physical and mental health;
- Lack of access to communication, as many are denied mobile phones by their employers and may not have the freedom to leave their employers house. In these situations it is almost impossible for migrants to have a voice and they lack the avenues to report mistreatment;
- The portrayal of migrants in the media often leads to misconceptions and prejudices which impacts their experiences in a host country. Terminologies and labels such as 'illegal immigrants' leads to the perception that migrant workers should be criminalized.

The result of these challenges, means accessing and supporting migrants extremely challenging for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and other stakeholders.

Even during their journey, migrants face challenges that leave them vulnerable. A migrant's circumstances may change at any stage during their journey. This can lead to a regular migrant worker becoming an irregular migrant, making them even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and often resulting in them to being put in detention. Detention centers possess their own set of problems for migrants including a lack of adequate healthcare.

### Key outcomes

A principal outcome from the conference was the signing of the 'Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers'. This declaration outlined the commitment by National Societies from the Middle East North Africa and Asia Pacific Regions to increase collaboration within the Movement itself and with other NGOs, civil society organizations and other actors working on migration, and to advocate for the rights and protection of women migrant workers with their respective governments and communities.

### In addition to this important achievement, the Manila Conference succeeded in:

- Providing a space for a range of stakeholders to come together to discuss labor migration. This included stakeholders from both within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (National Societies, IFRC and ICRC) and outside the Movement: civil society organizations, UN Women, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, and the media.
- Gaining the commitment of participants to work towards a common goal to increase the protection of female household service workers. To achieve this, discussions surrounding impact of current initiatives, lessons learned and solutions were proposed to address the gaps in the work surrounding migration.

During the conference, it was expressed through discussions and presentations that that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is well-positioned to help migrant workers, to promote tolerance and to challenge the stigmatization of migrants, due to the Movement's strong community-based volunteer networks and its position as an independent organization, acting as an auxiliary to government.

In addition, the Movement can work directly with migrants to support them and reconnect them if they experience problems overseas. One of the key services provided by the Movement, Restoring Family Links (RFL) for migrants in immigration detention, was highlighted, not only as a chance to for migrants to contact their families, but in many instances it also gives the opportunity to receive the relevant documents proving their origin, their identity, money or fly ticket and can facilitate their repatriation and contact with embassies.



*Chairman Richard Gordon emphasizes the importance of supporting overseas Filipino migrant workers, particularly females who are employed for domestic work. Credit: Philippine Red Cross*

### **The following points were also met with agreement through discussions at the conference:**

- Creating strong partnerships, collaboration and communication are key to ensuring protection for migrants before departure, during their journey and after arriving at their destination.
- Enhancing national and regional mechanisms in host and sending countries, and increasing the accountability of states to conventions that they have signed or ratified, is critical.
- Working closely with communities, listening to their perspectives and giving them a voice is fundamental to effective advocacy and protection of vulnerable workers.
- Emphasis must be placed on ensuring domestic workers are skilled, or trained, before they go overseas. It is important that they are taught basic language skills, cultural customs and given orientation details – such as important phone numbers of their agency or embassy in the host country – before departure.
- Psychosocial support is as an essential part of the assistance that needs to be provided to migrant workers. Support must also be made available to the families of overseas foreign workers and also to the workers upon their return to their home country.

### **A focus was placed on the way issues related with migration should be communicated, as well as what could be done to improve the current situation be done to improve the current situation including:**

- Humanitarian diplomacy - the work of persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with respect for humanitarian principles - is essential to protecting the rights of migrant workers and improving the conditions accompanying labor migration.
- The media has an important role and responsibility in the way people perceive migrants. The language used by journalists can create misconceptions and create fear and prejudices among host populations. Stakeholders must work with the media to break down existing stereotypes and change the way migrants are portrayed. One way of achieving this is by providing the media with human stories of migration with facts that demonstrate the plight of migrant workers, as well as their strength and the contributions they make to a host community.
- The youth have an important role to play in creating positive messages and perceptions around labor migrants.
- Technology and social media – for example, Facebook, Twitter, mobile apps – as well as more traditional communications channels such as phone helplines, cinema advertisements and radio plugs, can be used as advocacy tools and regulatory mechanisms.

# Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers

13 May 2015

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**WHEREAS, We**, the members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have gathered in the city of Manila, Philippines, on May 12-13, 2015 to continue our common efforts to address the matter of migrant workers and the humanitarian aspects thereof;

**WHEREAS**, guided by the Fundamental Principles of humanity and universality, we all recognize and unanimously declare that migration is not only an issue of people movement but more importantly an issue involving basic human rights and the protection of human dignity;

**WHEREAS**, among the migrant workers, we have identified women workers, especially those who work as domestic helpers, as most vulnerable, prone to abuse in view of their isolation and without sufficient means to obtain support and assistance when needed.

**WHEREAS, WE**, the National Societies in this DECLARATION, are desirous of adopting a common position, and take collective action and utilize the largest humanitarian network of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to protect the rights of labour migrants –with a particular focus on women household service workers.

**Therefore, we hereby declare and agree as it is hereby declared and agreed, to the following:**

1. WE reiterate and confirm our commitment to work together, undertake collective action to protect the rights of migrant workers, especially female migrant workers who are the most vulnerable, and to engage in a continuing dialogue and collaboration to ensure that the dignity and the rights of all migrant workers are respected and they can receive assistance individually and/or collectively at all times. WE recognize the need to bring greater attention to the plight of vulnerable migrant workers and to mobilize collective solutions to strengthen their resilience.
2. Each of the National Society participants hereto shall do its utmost to exercise humanitarian diplomacy to influence their respective governments and other stakeholders to assist and protect women migrant workers in distress and provide programs which protect the rights, reduce the vulnerabilities and support the best interest of the women migrant workers.
3. WE pledge to strengthen efforts to ensure National Society senior leadership dedicates sufficient attention, and other resources to activities relating to migrant worker assistance and protection.



## MANILA DECLARATION

4. WE the National Societies commit to strengthen our partnerships within and across countries in order to ensure the working environment of migrant workers in host countries fosters tolerance and cultural respect, and where the individual needs and vulnerabilities of migrant workers, irrespective of their status are properly addressed, consistent with the principles of humanity and universality.
5. In line with the the Philippine Red Cross proposal, the Fundamental Principles an our collective commitment to protect human dignity and respect National Societies and partners lend their full support to the establishment of a humanitarian lifeline/call center for overseas migrant workers in distress. Once established, WE all pledge to support the operation and development of the lifeline and to cooperate closely with the Philippine Red Cross who expressed intent in piloting this initiative.
6. WE the National Society participants also recognize the potential of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Network to play a valuable role in assisting migrant workers once they return to their home countries. WE express our commitment to explore ways in which the services and expertise of our respective National Societies can contribute to the safe rehabilitation of migrant workers back into their home communities.
7. WE may consider in the future other collective measures to protect all other categories of migrant workers in order to ensure the protection and dignity of labor migrants in the context of international labor rights, decent work, and the right to equal treatment regardless of gender, background and legal status.

*Left: Secretary General of Bahrain Red Crescent, Dr. Fawazi Amin, and IFRC Director for Asia Pacific, Jagan Chapagain. Right: Secretary General of the Philippine Red Cross, Gwendolyn Pang. Credit: Philippine Red Cross*





At the opening of the Manila Conference on Migration 2015, Philippine Red Cross Chairman Richard J. Gordon shakes hands with Saleh Ali Al Muhanadi, Secretary General of the Qatar Red Crescent Society, while Jagan Chapagain, IFRC Director for the Asia Pacific Zone, looks on.

