



# Red Cross Red Crescent Conference on Labour Migration

Bangkok, Thailand, 20 – 21 June 2018

Conference Report



## About the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our 190 member National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in every community reaching 160.7 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes, as well as 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by Strategy 2020 – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to saving lives and changing minds. Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development, and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

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## Overview

On 20 and 21 June 2018, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Offices for the Asia Pacific and for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) co-facilitated the Red Cross Red Crescent Conference on Labour Migration in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Conference brought together more than 80 participants from 29 National Societies along with external migration experts from civil society, agencies of the United Nations (UN) and governments including from the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process, the Swiss Development Corporation. The Conference was also supported by the technical expertise of IFRC and ICRC colleagues from across the Asia Pacific and MENA regions, and from Geneva.

The Conference provided a platform for Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) National Societies and external partners to discuss recent developments and exchange views, knowledge and experience under the theme of humanitarian assistance, protection and advocacy for those affected by labour migration, particularly those most at risk, including women and children.

The Conference is a follow-up from the Doha Dialogue Initiative, hosted from 2014-2015 with events held across Qatar, Myanmar and the Philippines.

2018 provided an opportune moment for this Conference, with almost unprecedented global attention to the issue of migration, including the needs of those affected by labour migration, and the on-going negotiations towards the first-ever Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration due to conclude by the end of 2018. At the same time, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has taken a number of decisive, collective steps to enhance our work to protect those most at risk in the context of migration, including labour migration.

The objectives of the Conference were to:

1. Enhance understanding of Asia Pacific and Middle East North Africa trends, dynamics and contemporary humanitarian challenges associated with labour migration
2. Enhance understanding of current opportunities and initiatives related to addressing the humanitarian consequences of labour migration at the national, regional and global levels
3. Enhance understanding of the collective strengths of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the respective mandates of its components, to assist, protect and advocate for those affected by labour migration
4. Enhance commitments and cooperation between National Societies across borders and across regions to assist, protect and advocate for those affected in the context of labour migration.

The Conference also provided an opportunity to discuss recent initiatives of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, related to labour migration, including the newly endorsed IFRC Global Strategy on Migration; the Movement Call for Action on the Humanitarian Needs of Vulnerable Migrants; the Protection within the Movement initiative; the Restoring Family Links (RFL) Strategy and developments in RFL (including missing and deceased migrants, and their families); and other cross-cutting initiatives across the Movement



Continued movement of migrant workers, particularly in low-paid and highly gendered sectors, continues within the Asia Pacific region and particularly between the Asia Pacific region and the MENA region.

Although many migrant workers bring great benefits to their new communities, and to their communities at home, many also face considerable humanitarian difficulties including anti-migrant sentiments, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance. Many migrant workers also face abuse, violence, exploitation, the risk of human trafficking, challenges to accessing basic services, the fear and reality of arrest, detention and deportation and an inability to access protection and justice. These risks are often particularly pronounced where migrants are in an irregular status. These humanitarian concerns also extend to the families of migrant workers, including those who stay behind. There is also the need to address concerns related to labour migration for host communities and those receiving and supporting migrant workers.

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## Day One

### Conference Opening and Welcoming Remarks

**Xavier Castellanos, Regional Director of IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office**



Mr Castellanos warmly welcomed all participants to Bangkok and to the Conference on behalf of the IFRC. He started his address by noting that labour migrants are among us all, including himself and many of the participants in the room. He identified the challenges before us as humanitarians, especially gaining acceptance and recognition for migrant workers and their families. He also underscored the heightened risks faced by irregular migrants, which can further exacerbate their vulnerabilities, including to xenophobia, physical, mental and sexual abuse, discrimination, violence, exploitation, detention, exclusion and trafficking.

He emphasised the importance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement leaders and partners gaining a better understanding of migration trends and dynamics, as well

as the activities of National Societies over the two days of the Conference, in order to identify needs and methods for collectively responding. He invited all participants to learn from each other's experiences across the Asia Pacific and MENA regions to enhance our respective activities. In addition, Mr Castellanos encouraged all participants to read the new IFRC report on *Addressing the Humanitarian Consequences of Labour Migration and Trafficking: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies* which can help us all consider the Movement's engagement on migration.

Finally, he thanked colleagues from Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the ICRC and the IFRC, and all partners for their participation, noting that he hoped that everyone would learn a lot from the two-day Conference.



**Vicki Mau, National Manager of Australian Red Cross and Co-Chair of Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN)**

Vicki Mau thanked all participants for taking the time to travel and join the Conference. She noted the need for a focus on collaboration to support people in need of the Movement's services who are moving between countries. The Movement's experience in responding to disasters and hazards, and with a broad reach across 191 countries and embedded within local communities, means that the Movement is uniquely positioned to address the humanitarian needs of migrants at all points during their migration journey. She highlighted some of the challenges ahead and posed the question of whether the Movement is currently reaching its full potential to serve migrants at risk, whoever they are and wherever they may be.

Co-Chairing the Red Cross Red Crescent Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN) along with the Maldivian Red Crescent, the Australian Red Cross aims to enhance the understanding and coordination of migration issues amongst National Societies through the Network. During the APMN Annual Meeting held prior to the Labour Migration Conference, APMN members discussed how to enable access to services for all migrants, and address risks, vulnerabilities and current gaps in service provision.



**Dr Fawzi Oussedik, Head of International Relations and International Humanitarian Law, Qatar Red Crescent**

Dr Fawzi remarked on the continued focus of the Qatar Red Crescent on labour migration, building upon the cross-regional dialogue started in Doha, Qatar in 2014. He welcomed the opportunity to continue these important discussions during this Conference, which serves firstly as, a platform for bringing together National Societies and other partners to discuss labour migration issues and the various avenues for enhancing our respective and collective efforts, and secondly as an opportunity to share the experiences of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies outside of the Movement. Lastly, to reflect upon the lessons learned of how to improve conditions for migrant workers, and find solutions to address associated issues at political, humanitarian and international relations levels.



He reminded all participants that as the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, our mandate is to relieve suffering and preserve human dignity, and he hoped that the outcome of the Conference would be supported by high-level discussions on migration. Dr Fawzi ended by thanking the organisers for making this Conference possible and all participants for contributing to the discussions.

## Session 1: Expert Panel Discussion

### **Chair: Raja Dato' Nazrin bin Raja Aznam, Member of National Executive Board and Chairman of International Relations, Malaysian Red Crescent**

Dato' Nazrin began by reiterating that over half of the people in the room are migrants, albeit in comfortable positions. However, it is not always so for many migrant workers, who may turn to the Movement in search of assistance and support. He cautioned that we cannot fail them. In this ever-changing world, migrant workers face multiple risks and challenges, including everyday survival, access to education, social and cultural assimilation and the impacts of disasters. Many are marginalised within their host communities, and struggle to enjoy their fundamental human rights.

### **Nilim Baruah, Senior Labour Migration Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO)**

Mr Baruah's presentation highlighted the main regional migration trends in the Asia Pacific region:

- While the number of migrant workers leaving their countries of origin are still significant, there has been an overall decline since 2016, reflecting the fall in oil prices globally and thus the demand for labour. However, this decline could also be interpreted positively as a reflection of increased opportunities within countries of origin, or negatively as an impact of a ban on labour migration.
- Countries in the Gulf remain the primary destinations for many migrant workers from the Asia Pacific region, in particular Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar.

- A large number of migrant workers in the region are female domestic workers, indicating the gendered dimensions to labour migration.
- There are potentially some positive features in seasonal workers' programmes, such as the programme hosted by New Zealand which attracts migrant workers from the Pacific Islands.

He continued by outlining some of the main humanitarian challenges and opportunities for collaboration, as identified by the ILO:

1. **Costs associated with labour migration**, and fees of recruitment agencies and brokers, which are particularly high in and specific to certain regions and sectors. Efforts to reduce such costs will benefit migrant workers and their families.
2. **Gender-based risks and discrimination**, recognising that male and female migrants face different challenges. Female migrants often have fewer opportunities to migrate through regular channels, and are afforded weaker social protection, such as being paid the minimum wage and enjoying maternity rights.
3. Issues surrounding **decent employment and working conditions**, such as document retention. Recently, the UAE and Qatar embarked on the process of making changes in this regard.
4. The main driver of migration is still **economic benefits**. While legally, migrant workers should be treated equally to national workers, many migrants still fill low-paying jobs, with women domestic workers being the lowest paid – a sector in which there is usually no minimum wage and timely pay protections. Electronic wage transfers could be a method to mitigate these forms of discrimination, as was recently introduced in Thailand and the UAE.
5. **Social protection, occupational health and safety, and security mechanisms** are less accessible to migrant workers especially those on temporary contracts, and particularly for the many workers who have no written contract of employment.
6. There are rarely **complaints mechanisms**, or platforms for migrant workers' voices to be heard. Further, migrant workers are often denied the right to organise either formally or informally.