## Red Cross tackles migration issues, focuses on women household service workers

The plight of migrant workers, particularly of women household service workers, can be considered as a silent humanitarian crisis. Issues that surround their employment in foreign lands remain unheard of and only very few get the attention of the media and governments of both sending and receiving countries.

To help these women and help address the issues on labor migration, with a special focus on women household service workers, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) in joint cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), hosted the Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015, Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers, on May 12-13, at the Manila Diamond Hotel.



During the press conference, Chairman Gordon elaborates on the proposed humanitarian lifeline for women household service workers.

“The number of migrant workers, especially women household service workers, has become so significant. The problem has become so big that we have to start where we can win. This conference will

bring together Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from sending and receiving countries with the aim of establishing protocols that would guide the Red Cross Movement in extending assistance to women

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Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers



Red Cross tackles... from page 1



**Richard Gordon**  
Chairman and CEO  
Philippine Red Cross



**Jagan Chapagain**  
IFRC Director  
Asia Pacific Zone



**Saleh Ali Al Muhanadi**  
Secretary General  
Qatar Red Crescent Society



**Gwendolyn Pang**  
Secretary General  
Philippine Red Cross

migrant workers. We aim to come up with measures on how we can engage our governments so we can better protect these most vulnerable and provide dignity and respect for them," said PRC Chairman Richard Gordon.

The conference brought together representatives from both sending and receiving countries from Asia Pacific and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, various stakeholders including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and leaders and representatives from Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) societies.

Gordon explained that the reason why the conference focuses on women household service workers is that the sector is considered the most vulnerable among migrant groups. "It is sad to hear that in pursuit of greener pastures abroad, women experience contract substitution, charging of hefty fees by recruiters, and when they arrive in their destinations, their passports and phones are confiscated, they experience beating, overwork, rape, and inhumane working conditions, among other things with little or no recourse. Some are tricked into becoming drug mules," he said.

He cited the case of Mary Jean Veloso, who was charged of drug trafficking and was almost executed in Indonesia. "Many other women migrants who suffer the same plight and abuse become invisible and simply become a statistics," said Gordon.

Statistics show that in 2013, there is an estimated 232 million

migrant workers living outside their home countries, 48 percent of whom are women. One out of five migrant workers is engaged in domestic work, of which some 43.2 million are women.

According to Philippine Red Cross secretary general Gwendolyn Pang, the Manila Conference on Migration 2015 is a key step in the mobilization of resources across Red Cross Red Crescent societies all over the world. "There is a need to coordinate a global strategy to defend the human rights of our migrant workers. Let this conference bring about agreements and strategies among our RCRC societies that can make the dream of protecting migrant workers a reality," said Pang.

Representatives from the Philippine government likewise showed their support for the conference. Linlingay Lacanlale, Undersecretary for Administration of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) congratulated the PRC and the IFRC for organizing the conference.

"The Philippines is primarily a sending country in the context of international migration," said Lacanlale. He revealed that as of DFA's latest data, there are around 9.5 million overseas Filipinos, 4 million of which are in the Americas, with approximately 2.5 million and 2 million are in the Middle East and the Asia Pacific, respectively.

On the part of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), administrator Hans Leo Cacdac said that the Philippines, in the past four years, has been committed in exerting efforts on migrant workers.

According to Cacdac, the POEA is now in the process of customizing the pre-deployment program for migrant workers. He also acknowledged the importance of strategic partnerships with other organizations to provide assistance to migrant workers who need help in repatriation, welfare services, etc.

Speaking in part for receiving countries, the secretary general of Qatar Red Crescent Society, Saleh Ali Al Muhanadi, spoke of the importance of discussions on labor migration to raise awareness on issues and to better address the gaps needed to provide the much needed assistance and protection to migrant workers.

"In terms of my country Qatar, and other so called receiving countries in the Gulf, labor migration is a contemporary phenomenon which is rapidly evolving and provoking much debate and soul searching. It is impossible to live in a country such as Qatar without interacting or touching glimpse of workers from other countries every single day," said Al Muhanadi.

According to Al Muhanadi, migration is a rapidly provoking debate in Qatar and that without the interaction with other countries, it will be impossible for the country to deal with the issue. "Much has already been said about the lack of legislation and the weak protections afforded to migrant workers. Much has also been said about the risks and vulnerabilities they face. But I feel very strongly that we should also place an emphasis on two critical and often overlooked aspects of labour migration—dignity and respect," he said.



## Red Cross Movement takes a firm stand to assist women household service workers

With the mounting problems rendering women household service workers, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), together with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), have committed to take a firm stand on protecting them, alleviating their suffering and upholding their dignity.

In his opening address during Day 1 of the two-day Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015, Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers, PRC Chairman Richard J. Gordon stressed that women migrant workers are isolated, invisible and vulnerable and that the Red Cross Movement will be taking a deeper involvement in the issue of migration.

"The other day was Mother's Day. It was celebrated by at least 1.2 Filipino women abroad, working as domestic helpers or as they say, women household service workers who are invisible and vulnerable," he said.

Gordon noted that starting from the pre-departure stage, women household service workers are already vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, such as falling prey to unscrupulous recruiters who collect exorbitant placement fees and contract substitution, among others.

When women overseas workers arrive in their country of destination, he added, another stage of their harrowing experience start because they will live in a home where the language barrier could only make things worse for



Chairman Gordon passionately delivers his opening address at the migration conference.

them. They will live in a country with different cultures, different practices and beliefs. They are prone to rape, abuse, beatings and sometimes they are not even allowed to see a doctor when they are sick. Their passports and cellular phones are taken away, further isolating them.

"And of course, when they give up because they could not handle it anymore and they escape, sometimes the employer prevents them from leaving by accusing the women household service workers of stealing. And when this happens they will be subjected to visa restriction, they could not get out," Gordon explained.

The conference chairman stressed that current circumstances and the Red Cross tenets demand the humanitarian organization's deeper involvement in protecting the most vulnerable.

"As Red Crossers, we must protect those who cannot protect themselves. These are the tenets of Red Cross: protect the vulnerable, alleviate human suffering and uplift human dignity. This is the time upon which we may say it is not too late to reinvent ourselves. If Henry Dunant demanded that there must be rules in war, we can demand, we can commit ourselves to rules in migration," Gordon said.

### HOW THE MANILA CONFERENCE CAME ABOUT

- 2011** - During an international conference in Geneva, Switzerland, Philippine Red Cross Chairman Richard J. Gordon spoke with Jakob Kellenberger, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).  
 - Gordon pointed out to the IFRC president that there is a severe problem in migration.  
 - Dr. Fawzi Abdullah Amin, Bahrain Red Crescent General Secretary, offered to help him work on the issue.

- 2014** - Four years later, the Doha Dialogue on Migration 2014 was organized.  
 - The event was hosted by Qatar Red Crescent and included key external partners, including international NGOs, governments, and civil society representatives, who joined the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to address the challenges of labor migration and expatriate workers.

**January 2015** – The Regional Think Tank Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue was held on January 24–25, 2015, Yangon, Myanmar

**May 2015** – Manila Conference on Labor Migration 2015, Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers, May 12–13, 2015



# As Sy commends Gordon on advocating for migrant workers



*PRC Chairman Richard J. Gordon and Elhadj As Sy, IFRC Secretary General with Dos por Dos hosts, Anthony Taberna and Gerry Baja.*

Philippine Red Cross (PRC) Chairman Richard Gordon and Elhadj As Sy, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) graced the top rating ABS-CBN show *Dos Por Dos* hosted by Anthony Taberna and Gerry Baja.

As Sy is in the Philippines for two days to attend the landmark Conference on Labor Migration, the first time such an event has been hosted by the PRC and the third in a series of such events focusing on the plight of migrant workers and the hardships they can face as they adapt to a very different life and culture.

The IFRC represents 189 Red Cross Red Crescent

societies around the world, with 17 million volunteers.

Chairman Gordon revealed that As Sy had skipped a meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in order to attend the conference before flying to Nepal to visit survivors of the recent earthquake, which was struck by a second serious trembler.

As Sy told the nationwide television and radio audience that he was in Manila to support the Red Cross' stand on the plight of migrant workers. "I want to pay tribute to the leadership of Chairman Gordon," he said.

"As a member of the IFRC's Governing Board, and even before that, Chairman Gordon

has been a strong voice on the international stage advocating on behalf of migrant workers. He has also lent his support to the Italian Red Cross' stand on migrants from North Africa," said As Sy.

Even though the Red Cross Red Crescent is best known for working in war zones and disasters, it also advocates strongly for people who face exploitation and victimization.

"Our humanitarian work also extends to speaking out on behalf of migrants around the world," As Sy said. "Migrants quite often find themselves facing exploitation, discrimination and xenophobia. We give a voice to the voiceless and make sure the invisible are visible," he said.

Asked about what IFRC was doing to address the issues of vulnerable migrant workers, As Sy said that it was actively seeking solutions through member societies, for example in Middle East host countries and the Gulf States.

He said the PRC is making a real difference by providing the necessary leadership to bring people together and find concrete solutions. According to As Sy, out of this dialogue will come a commitment to improve workers' rights and protections.

"Countries like Bahrain and Qatar are represented by member Red Crescent societies at the conference so they can be part of the solution. Their presence is paying tribute to both the Philippines and the Philippine Red Cross for their valuable contribution," As Sy said.



## Dialogue focuses on challenges in protecting migrant women household service workers

The Manila Conference on Migration aims to come up with a solution to address the issues and challenges in protecting migrant workers, particularly women household service workers.

To lay out the issues and challenges and pave the way for dialogues, a panel discussion on “Challenges and Issues in Protecting Migrant Women Household Service Workers”, was held on the first day of the conference.

Jagan Chapagain, IFRC Asia Pacific director, chaired the panel discussion, moderated by journalist Divya Gopalan from Aljazeera. The discussion focused on the key challenges and solutions for women household service workers. “This is about changing a mindset, helping people who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity,” said Chapagain. “Our Red Cross branches as we see here in this room today, are key to engaging with community members. This is how we can contribute positively to creating this change.”

Speakers on the panel included Aasha Lama, Founder of AshahH4 Foundation Nepal, Anis Hidayat, CEO of Migrant Care,



Panelists discuss the topic “Challenges and Issues in Protecting Migrant Women Household Service Workers” during the Migration Conference’s first panel discussion. From left to right: Marilen Soliman from UN Women Philippines, Anis Hidayat from Migrant Care, Aasha Lama of AshahH4 Foundation Nepal, and Renato Villa from DFA Philippines.

Marilen Soliman from UN Women Philippines, and Renato Villa, senior special assistant at the Department of Foreign Affairs Philippines, Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers. The debate was lively and informative, with plenty of questions from the audience including Tissa Abeywickrama, Sri Lanka Red Cross

Director General and Dr. Fawzi Abdullah Amin, Secretary General of Bahrain Red Crescent.

While Villa called for increased collaboration between governments and the Red Cross Red Crescent expressing the valuable, unique “access” of Movement partners to migrant communities, both Lama and Hidayat reinforced the need to empower women before they depart their home countries in order to reduce their vulnerabilities. Soliman from UN Women emphasized the need to implement laws in order to also effectively protect women domestic workers.

“This was a very engaging discussion that was informative and it paints a clear picture of where we need to continue our work,” said Philippine Red Cross Chairman Richard Gordon. “We simply cannot be bystanders. We must be leaders in promoting change for the most vulnerable,” he said.



Participants listen intently to the discussion on the challenges and issues in protecting migrant women household service workers.



# Humanizing migrant workers to combat migration issues

They are mothers, sisters, aunts, and daughters. Women household service workers are human beings that deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

However, the way that women household service workers are perceived by others can be dangerously misleading. It can fuel the exploitation and abuse that they face by their employers and others in the community.

“The media often uses labels and terminologies such as “illegal immigrant”, explains Sue Le Mesurier, Migration Senior Officer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). “The media needs to be well informed on the issues they are speaking about as it can have a real impact on the way migrants are perceived and the criminalization of migrant workers,” she added.

The second panel for the first day entitled “The Human Face of Migration” aimed to stimulate discussion and debate about the challenges in bringing a “human face” to the issue of labor migration.

As outlined in his opening remarks, Tissa Abeywickrama, Director of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, said the humanitarian aspects of labor migration often get lost in political, economic, and media driven dialogue. Abeywickrama urged the humanitarian community to play more of a role in ensuring that attitudes towards migrant communities are more positive, and to ensure governments view labor migration through a humanitarian lens.

The panel featured a diverse array of speakers including Jojovan Wham from the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), and Marco Boasso, Chief of Mission from the International Organization for Migration Philippines. All speakers were able to share their personal motivations and experiences about the human stories of labor migration - all united in their



*Panelists discuss the topic “Human Face of Migration” during the migration conference’s second panel discussion. From left to right: Jojovan Wham of HOME, Marco Boasso of IOM, Elcy Kieth Debildos of PRC National Youth Council, Sue Le Mesurier of IFRC, Simla Ramphul of ICRC Kuala Lumpur, and moderator Divya Gopalan.*

argument that women household service workers, are human beings that deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Meanwhile, Elcy Kieth Debildos, president of the National Youth Council of the Philippine Red Cross underlined the importance of investing in youth to become advocates for change in perception.

In the context of Singapore, Wham pointed out that if all “migrant workers stopped working, the entire economy of Singapore would collapse...” - highlighting the extent of the island nation’s dependency on its migrant workforce. Wham expressed his concern that the provision of the very basic service for labor migrants remains disproportionate and underlined the fact that while the remittances domestic workers provide are well recognized, their basic human rights and needs are not. It was also noted that migrant workers in Singapore lack the power and ability to organize themselves into interest groups or even unions - highlighting a broader point that labor migrants will remain invisible if they lack the access or platform to make themselves heard.

When asked how the Red Cross Red Crescent could contribute to supporting existing

efforts and filling protection gaps in migrant worker protection, a number of suggestions were mooted including: greater advocacy with governments, stronger partnerships with grassroots NGOs, and further efforts (as cited in the example of the Australian and British Red Cross) to migrant awareness training in schools and public campaigns, which aim to defuse tension and diminish xenophobia towards migrant worker communities.

The panel discussion was followed by testimonies from two former overseas women household service workers from the Philippines. In an emotional address, the two women recounted both the struggles they had faced in employment and also the emotional aspects of fear, isolation, guilt, and separation from their families - thus bringing home the overall message of the panel that migration needs to be tackled with compassion and a people-first approach.

The panel concluded with a reminder that the job of humanitarians is to act on behalf of vulnerable migrant workers and to ensure that the human face remain visible to all those with the power to change their lives for the better.