### Leah Sullivan, Communications & Advocacy Officer, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

Ms Sullivan provided an overview of global migration trends and dynamics, highlighting that international migration continues to be a growing phenomenon, and adding that people who move between countries in the 'global south' are more likely to migrate using irregular pathways and are also more often undocumented, in comparison with migrants in or to the 'global north'. She



explained that women comprise just under half of all cross-border migrants (although this does not account for gendered-dimensions in internal migration), and that women make up the majority of migrant domestic workers. Leah added that women often face pressure to work as caregivers for the elderly and children due to funding cuts from states for public provision of these services.

Many countries, for example the Philippines and Nepal, have a high dependency on remittances from migrant workers, which can create or exacerbate economic instability and vulnerabilities to the economy in the worker's country of origin resulting from volatility in the economy of the country of destination, and consequently increase exploitation of migrant workers. Thus, efforts to enhance discussions on the intersection of migration and development and explore mutually beneficial arrangements for migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination, as through the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), are significant.

Nevertheless, Leah reminded participants that humanitarian and human rights concerns are still acute, and evidence now shows that the regularisation of migrant workers does not necessarily prevent exploitation and abuse. Arbitrary discrimination and abuse still affect migrants who are in a regular migration status, despite the policymaking sphere assuming that only irregular migrants are at risk of rights violations. Moreover, there is an urgent need for identification of and support for migrants who go missing.

Turning to the current global high-level discourse on migration – especially through the negotiations towards a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – Leah explained that while States and parties agree that migration is a highly complex issue, there is no consensus on the mechanisms for sharing the responsibility for protecting migrants and refugees. Leah ended by encouraging all humanitarian actors to advocate with States to uphold international humanitarian law, not to misinterpret the discourse on combatting migrant trafficking and smuggling as justification for rights infringements, and to engage with processes to strengthen protection of all migrants at the international level.



**Aishath Noora Mohamed, Secretary General of Maldivian Red Crescent and Co-Chair of Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN)**

Ms Aishath Noora began by noting that one in every five migrants originates from the Asia Pacific region, and emphasising the immense importance of protecting migrant workers in and from this region. As the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, she reminded participants of the mandate to work with and for all migrants, including migrant workers, to address and respond to humanitarian needs, and to remain neutral – not encouraging or discouraging people to migrate.

She outlined some of the Movement's many strengths, including the strong local and 'grassroots-level' connections, the wide global reach with a presence in 191 countries, and status as an auxiliary to states' public authorities. For the benefit of all participants, Noora also provided an overview of the scope of the Movement's activities and programmes to provide humanitarian assistance for migrant workers, which includes health and welfare services, psycho-social support and restoring lost family links (RFL)



programme, as well as engaging in humanitarian diplomacy in favour of all migrants and those affected by migration. Finally, she reiterated that as a Network the Movement is in a position of relative advantage to work collaboratively with other partners focused on migration, while all of the Movement's actions are guided by the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Seven Fundamental Principles.<sup>1</sup>

## Session 2 (a): Pre-departure Initiatives for Migrant Workers

This session was moderated by Ruth Lane from the Swiss Red Cross and Jasmine Lidasan from Migrant Forum in Asia. The moderators stated that protection of migrants begins at home, and introduced three speakers who will describe some pre-departure initiatives to enhance migrant workers' empowerment and protection.

### Dr Zenaida Paez-Beltejar, Manager of Welfare Services Department, Philippine Red Cross

Dr Paez-Beltejar gave an overview of the Philippine Red Cross' support for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and the current migration trends in the Philippines, explaining that better work opportunities are the primary driver for migration, and many migrants face protection risks including human trafficking.

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) provides pre-departure orientations to prospective migrants containing general information on health, culture, lifestyle and laws in various countries of destination, and tips for psycho-social wellbeing and where to get support if needed. PRC's services also include crisis interventions and restoring family links (RFL), family tracing and reunification. Following disasters, PRC also offers support to migrants and their families; repatriation services and referrals to other support services.

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<sup>1</sup> The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity and Universality.



She emphasised that information is a form of protection for migrants. Knowing this, PRC and IFRC created the ‘Virtual Volunteer’ online platform for migrants to locate services (e.g. medical, legal support, law enforcement assistance) while abroad. It also provides safety and first aid tips, translation functions, links to other resources and a contact form for communicating directly with PRC’s staff and volunteers. PRC plans to collaborate with other Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to further improve this tool, and Dr Zenaida stressed the importance of strengthening partnerships and networking with National Societies in countries of destination to better support migrant workers.

### **Umesh Prasad Dhakal, Executive Director, Nepal Red Cross**

Mr Dhakal began by tracing the long history of migration to and from Nepal emphasising the present-day high levels of out-migration which can be attributed mainly to urbanisation and economic factors. He described migration trends in Nepal: many Nepali migrant workers use irregular channels and are undocumented which presents increased risks including to human trafficking. The main countries of destination for low-skilled Nepali migrant workers are the Gulf countries. Remittances from Nepalis working abroad contribute greatly to individual households and to the Nepali economy in general.

The Nepal Red Cross also participated in the IFRC ‘Rights of Migrants in Action’ project from 2015 to 2017 which aimed to promote and protect migrants’ rights through global and coordinated action uniting civil society organisations to exchange good practices and strengthen expertise in migration. Mr Dhakal described the Nepal Red Cross’ RFL activities which include tracing services for migrants abroad and dissemination of information about RFL messaging to prospective migrants during pre-departure information sessions held by the Department of Foreign Employment, via employment agencies, grassroots volunteers and public radio broadcasts.

### **Lara White, Regional Labour Migration Specialist, International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

Ms White outlined the history of IOM which began with humanitarian work for displaced populations, managing resettlement of refugees, and now includes services

for international students, migrant workers, refugees and other migrants. IOM offers training in preparation for work and life in other countries, and endeavours to provide accurate and reliable information to aspirant migrants (whether they intend to migrate through regular or irregular channels) via Migrant Resource Centres. IOM partners with governments, recruitment agencies and the private sector to offer rights-based curricula.



IOM is directly involved in discussions related to labour migration through intergovernmental for a such as the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue. These discussions have resulted in IOM offering pre-employment orientation seminars to provide prospective migrants with adequate information before they commit to employment, and also post-arrival orientation seminars as a migrant's situation may change upon arrival in a new country.

Recently, in response to global concerns, companies are increasingly incorporating sustainability mandates into their corporate social responsibility models that require suppliers to consider and uphold migrants' rights. IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) initiative trains the private sector about slavery and trafficking, provides pre-departure and post-arrival orientation training to migrant workers to enable them to make informed decisions and better exercise their rights as well as providing technical empowerment to raise concerns, supply chain mapping and ethical recruitment support. Good practices learned from the initiative are that families can participate in the initiative as migration is often a family decision, the value in various sources of information, and the benefits of group learning.

## Session 2 (b): Protection activities for migrants

This session was moderated by Dr Sabrina Meddour from the Qatar Red Crescent and Sally Barber from UN Women.

### Cornelius 'Leo' Brueser, Migration Adviser for Asia Pacific, ICRC



Leo explained the ICRC's perspectives on 'protection' by providing examples of the work of ICRC in immigration detention, guidance for law enforcement officers including upholding the principal of non-refoulement, restoring family links (RFL) which encompasses avoiding family separation, keeping families together and investigating the fate of missing migrants, and working together as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Leo also posed a question to participants by asking how could we all work more effectively together to address the challenges of protecting migrants, including through identifying and addressing protection gaps.

### **Vicki Mau, National Manager – Migration Support Programme, Australian Red Cross**

Vicki spoke about the Australian Red Cross' (ARC) work supporting people who have been trafficked. She started by sharing the story of a survivor of trafficking who approached the ARC for support after recognising the emblem from elsewhere during their migration to Australia. Vicki explained that Australia is a popular country of destination for migrants, however is also somewhere that many people may be trafficked to. Furthermore, some migrants in Australia experience forced labour, severe forms of labour exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced marriage. ARC endeavours to provide services to all people in need, in both urban and rural settings across Australia, and in particular supports survivors of trafficking as many have been subject to emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Through case work and outreach, service providers understand and can identify indicators of trafficking, and refer survivors for onward services.

ARC also engages in humanitarian diplomacy, using evidence and data to influence policy-makers and raise awareness of risks, promoting collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders, including other Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies. ARC's role is to provide support services and ensuring that the voices of those effected are amplified, in order that ARC can offer the most appropriate humanitarian assistance to people in need.

### **Session 3 (a): Access to Services including Health Care for Migrant Workers**

The moderators, Oyungerel Amgaa, IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Health Coordinator and Patrick Duigan, IOM Regional Migration and Health Advisor introduced the session which explored the challenges faced by migrant workers in accessing basic services including health and care in host countries, as well as existing initiatives that address these challenges.

### **Noora Rashid Al-Dosari, Executive Director of Volunteering and Local Development, Qatar Red Crescent**

Ms Al-Dosari began by providing an overview of the demographics and dynamics of migration to Qatar, a host country for migrants of various nationalities who mostly work in the construction industry and services sector. She explained that following the Qatar government's commitment to better health and care for all in the country contained in its National Vision 2030, the Qatar Red Crescent (QRC) signed an agreement with the government to manage six healthcare centres located close to communities of migrant workers, which serve approximately 810,000 labourers annually. These centres provide a range of services including health awareness programmes, emergency care,

laboratory services, and dental care for migrants. However, the Health Centres currently only provide basic healthcare – more serious health conditions are referred to a hospital but QRC supports the cost of necessary treatment.