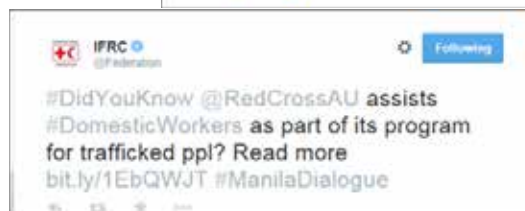
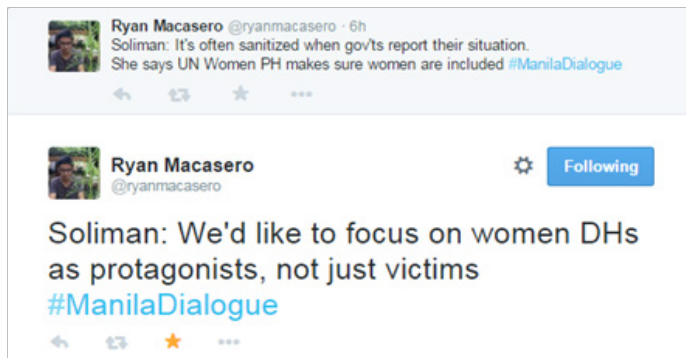


Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers

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# Social media engagement: Red Cross Red Crescent Manila Conference on Labor Migration

Social media today is a key resource for information and an effective way to advocate on key issues such as labor migration. Using the main hashtag for this event - #ManilaDialogue – participants in the conference as well as IFRC, National Society staff and community members around the world, have been engaging enthusiastically on the conference discussions. Below are a few highlights from around the globe.





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Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers



## Photojournalist's award-winning exhibit displayed at Red Cross' migration conference

To further illustrate that women household service workers constitute the most vulnerable, an award-winning exhibit by American photojournalist Steve Mc Curry were put on display at the "Manila Conference on Migration 2015, Focus on the Most Vulnerable: Women Household Service Workers."

Fourteen photos from Steve Mc Curry's "No One Should Work This Way" exhibit were displayed at the Diamond Hotel's ground floor ballroom on May 13, the second day of the conference hosted by the Philippine Red Cross, in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The exhibit features images of women household service workers who endured abuses and exploitations around the world. The women left their home countries to find better opportunities abroad.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mc Curry has been one of the most iconic voices in contemporary photography for more than thirty years, with numerous magazine and book covers, over a dozen books, and countless exhibitions around the world to his name.



*Fourteen photos from Steve Mc Curry's "No One Should Work This Way" exhibit were put on display at the Manila Conference on Migration 2015.*

## Closing address

# IFRC Secretary General Elhadj As Sy

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today united as one beautiful rainbow community, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. We are the Red Cross Red Crescent, we are there all the time on the side of communities to accompany them to respond to their needs.



We come from and emanate from those very communities that are affected. We can build the trust, build the respect, understand the cultures and the social-economic dynamics that allow us to overcome bottlenecks and to build on the enabling factors to get to success.

We talked a lot about migration, labour migration and with a great percentage of female domestic workers. It is very important to have the opportunities we have had these last two days to reflect on that, with only one aim at the end of the day, the search for solutions to the problems of people.

And when we talk about those problems we try to illustrate them through numbers and figures and we've heard so many of them over the last two days. We heard about the 232 million labour migrants. Well, if then we were putting those numbers of people as citizens of one country they would be representing one of the largest countries on Earth.

We talk about the 52 to 100 million that are domestic workers, and because of the very nature of that work, about 80 per cent of them are women.

We talk about their vulnerabilities, trying to describe them in numbers again.

We talk about the billions of dollars that are coming into remittances, and quite often we forget about the most essential part of that, which is simply put: it is not about numbers, it is not about figures, it is simply about people. Behind every unit of this number there is a human being, there is a brother or a sister, there is a father or a mother, like you and me, who are trying on a daily basis to improve their own lives and to seek for better opportunities to care for their children and their loved ones.

When they were talking about migrant labour in Switzerland, I remembered the Swiss author Max Frisch who in a very sarcastic way said: "Our problem is that every time we ask for a labour force, human beings come."

Well, he is right. Human beings do come they come with their own colour of skin, which may be different, they come with their own colour of eyes, may be different, they come with their own hair which is different. They come speaking a different language, they wear colorful clothes, they may be louder than you are used to. They sing and dance, they pray in different ways. But simply put, they come as they are, they come as human beings.

And they get hurt, they get hope, they cry, they suffer and if they do suffer, like sometimes when it happens as we have witnessed over the last weeks over the Mediterranean Sea, where 1,800, another number again, get drowned in the sea while trying to reach Europe.

I used to say each of them, who drowned in that Sea, took one part of our own humanity. A part of us drowned with them.

And these migrant workers we are talking about and who are suffering in different parts of the world, a part of our own humanity suffers with them.

Well, again, it is very easy to capture a number as I've said, but numbers will never tell stories. They don't tell the stories of hope, they don't tell the stories of separation and pain, but neither, some good stories that express the best in us, most of the time.

Domestic workers who are loved like the children of their host families, domestic workers who take care of the elderly and of the children like they do with their own family, showing us another expression of humanity, that no matter what it seems to be dividing us, be it the way we look or the geographic confine we are coming from, there is one basic fact that we all respond to our shared humanity.

There are a million reasons for people to move. Some do it because they don't have any other choice, they do it because they lost what is dearest to them, which is their human dignity, and so they try everything possible to recover it. They do it because they are fleeing out of conflict, where they have nothing and nothing more to lose. They do it because of poverty and have to travel and develop strategies for survival for them and their loved ones to survive.

They do it sometimes simply because it is a choice. We are living in a world that is more interconnected than ever before. We live in a world that is more global than ever before, and entrenchments of frontiers will never prevent people from wanting to move far ahead. And that is what happened in history most of the time, they were not always called migrants, if you like a bit of music I would recommend you a beautiful song called Christopher Columbus:

"He says he was the first man who discovered Jamaica,

"But what about my grandfather who was there before him."

Well, those migrants were at times called explorers, and there were also times when they were called settlers, and at other times, migrants were even called pioneers. And today, many times they are labeled simply, lumped together, under one heading, "migrants" and often times, with a qualification of illegal. There is nothing like an illegal human being, there is nothing like this qualification.

We are the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we cannot accept that because indeed, behind every migrant or so-called migrant, there is a person, like you and me.

Support to the people on the move has always been a Cornerstone of what we've been doing, since the creation of our Movement. Remember we were created out of a battlefield called Solferino where the suffering of human beings were untenable and there were some people that did not accept the indifference and said that we are not helpless, we can do something about this.

Today more than ever before, we should halt the indifference that this world is suffering from and be convinced that we can do something about it.

The Philippines Red Cross is the leader in terms of support to labour migrants, and you could witness that over the last two days and beyond, but you are not alone.

In Central Asia, I could quote the example of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, all these inform their labour migrants about their rights and advocate on their behalf. They continue to run campaigns to target discrimination and xenophobia, and provide basic services to those marginalized groups, including legal services, psychological support, health care and even employment and language training, as we've discussed in the last two days.

In Spain, we have seen the Red Cross fighting discrimination in labour markets, making sure that migrant workers are paid fairly, running campaigns that encourage people to look closer – look closer to see the faces, the faces behind the label. And in doing so, we realize that the reflection of your own image can be read in the eyes of these human beings.