QRC has successfully attracted additional funding for their health initiatives which now include mobile clinics, enabling QRC to reach migrant workers who are located far from the city areas. There are plans afoot for health awareness campaigns targeted specifically at migrant workers – such as an anti-smoking campaign. In the future, QRC hopes enable cooperation with embassies, other government authorities and private companies to involve them in the provision of primary healthcare for migrant workers in Qatar.

### **Va Sopheak, Head of Communicable Diseases/Non-Communicable Diseases Sub-department, Cambodian Red Cross and Chair of ART Network**

The Cambodian Red Cross is well-known within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for its pioneering work on HIV education and awareness, and has been part of the ART Network – the Red Cross Red Crescent Asian HIV Network – since 1999. The ART Network was established in 1994 in response to the HIV epidemic in the region.

According to Mr Sopheak, the majority of Cambodian migrant workers are undocumented, and in countries such as Thailand this means that they face obstacles in accessing affordable healthcare. In response, the ART Network proposed a project to explore the scale of HIV prevalence amongst migrants in the Greater Mekong sub-region, which includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand.

An assessment was recently conducted in Cambodia which involved consultations with civil society organisations, government authorities, healthcare providers and migrants in the context of Cambodia-Thailand cross-border movements. Although information on the number of migrants living with HIV is not available, and reliable data are considerably lacking, it is suspected that the number could be high. Many Cambodian migrant workers commute from Thailand back to Cambodia in order to receive anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment, but about 30% appear to have dropped out of the treatment regime. Nevertheless, structures and networks exist which provide healthcare assistance to migrants, but there are challenges in building trust with migrants and encouraging them to accept the treatment.





Furthermore, some migrants may avoid accessing available treatment due to the social stigmas attached to living with HIV.

In order to address this issue, Mr Sopheak described the potential for collaboration between recruitment companies and the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs, which could enable the dissemination of information to migrants about how and where to receive ARV treatment during pre-departure orientation sessions. The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) hopes to develop a referral mechanism to link CRC with existing organisations working with migrant communities. Additionally, Mr Sopheak urged other RCRC National Societies to join these efforts and re-activate cross-border committees, in order to continue negotiations and advocacy with their governments to allocate more resources for healthcare and, in the context of Cambodia, in the Commune Council Development Plan.

Other challenges relate to the provision of healthcare for irregular and/or undocumented migrants in countries of destination, and the significant financial and security implications for migrant workers of returning to their country of origin for health care, as this would necessitate requesting time off from employers and incurring additional risks while travelling, due to their lack of necessary legal documentation. An additional challenge for service providers is that migrant workers are frequently on the move, thus ensuring follow-up treatment adherence is problematic.

### **Session 3 (b): Supporting Social Inclusion and Cohesion**

This session was moderated by Tiziana Bonzon, IFRC Global Migration and Displacement Lead and Oliver Behn, Head of Asia for the British Red Cross.

#### **Rachel O'Connor, National Migration Programmes Manager, New Zealand Red Cross**

Ms O'Connor opened her presentation on labour market integration in New Zealand, by describing how having a job is a vital part of belonging and feeling part of a community, and this is why the New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) 'Pathways for Employment Programme', is a good example of a social inclusion and cohesion initiative.

She elaborated that the conceptual framework of ‘integration’ is the basis for the NZRC programme. However, perspectives vary on the relationship between obtaining a job and actual inclusion and integration within a community. For example, governments may consider this to be when someone is employed and thus no longer receiving welfare payments, while an NGO may consider initial low-skilled roles as achievement of employment, and an individual may regard a sustainable or fulfilling role as a measure of satisfactory employment.

Rachel explained that there are various factors that influence an individual’s experience of social inclusion and cohesion. These include: the length of time that the person spent seeking asylum or as a refugee; personal expectations; the person’s transferable skills, qualifications, and professional work experience. The length of time that a person has spent as an asylum seeker and/or refugee can directly correlate to the length of time it may take them to successfully find employment. An individual’s personal expectations can include those related to the type and level of job they desire, delays encountered in being formally employed, and idealist views of what being employed may feel like.

NZRC’s ‘Pathways to Employment’ programme offers individualised career advice and guidance to migrants and resettled refugees, including an assigned Employer Liaison Officer who works with both the job-seeker and the employer. Post-employment support also is offered.