We see the same in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and we see the same in many other parts of the world, in a country like Lebanon that finds itself having 25 per cent of its own population being composed of people from abroad. They are over a million in Jordan, they are over another million in Turkey.

Again numbers that try to capture the reality of the situation, but they will never capture it until it comes very close to home and that every person that is affected is either the friend, is either a family member, and a loved one, and then it comes home and we know what it means.

As we have heard over the past two days, more needs to be done to support these people, including by us, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, we, this Movement, this formidable, as I used to call it, rainbow community that unites everybody in our shared humanity.

Let me applaud the Philippines Red Cross Proposal for a call centre for foreign domestic workers. We wish you success in that, because if it is successful, it can provide us with a platform for all, not only the Philippines.

This is a type of approach which we believe can be fruitful and provide the base for a foundation that could make a meaningful difference for some of those people who have become invisible. We say no, they are not invisible; we are simply not looking at them.

It is also an example of the type of innovative approaches that we need to adopt and I am glad that we have spent time looking at innovation and how innovation and new technologies can contribute to making us more effective, bringing us closer to each other.

Are we using them all? Let's reflect on it. How much are we using the digital tools that already exist, from Facebook to Twitter and others. Some people in need may call the call centre and that is important. But so many others are talking, so many are crying, so many are looking for help, but we should always ask ourselves; are we listening? Are we hearing them? Are we responding to their needs?

Responding to the multitude of challenges that migration can cause requires engagement at all stages along the migration path; in the countries of origin, it is not enough to point fingers and then blame host countries, be they in Europe or the Middle East – we have to start at home, before people leave. So that they can get information, make informed choices, and also be empowered with the knowledge, with the protection that allows them to undertake the journey.



That path is always paved by so many stations and at each of the stations there is a Red Cross and Red Crescent, and that is the reason why nobody is better placed than us to respond alongside that journey.

It is so heartening to see, here united, people from countries where most migrants are coming from, as well as, brothers and sisters from countries where most migrants are coming and working into, here again, showing what is uniting us in providing support to the same people.

It is time to halt the indifference of the world and to continue to shed light on the issue. You may have seen recently a situation in the Mediterranean Sea reported on TV. I was in Sicily, in Catania, where tens of cameras of TV stations from around the world came down to film 28 people who had survived, the hundred, two hundred that they were waiting for never arrived, they drowned

We saw once again the perverse indifference about what these people and others like them have gone through.

We know of examples of (news articles) talking about boats that capsized. It is not about the boats, it is all about the people inside the boat that nobody was talking about.

It struck me again in the recent months, how indifferent people are in the face of so many lost lives of people on the move, in the face of the plight of asylum seekers. Does that may mean that we are getting to a level of saturation that we no longer get angry, that we no longer get sad, that we no longer get impatient, that our level of tolerance of the unacceptable and intolerable is getting higher and higher? That may be one of the biggest risks that we face.

Well, that is the reason why, we will be soon launching a new global campaign in an effort to tackle this growing lack of empathy. Using the immediacy of social media, we will try and create and communicate, a sense of compassion for the people who are made vulnerable through their decisions to leave their home countries, no matter what the motives behind those decisions are.

We call on people to recognize the people behind the numbers and behind the label, we will call to our common sense of humanity targeting the audiences in countries of destination, but also, communities in countries of origin and countries along the major migration routes.

You are the representatives and the leaders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

You are the heroes of many. So many look up to you, young people, who wish when they grow up to be like you. Many were watching and sitting in the margin admiring your work and one day decide to join the Movement because of the examples and the leadership you've shown.

Let me salute your leadership.

Leadership can mean so many things, but at the end of the day, it is nothing but finding solutions to the problems of people. Leadership is not only about the people of your country, but every human being in your country, no matter how people try to portray their differences. Leadership is what you have demonstrated over these days.

Senator Gordon, let me salute you, as the leader of the Philippine Red Cross and our host. Let me salute you a member of the Board of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. You have been always consistent. Consistent in your empathy, your compassion, your anger when it is required, your love and your hope when it is needed.

Let me also salute the many young people, that we've met here.

Anyone who travels to Geneva sometimes when they get out of the plane and walks the whole long way to immigration, you will see this beautiful picture of an advertisement to a very expensive watch called Patek Philippe. The advertisement says: "You never actually own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation."

We don't own the Red Cross or Red Crescent, we only look after it for the next generation.

So my last word goes to you, our young people; lead us, lead us in the future, and be sure we will always be on your side to do everything possible to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, and always on your side to walk the last mile, the extra mile to the hardest to reach, to the ones that seem to be forgotten, the ones that we call invisible. But if we make one small effort, we will see them well, because they send us back the reflection of our own humanity.

Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be with you.

## Speech of PRC Chairman Richard Gordon

### Red Cross Red Crescent Manila Conference on Migration 2015

May 12, 2015 (first day)



Thank you Governor Corazon Alma de Leon, former Secretary of Social Services and Development and former Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission, will you please give her a big hand. She's one of the pillars of our Red Cross community.

First and foremost, I'd like to greet and appreciate the fact that my good friend, Acting Secretary Lingling Lacanlale is here, and she took time out from her very busy schedule. It shows the Department of Foreign Affairs' interest in the matter of migration. So, Lingling, thank you very much on behalf of our Red Cross movement. Thank you very much.

Also, we'd like to, in particular, notice the fact that we have a very good friend of mine who has worked very, very hard in the interest of labor in this country, and you've heard him speak, Dr. Hans Cacdac, who is former \_\_\_ and is actually chairman of the principal agency in charge

of migration in our country. So, I salute you, Hans, for all your wonderful effort, and thank you for coming here as well.

My felicitations and salute to my General, my favorite Secretary General, from Qatar, Saleh. You know, I'm rather close to the Qatar Red Crescent immensely, and I'll tell you about it later, but I enjoyed your speech very much. Thank you.

I also would like to thank our friends from the International Committee of the Red Cross who are here today, Sandra Moretti, and of course Pascal, over here, who's head of delegation here, the International Federation who are here as well, at the moment led by the regional head for Nepalese, by the name of Jagan. Jagan, will you please take a bow, because I am going to later on mention the fact that in spite of the disaster in Nepal, we have a Nepalese delegation here. [unclear audio]

Of course, I have to thank all of the different participants here today from the different countries, receiving and sending. The Red Crescent, the Red Cross that involves many countries, like Indonesia Red Cross, or for that matter, Nepal as I already pointed out, or the Middle East.

I'd like to greet also, on behalf of my country... You know, we've been given the responsibility of hosting this very, very important conference on migration. I cannot do that without telling you that the representatives from our government are here. Foreign Affairs is here. Department of Labor is here. Department of Justice is here. Immigration is here, and many others.

And I'm sure... I have not seen the roster yet, but I'd like to greet all your Excellencies from the different embassies who have decided to come here today.

Let me also give my personal gratification for the attendance, like I said, of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as the attendance of all our chapters in the country. All 102 Chapters have come down here, represented by their Members of the Board and by their Chapter Administrators. We pay very, very strong importance to this conference because, as you will see, I believe it is a game changer in our Movement.

Today we meet under very, very auspicious circumstances. Migration is a very big issue. In spite of the fact that it is one of the biggest issues hounding the world today, let me just tell you that it is as old as dirt. The time of Moses when he led the Jews from Pharaoh in Egypt, the Chinese migrations brought about by wars in China, persecutions in China, that's why you have Chinese in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Korea, and all the other countries here in the region.