Rachel’s presentation ended with a reference to UNHCR’s 10-Point Plan which outlines specific actions that can be taken to support the sustainable employment of refugees in resettlement countries: for example, matching talent with employment opportunities, providing equal opportunities to job-seekers, preparing for the work environment, and coordination between stakeholders. Finally, Rachel echoed the importance of unpacking what ‘measuring integration’ really means, and advocated for a move away from measuring how many jobs were identified for people seeking employment, and towards more qualitative and subjective measurements: does an individual find the work fulfilling? Is the job sustainable? And does it meet the needs of the person’s wider community?

**Youngjo Lee, Senior Officer,  
Disaster Relief Team, the Republic  
of Korea National Red Cross**

Mr Lee presented about health services for migrants in South Korea provided the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (KNRC), in a country where 4.4% of the total population (over 2 million people) are migrants – many originating from countries in Asia including China, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and





Viet Nam. Many female migrants have come to South Korea to marry South Korean men, and South Korea is also hosting numerous migrants from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as many other migrants in an irregular status.

KNRC's 'Windmill of Hope' (*Heemang Pungcha*) programme is targeted towards children and youth, older people, migrants, and families in crisis. The programme's focuses on supporting such people with livelihoods, housing, healthcare and educational support.

As well as the Windmill of Hope programme, KNRC also hosts 'Healthy Neighbour Centres', which offer support services to migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees and multi-cultural families, on the condition that they have

been in South Korea for at least 90 days prior to receiving the support. KNRC works closely with Seoul National University Hospital who provides KNRC with technical support and to whom they also refer people for particular medical treatment. At present, KNRC are supporting the reception of several hundred migrants from Yemen, who have recently arrived in Jeju island and are seeking asylum in South Korea. KNRC offer the asylum seekers medical assistance and food aid.

A number of lessons have been learned by KNRC from their experiences thus far in providing assistance to migrants. Firstly, language barriers are a significant challenge as skilled interpreters are frequently needed in order to communicate effectively with migrants. Secondly, it is often difficult to promote the services offered by KNRC to irregular migrants due to challenges with reaching such people. Lastly, KNRC has seen many positive impacts of their programmes. KNRC is positioned as one of South Korea's leading organisations providing quality healthcare services to migrants, which has in turn strengthened the partnership between KNRC and relevant government authorities and helped develop a network and future plans with other migrant-focused organisations in the country.

## Session 4: Supporting Migrant Workers on Return and Reintegration

This session was organised as a 'gallery walk'. Participants were divided into five groups which rotated around five 'exhibits' at which there were presentations and visual displays about various country contexts and how the respective Red Cross or

Red Crescent National Society is responding to the return and reintegration of migrant workers in these contexts.

### **Papua New Guinea Red Cross and Fiji Red Cross: Returning migrant workers in the Pacific**

The exhibit introduced the seasonal workers' programmes that Papua New Guinea and Fiji have established with New Zealand and Australia. Seasonal migrant workers often originate from rural areas where there are few work opportunities, and small island states in the Pacific are also greatly affected by the impacts of climate change and highly susceptible to disasters. The programme enables migrants to work overseas for six months, following which they are expected to return to their country of origin. Remittances and earnings from overseas work can be advantageous for seasonal migrant workers and their families, however sometimes workers are ill-prepared for the risks associated with migrating for work and can fall prey to abuse and exploitation. Upon return to their country of origin, some migrant workers require psycho-social and livelihoods support.

Red Cross National Societies in the Pacific find it challenging to find ways to assist migrants due to the great distances across the Pacific islands and the fact that Embassies are often unable to help migrant workers in distress. As such, it is even more important for National Societies to cooperate through cross-border initiatives and to collaborate to assist and protect migrant workers. In recent years, the Australian Red Cross has funded disaster risk reduction programmes in Pacific countries, such as mangrove planting and sea wall construction in coastal areas, in order to create local employment opportunities.

### **Myanmar Red Cross: Returning migrant workers in border regions of Myanmar**

Myanmar shares an international border with seven other countries, and consequently there is a high rate of migration from Myanmar, particularly to Thailand. The Myanmar Red Cross faces numerous challenges in responding to the high number of migrant workers who return to Myanmar, including managing large-scale returns, paucity of information about anticipated returns, the fact that many returnees lack documentation and a legal identity, that upon arrival in Myanmar many returnees having to stay in temporary shelters, responding to deportations or 'involuntary returns', and the complexities of reintegration of migrant workers who have spent many years abroad.