Let me also point out the fact that there have been many instances, and I think my good friend, Saleh has already mentioned the fact that you've had this very major event that transpired in Italy. You know, with all the furor in the world, particularly in the Middle East - in Iraq, in Syria, in Libya - a lot more people are affected by war and, therefore, are going to other countries in search of greener pastures, if you would.

They constitute what we call illegal migration. It's not far from the fact that in America, about 200 years ago, you had the Old World going to the New World, and creating a mighty country called America. Or, for that matter, the fact that today, we're experiencing migration of all kinds, even within continents. You see the problems in South Africa, for example, where migrants have been harassed, those who are trying to eke out economic opportunities in that country.

Today, these circumstances, militate that the Movement, among other things... and to be sure, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been thoroughly involved in migration, albeit at a very, what you might call, reactive stage. They react when there are migrant problems, when people are in ships, or when people are trying to save themselves under container boxes or whatever, or people who are scattered by war.

But, in reality, we are late-comers in the game of migration, if you can call it a game. Forgive me for calling it a game. It is not a game. Having said that, it is important for us to realize that it is not too late for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to start pulling itself together. And I would like to just cite the fact that, in 2009, we created a migration policy in the Movement in Kenya. It is not Dick Gordon here, it's the Movement.

But in 2011, I spoke with Jakob Kellenberger, the President of ICRC, and told him that we really have a severe problem in migration. Migration takes all kinds, as you know - the illegal migrants in Europe, and our legal migrants in Asia. We have to do so, because we cannot turn a blind eye, we cannot be bystanders in the tragedy that is happening, of people just trying to eke out an existence, new opportunities for themselves.

He encouraged me, and so I intervened in the convention, and I was so blessed because Qatar was there. I would like to make particular mention of Qatar because Dr. Fawzi, who is right here... Can you stand up please, thank you... Dr. Mohammed Almaadeed, my good friend, who was then Vice President of the Federation and, later, Saleh, our Secretary General here, we all got together and sat down and said we must do something. I thought they were going to get upset because I was quite blunt, which is par for the course for this representation. I don't believe in futzing around and not telling it the way it should be.

After that meeting, we agreed that we would hold a series of dialogues. With the help of Anne Leclerc we have been able to put together the Doha Dialogue. I want to tell you all, and I want to pay my respects and salute to Doha Dialogue on Migration, because the Qatar Red Crescent led an enlightened approach in discussing it in their own country, recognizing that there are things that must be fixed in migration.

Today, this is a continuation, an extension of that conference. We hope to break ground here, and to create game changers as we move on today.



The other day was Mother's Day... I have to slow down here because I get too excited, at times I get too emotional.

Mother's Day was celebrated by about 1.2 million Filipino women abroad working as domestic workers, if you would, or as they say, women household service workers. Allow about 52 million domestic workers working as female domestic workers as well, all over the world. These women leave their countries, hold the knife by the blade, and go to different countries in Europe, in Asia, in the Middle East. Going to a home that they do not know. From the very beginning that they leave - and even in my country, there are people who are unscrupulous, in spite of all the laws that I recommended to the Department of Labor in our government - we are trying very, very hard in terms of making sure that we control the abuses, they are nonetheless abused.

They are mulcted. They pay fees that are exorbitant at times. They recruit people and at times turn them into drug mules. It is fortunate that we were able to get a temporary reprieve for one of our Filipinas in another country who was practically mulcted and deceived, thinking that she was going to go as a migrant worker and was given a suitcase and turned out to have drugs. Well, we will not tolerate that but, in this particular case, when you have a person who is not endowed with the education that most of us have. She was a target of opportunity for those who are unscrupulous.

And so, today, as we speak here, we look at all these instances, just on the pre-departure stage, you already have. Contracts are substituted. They will be promised things, you know, benefits. Sometimes contracts will be given on the plane. That is illegal in our country but, nonetheless, it is still violated. And they will find out, when they go abroad, instead of having \$400 or \$500, they get \$150. When they arrive, because their papers are not in order at times, they're even mulcted at the airports in practically all the countries that send, because countries try to protect them but in the process of protection, some people take advantage of those protective measures to try and look for ways and means that they can mulct. Unscrupulous government officials would do that.

So, when they arrive in a foreign country, at times some have been raped right from the very beginning they are raped. Some are brought to a home where they don't speak the language, of course. I'm talking not about Filipinos, I'm talking about all the migrants of the world, women migrants. They will speak a different language, and they may not be familiar with the accouterments of modern-day living. The language barrier alone will create tensions. The inability to operate a microwave oven or a washing machine will create tensions. Or, for that matter, even a good-looking maid can create tensions in the household. Jealousies can create beatings that are unnecessary.

They will not be given opportunities at times to go see a doctor, unlike in Qatar where they have a very enlightened scenario, where... They brought me to this place where all the male migrants have this routine where they go to a place where doctors, clinics are there to minister to them.

Unfortunately, and let me be blunt, and forgive me for being so, because we cannot correct something unless we take away our blinders. The treatment in terms of some countries are that they are not labor workers, so they have a difficult time dealing with the Labor Ministers, our governments have a difficult time not only dealing with them, but they are afraid that they will lose their precious remittance of foreign exchange.

This is a travesty that has to be faced up to.

When you do that, what happens is they are more vulnerable. At times when that happens to them, they are overworked, they are not given health benefits, they sometimes work several households. Of course, when they give up, and say I cannot handle this anymore, or they escape, sometimes they will be revenge-exacted. How is that? They will be accused of stealing from the master.

And when that happens, they will be subjected to visa restriction. They cannot go out. Some of them are in prison right now. Some of them are in formal prisons in our embassies. All of us have embassies that are loaded with runaway workers.

Today, when we speak about migrant workers, first thing we must understand is we are not talking about things. We are not talking about objects. In spite of our cultural differences, we are human beings, and we must treat them with humanitarian respect, just as my good friend, Saleh, mentioned in his speech. There must be humanitarian respect in addressing these people.

Having said that, when you look at all these events transpiring in the life, they are not faceless. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement must provide a face, must adopt a people-first approach. Not chattel approach. Not something that was practiced many years ago, and by the way, in Sharia, or for that matter in the Bible, everybody is supposed to treat his or her fellow person with respect and dignity, and that it is a point in heaven if you will release them from slavery. That was the old days in the Sharia.

Today, we have to put this into the context of things. We're dealing with 232 million people, a nation by itself, that represents the sixth largest nation in the world. Can you imagine that? The migrants of the world, we think that when we send them, we're benefiting. They're sending remittances. But if you look at the disadvantages as well, there are. On the other hand, the receiving country benefits. In Hong Kong, in Singapore, there are two-income families. Or for that matter, in the Middle East, they are able to uplift the economies of their countries.

So it is a give-and-take proposition, a transaction, if you will. No, it must turn not only into a transaction, but a transformation of attitude. It must be definition of the character of both the sending country and the receiving country, because this is where we define the kind of nation we must be. We can have all the modern accouterments of today, but without the attitude of respect for your fellow man, you have not accomplished anything.

And that is why, today, even in Europe, they're having problems with their migrants. Some of them have been marginalized. They have been defined as terrorists. Now, you have terrorists coming out of internal Europe, even going to other places. It comes out to bite us, just as the Jews had ghettos in Europe and the Holocaust occurred, not to the pride of the entire humanity, but certainly all these things will lead to perdition.

Having said that, therefore, this conference is very timely, as it was timely in Doha. This is the time on which we must say, it may be old, but it is not too late to change. It is not too late to reinvent ourselves in the Red Cross Movement. If Henry Dunant demanded rules in war, we can demand, we can commit ourselves to rules in migration.

We don't need governments to do that, although we try. There are so many efforts being conducted by governments. There are concordances in the UN, in ILO. In ILO, it's very disappointing that 17 countries have chosen to sign ILO 189 which protects migrants. But isn't it a natural reaction by man to protect his fellow man. In the case of Dunant, it was natural for him to say we must protect those that have been disqualified from war, because they are already needing protection.

We must do our duty as Red Cross and Red Crescent folks here, make sure that we protect those who cannot protect themselves. We have no business being in the Red Cross and Red Crescent if we cannot do that for our fellow men and women, for the vulnerable. These are tenets of the Red Cross: protect the vulnerable, alleviate human suffering, uplift human dignity. It's in the Quran. It's in the Bible. It's in human nature.

## SPEECH OF PRC CHAIRMAN RICHARD GORDON

Therefore, this conference must find its way clear in making sure that the game changer is not just technology - the game changer is a dramatic change in attitude. Sure, we will not win the victories overnight. Migration is such a huge problem. Illegal migration is such a huge problem.

There are so many complexities, but we can begin to win in an area on legal migration, in a people who are most vulnerable: the female, the woman household service worker. Isolated, alone, no network as if she's working in a hotel or factory, but alone by herself.

Working with the employer, working with the government, working with the Red Crescent, we can help alleviate human suffering by beginning to agree today to having a concordant of values of protecting these people, very precious people, and making sure that we exercise humanitarian diplomacy within ourselves, within our governments, to try and make sure that a household worker can work better because she's treated better, and because she will be able to contribute more to the economy of the receiving country.

If we do not recognize this, if we do not accept this responsibility, then we are leaders of title, we're leaders of position. And that is not leadership, because leadership is action. Leadership is going out there and making life better. Leadership is drawing out the best in people.

That is our charter today. All these things we can do. We will call it the creation of a humanitarian lifeline.

People go abroad, they are on their own, we will provide them with a lifeline. Red Crescent, Red Cross, working with our governments, working among each other. We will have that line so that they can call us, and we can call each other, and we can help alleviate their suffering in their own communities.



This is a complaint. No it is not a complaint, this is a bite. No it is not a bite, this is the problem. In Indonesia, in Nepal. Every time you have a war, you are going to have this. And every time you have disasters, you're going to have one [audio unclear].

If we do not accept our responsibility, then we turn our back on the principles of the Red Cross.

Today, I am excited as well on the new technologies that we can apply. In Doha, I said we must take a big bite out of a bigger problem. That big bite is addressing the problem of the women household service workers. We can do that. We can change attitudes. We can change the way our governments think about it, both sending and receiving countries.

At the same time, we must also make sure that everybody knows that you can no longer take a lifeline called a mobile phone. You can no longer collect a passport. You can no longer deprive somebody of a visitation to her doctor. You can no longer deprive her of not having leave or having some privacy whatsoever.

Now, I am not showing the bad side alone. There are many, many migrant workers in my country that have benefited. Their children have graduated. Some of them have Ph.D.'s thanks to the support given to them by their employers in Saudi Arabia, in Qatar, in many places. We must not forget that.

But of course, suffering is suffering. And suffering must be alleviated.

The important thing today is that humanitarian concordant among ourselves, and seeking new technology to use, and advance that cause.

For example, we can have, as I proposed in Doha - and we are going to do it in the Philippines, and it will depend on you if you want to do it all as a regional confederation within the Red Cross Red Crescent Society, among Asians, and sending and receiving countries - come up with what we call an international call center, an international help desk. This is already being done in America, in Arizona for Mexicans. This is being done in South America. This is being done even in the Middle East - Qatar. Bahrain has been doing tremendous work on this, and I salute these countries.

But it is not enough.

Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies... Our government is doing that, and I know the calls are not that frequent. Of course, when you have a legacy of lack of protection, people are sometimes wary to talk to their own governments. I'm saying the truth here. The truth hurts at times but we have to face that.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies using its international track record, its reputation for being neutral, impartial, independent, and for humanity, using its volunteers all over the countries. 189 countries. 17 million volunteers. A powerful source, what we call the power of humanity. We can utilize it. If we have a call center, they can call and ask for assistance. They can call and ask for help, "How do I settle this?"

Have I said enough? I cannot say enough. When they get back - if they can come back - these women are also scarred, psychologically troubled... so you can see... for trying to eke out a living, for holding the knife by the blade, for being alone, leaving your families here, hoping that they can go to school. When they get back, are their families still intact? Their children, did they go to school? Or did they use the hard-earned money for other things. Sometimes this can be just overwhelming for a woman domestic worker.

So there is a whole nine yards of... prior to sending them, all the PDOS, if you will, giving them the cultural immersion. It's a big enough thing. But if we can start today, when we leave here tomorrow and agree on something, then we would have created that wonderful humanitarian effort.

This is the game changer that I speak of. An attitude change, not just technological change, but an attitude change that, like Henry Dunant 152 years ago, changed the mindsets of governments. Changed the way we looked at war.

It is time to change the mindset to look at migration. It is so old that nobody has ever changed it. We cannot, to use the words of Peter Maurer, be bystanders in this tragedy. We have to become part of the reality. We cannot be complacent. We cannot be indifferent. We cannot be passive. But we must be active leaders in promoting change for the betterment of the people of the world.

This is our task today.

I hope you will pardon me for my passion. But nonetheless, every ounce of energy, every moment when we think, we must think: that we don't live alone, that others have less in life, others have to struggle for opportunities.

So, perhaps, before I disgrace myself here with my emotion, I will use my favorite quote...

Before that, I will say, Happy Mother's Day to all those who have mothers in other countries, who is probably the daughter of a mother in the Philippines, or the mother of children in the Philippines, or the sister of somebody in the Philippines or Indonesia or elsewhere. And if you take pause to say Happy Mother's Day to these people, it will restore conviction and definition into our humanity as Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers.

And so I end my... Taking a favorite quotation of mine... Ulysses. People traveling to other countries. Some were pressured. Some for work. And he says, "Come, my friends // 'T is not too late to seek a newer world. // ...for my purpose holds // To sail beyond the sunset ... // ... and though // We [may not have that heart] which in old days // Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are: // One equal temper of heroic hearts, // Made weak by time and fate, but [still] strong in will // To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Not to yield.

Thank you all very much, and God bless you.

# ‘No one should work this way’

Exhibition 12 – 13 May 2015

Diamond Hotel, Manila, Philippines

**F**or 18 months, Bangkok-based journalist Karen Emmons and the photographer Steve McCurry worked on a documentary project to record and expose some of the abuses faced by migrant domestic workers. They photographed and recorded interviews with workers in four Asian countries. They found physical and mental abuse, child labour, forced labour, trafficking, rape and starvation. Some had been abused in their own countries, others had travelled elsewhere in Asia or to the Gulf states. The subjects were male and female, young and old, educated and illiterate; what linked them together was poverty, desperation, and a lack of protection. Their abusers were equally varied.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), which funded the photo project, estimates there are more than 52 million domestic workers in the world, and 250,000 in Thailand. Many are also migrant workers. Some recent, high-profile cases, have helped bring attention to the scandal of domestic worker abuse; these include the Indonesian domestic worker, Erwiana Sulistyarningsih who was abused in Hong Kong, and her fellow national, Isti Komariyah, who was starved to death by Malaysian employers. However in most countries domestic workers are not even covered by basic workers' rights legislation and protection systems. In 2011 a new ILO Convention specifically covering the rights of domestic workers came into force. However so far it has only been ratified by 14 countries, and just one (the Philippines) in Asia Pacific.