The majority of the Myanmar Red Cross' programmes are community-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to improve livelihoods of the returnees. The Myanmar Red Cross provides services to returning refugees from Thailand at temporary shelters alongside the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), in anticipation of handing over the project to the Myanmar government in due course. The Myanmar Red Cross also participates in multi-stakeholder meetings about human trafficking, and delivers awareness sessions about protection, especially for people who are considering migrating for work.

At present, the lack of coordination between the multiple stakeholders, and the lack of clarity on respective roles and responsibilities present significant challenges to providing humanitarian assistance. The Myanmar Red Cross has many valuable experiences and learnings to share, including the need for strengthening capacity and technical knowledge within the National Society to provide assistance. It is hoped that a Roundtable discussion with respective communities and organisations can be conducted soon, supported by enhanced humanitarian diplomacy and regional advocacy efforts.

### **Indonesian Red Cross (PMI): Health and psychosocial support for returning migrant workers**

Currently, PMI is the only organisation offering assistance to migrants who are deported from Sabah, Malaysia to Nunukan island off the east coast of Indonesian Borneo, and have been providing services since 2017. Numbers range between 90 and 300 people arriving in Nunukan per week, and upon arrival returnees are immediately moved to a temporary shelter managed by the local government, where they are offered assistance such as the opportunity to make a “safe and well” phone call as part of PMI’s Restoring Family Links services. Following this, individuals are given three options: 1) returning to their place and community of origin with the cost of transportation being covered by the Indonesian government, 2) staying in Nunukan island, or 3) returning to Malaysia (subject to acquiring the necessary travel documents). Approximately half of all returnees choose to return to Malaysia. For those who choose to stay in Nunukan, the local government is legally obliged to offer assistance or refer onwards, for example to potential employment opportunities in factories.

PMI have gradually been strengthening their relationship with the Indonesian government and are now able to deliver information about RFL services during the briefings for migrant workers at government service centres. PMI has also secured some funding from the government which has been used to station an ambulance which is on standby for migrants upon arrival in Nunukan. The main challenge faced by PMI is the lack of advance notice from the Malaysian government about deportations of migrant workers to Indonesia which makes it difficult for PMI staff and volunteers to prepare to adequately respond.

### **Philippine Red Cross: Supporting undocumented and stateless migrant workers upon return and deportation**

The east Malaysian state of Sabah hosts many thousands of migrant workers from the Philippines, and many Filipinos and people of Philippine heritage have lived in Sabah for generations. However, due to an ongoing political border dispute, many people are regularly deported by the Malaysian authorities to islands in the southern Philippines. Upon arrival, local branches of the Philippine Red Cross offer basic services to the deportees, including first aid, RFL and food. However, as many of the people do not have a sustainable source of income or family members in the Philippines, many choose to return back to Sabah.

## Afghan Red Crescent: Mixed migration returns

There are large numbers of documented and undocumented Afghan migrants currently in Iran and Pakistan. In 2018, Pakistan decided to repatriate many of these migrants to Afghanistan, which has limited capacity to respond to the needs of returnees due to the lack of infrastructure and resources as well as disasters in rural areas of the country. Fortunately, the further repatriation of Afghan migrants from Pakistan to Afghanistan has been postponed for the time being. Nevertheless, these migrants will eventually be repatriated to Afghanistan and will require considerable support. In addition, Afghanistan is also facing challenges in managing the humanitarian needs of large numbers of people who are internally displaced throughout the country.

The Afghan Red Crescent supports returning migrants through various projects namely, disaster management and risk reduction projects; youth-focused projects including promoting sports; and health projects such as clinics, mobile health teams and community-based health and psycho-social initiatives. Although these programmes are not specifically designed for returning migrants and IDPs, such people are major beneficiaries of the initiatives. Other groups of vulnerable people who may be in need of support from the Afghan Red Crescent include the small number of migrants from Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Afghanistan. The needs of migrants and IDPs in Afghanistan is a major concern owing to the large numbers, and thus a greater focus on their specific humanitarian needs is required. Some challenges and opportunities face the Afghan Red Crescent and these include working with the Afghan national government and UN agencies, and also obtaining good quality data to inform the design and efficacy of future initiatives.