**Steve McCurry** is an internationally-known documentary photographer from the United States who specializes in India and South-East Asia. Best known for his work in war-torn countries like Afghanistan, he has covered many theatres of international and civil conflict, including Beirut, Cambodia, the Philippines, the Gulf War, the former Yugoslavia and Tibet. He focuses on the human consequences of war by looking at how it impresses on the human face. His image of a young refugee known as the "Afghan Girl" is considered "the most recognized photograph" in the history of National Geographic magazine. His work has won the Robert Capa Gold Medal, the National Press Photographers Award (given by World Press Photo) four times, the Magazine Photographer of the Year (given by the National Press Photographers Association) and the Olivier Rebbot Award twice. He received the Centenary Medal for Lifetime Achievement in the 2014 Royal Photographic Society Awards. His work has been featured in major magazines and frequently appears in National Geographic. His books include *The Imperial Way* (1985), *Monsoon* (1988), *Portraits* (1999), *South Southeast* (2000), *Sanctuary* (2002), *The Path to Buddha: A Tibetan Pilgrimage* (2003), *Steve McCurry* (2005), *Looking East* (2006), *Steve McCurry: The Iconic Photographs* (2012) and *Untold: The Stories Behind the Photographs* (2013).

**Karen Emmons** is an American journalist who has lived and worked in Asia for the past 25 years, after working as a staff reporter with LIFE magazine in New York City. Her reporting and editing work for newspapers, magazines and United Nations agencies have covered child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, migrant abuse as well as domestic worker abuse, among many other issues. Her work has appeared in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Time*, *People*, *Who*, *Reader's Digest*, *Development Asia*, *The South China Morning Post*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *International Herald Tribune* and *London Sunday Times*. She contributed to *The Meaning of Life* books, produced by the editors of LIFE magazine. She and Steve McCurry previously collaborated in Vietnam on a documentary project for The Global Fund, called *Access to Life*, on the difference that access to antiretroviral drugs makes in the lives of people living with HIV.



This exhibition would not be possible without the courage of the people who agreed to be photographed and talk about the abuse they experienced. The staff of several organizations working with domestic workers and/or migrants also gave generously of their time, contacts and resources. In particular:

#### **Indonesia**

Anis Hidayah, Executive Director, field officer, Nurharsono and the supportive staff of Migrant Care. Translators Gita Tampubolon and Binti Mukaromah Muhtarom.

#### **Nepal**

Pemba Lama, Deputy Secretary General, and Binda Pandey, Planning Commission member with GEFONT. Sonu Danuwar, President of the Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Trade Union. Pradhip of CWISH. Manju Gurung, Bijaya Rai Shrestha and Muna Gautam of POURAKHI. Chandani Rana with ABC Nepal. Maiti Nepal. Translator Kesang Renchen.

#### **Philippines**

Ma. Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, President and Executive Director, and Alfred Ari Regino, Karen Navera, Sheryl Losena and Agnes Villegas of the Visayan Forum Foundation. Luther Calderon from Kampi.

Fe Nicodemus of Kakampi. Noel Valencia and Vikki with Kanluga. Jerome with the Ople Center. Leah Valle helped with introductions to a Hong Kong shelter. Minette Rimando and Ana Valencia of the ILO. Translator Mishka Bosch.

#### **Hong Kong**

Elizabeth Tang, International Coordinator and General Secretary with the International Domestic Workers Network. IP Pui Yu (Fish), Regional coordinator (Asia) with the International Domestic Workers Federation. Sring, a domestic worker and member of Indonesian Migrant Workers Union. Wong Siu Woon (Michelle), Organizing Secretary with the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions and General Secretary, Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union. Shiella Estrada, a domestic worker and founder leader of the Filipino Migrant Workers Union. Chuni Thapa, a domestic worker and Chairperson of the Union of Nepali Domestic Workers in Hong Kong. Edwina Antonio-Calimutan and Esther C. Bangcawayan with the Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge. Rey Asis of the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Workers. Eni Lestari of the Indonesian Coalition to

Stop Overcharging-HK and Chairperson of the International Migrants' Alliance. Translators Kanitka, Chitra and Siti Nurhadiyah.

*Beth', now 20, from rural Philippines, abused in Manila*

"My employer would bang my head on the wall and she would throw hot water on me. She would burn my skin with cigarettes. She said this was the punishment for my sins."

'Beth' was sold by her sister to a couple in Manila when she was 10. She worked from 4 a.m. until late every day, cleaning and looking after their small child. She was not paid. Her female employer beat her frequently, with sticks, a pot or pan and, after the boyfriend once walked out, began burning her with cigarettes. After seven years locked in the house, Beth escaped. She had never been to school, watched TV or listened to music or the radio.



*Saraswati, now 19, from rural Nepal, abused in Nepal*

"She took me to my room and started beating me with her hand. Pulling my hair. With no one at home to stop her, she would beat me a long time....The government should not allow children to be used as domestic workers... guardians should be aware that they should not send their children to do such work."

The scars on Saraswati's forehead and her knee remind her daily of the years of abuse she endured, first with a family in her village. She began working when she was 12 because her family could not afford to send her to school. Her mother, sisters and a brother also worked in homes. A shopkeeper helped her escape to Kathmandu, where she worked for a family even more abusive. Saraswati still works as a housemaid but is finishing her education and helps other domestic workers learn about their rights.

*Sring, now 33, from Indonesia, helps other domestic workers in Hong Kong*

"To help protect workers from physical abuse you need to educate them to understand the laws in their workplace. They don't know that they have rights."

Sring's first employer paid less than the legal minimum and did not allow the legally set days off. She had to give most of her salary to the recruitment agency for the first six months. When her contract ended, Sring left and found a decent employer. She still cleans and cooks for a Hong Kong family, but is now Chair of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union. When an Indonesian worker is in trouble, Sring is the first person called to help.





## Asia Pacific Migration Network Side Event:

During the Manila Conference on Labour Migration, the Asia Pacific Migration network (APMN) held a one hour side event which was attended by participants of the Manila Conference, including members of civil society organizations, Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies, ICRC and IFRC. This APMN presentation, and annual meeting provided an ideal opportunity for attendees to learn more about the Network, including how the Network has developed since 2012 as well as some of the Network's current activities and future plans, as well as areas for National Society involvement. A key initiative being the development of a Foundation paper, identifying migration issues in the region, priorities for action and gaps. Research for the paper included a Regional Migration Survey that was disseminated to National Societies in the Asia Pacific Region in April 2015. During the meeting some interesting initial results from the survey were presented and a draft report based on these was circulated. This provided an opportunity for attendees to review the preliminary findings of the report and provide feedback, and we look forward to seeing and sharing the report once it is finalised.

The Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN) is a regional forum that was established through agreement by 17 National Societies in December 2012 at the Asia Pacific Migration Workshop, held in Bangkok. The APMN aims to engage National Societies and build their capacity to work towards enhanced collaboration, both internally within the Movement and with external actors, in responding to issues of migration. The Network aims to act as a platform to encourage information sharing, increased advocacy and better use of resources within the region, with the overarching goal that the rights of all migrants are recognized and upheld.

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## The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



**For further information, please contact:**

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