## Bangkok Call for Action on Labour Migration

We, the members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, have gathered in Bangkok, Thailand for the Red Cross Red Crescent Conference on Labour Migration, from 20 to 21 June 2018, to advance our shared efforts to address humanitarian needs in the context of labour migration

*Acknowledging*, in accordance with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement principle of humanity, the importance of respect for the human dignity of all migrants, irrespective of legal status, including migrant workers,

*Expressing*, in accordance with the principle of humanity, deep concern about the continued vulnerability and risks faced by many migrant workers, in Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, in regard to their dignity, safety, access to protection as well as access to essential services, including health and care, and specific concerns faced by those who have been trafficked,

*Expressing* also concern about migrant workers, who face risks associated with disaster and crisis, and those being driven to migrate by environmental changes, including the effects of climate change,

*Recalling* that, as neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian actors, we take no position on whether there should be more or less migration, but recognising, nonetheless, the social, economic and cultural contributions of migrants, including migrant workers, to countries of origin and destination,

*Recalling*, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Doha Dialogue Initiative, from 2014 to 2015, with events held in Qatar, Myanmar and the Philippines, the 31st International Conference 2011: Resolution 3 - Migration: Ensuring access, dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion, and its commitment that states will ensure our safe and effective access to all migrants in need; recalling, the Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers, endorsed in Manila, Philippines on 13 May 2015; recalling, the Movement's call for action on the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants of the 2017 Council of Delegates; recalling, the IFRC Global Strategy on Migration 2018-2022, recalling also the IFRC Asia Pacific Framework for Action on Migration and Displacement 2017 to 2022,

*Recalling* further, the Declaration 'Together for Humanity' adopted by the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which acknowledged "the role of governments, within the framework of national laws and international law, especially international human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law, to address the humanitarian needs of persons negatively affected by migration, including families and communities, and to take effective measures",

*Reaffirming*, the humanitarian approach of the Red Cross Red Crescent to work with and for all migrants, focused on needs, vulnerabilities and potentials and irrespective of legal status or category, including migrant workers and those affected in the context of labour migration,

*Reaffirming*, that our work with and for migrant workers reflects our capacity and national context,

*Reaffirming* also, that our work with and for migrants is in line with International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement resolutions and approaches, and that we do not endanger beneficiaries, or the reputation of staff and volunteers of National Societies or other Movement Components,

## **We hereby declare and agree to:**

**Continue** to provide integrated and impartial assistance and protection, and to advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable migrant workers, recognising, that protection activities may encompass a wide range of initiatives, and the existence of the Protection within the Movement framework, to further clarify possible approaches to protection activities for migrants,

**Consider** developing further assistance, protection and advocacy activities for migrant workers, and those affected in the context of labour migration and trafficking, especially children, including also raising awareness of the humanitarian risks for irregular migrants and those who have been trafficked,

**Enhance**, together with the support of the other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the capacity of staff and volunteers of our National Societies to deliver stronger programmes for the most at risk in the context of labour

migration and trafficking, including, recognising the importance of having strong capacity within local branches, and especially those branches along migratory routes,

**Support**, together with the other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the development of strategic plans of action on migration, in line with the IFRC Global Strategy on Migration 2018-2022,

**Raise** awareness and ensure respect of the Code of Conduct for Data Protection, including taking special care with pictures and information relating to beneficiaries,

**In countries of origin**, continue and enhance our work to reduce vulnerability, and enhance the resilience of migrant workers, including through safe migration and pre-departure messaging and initiatives, including measures to reduce the risks of trafficking, and to better prepare migrant workers for their journey and living in host countries; also, to assist and support family members staying behind, including the children of migrant workers,

**Along migratory routes**, including across borders and across regions, seek to ensure access to assistance and protection, including for the most at risk, and develop agreements with each other to coordinate our services and share relevant information to and about migrants on their journeys,

**In countries of destination**, in cooperation with public authorities, seek to support access to our humanitarian services, including essential health and care, and protection services, without fear of arrest,

**In countries of destination**, encourage the social inclusion, cohesion and integration of migrant workers and host communities, including through initiatives to counter intolerance, prejudice and discrimination and to promote respect for diversity, enhancing cultural awareness between migrants and local communities,

**On return**, continue and consider developing further support for the immediate and longer-term reintegration needs of migrant workers, including through addressing health and any psychosocial support needs,

**Continue** to explore ways in which Restoring Family Links (RFL) can be implemented to better support those affected in the context of labour migration, recognising that addressing the Restoring Family Links needs of migrants is a key element of the Family Links Network's RFL Strategy 2018+,

**Undertake** humanitarian diplomacy initiatives to seek to ensure that authorities and other actors respect their obligations towards protecting the lives, the rights and the dignity of migrant workers, including their access to essential services and humanitarian assistance,

**Strengthen**, together with the support of the other components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, our partnerships within and across countries and regions, including between National Societies in countries of origin and in countries of destination, including bilateral or collective initiatives and projects among National Societies, in order to better assist, protect and advocate for the humanitarian needs of migrant workers, consistent with the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including recognising and supporting the roles of Red Cross Red Crescent networks, including the Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN),

### **Following endorsement of this statement, we agree to:**

**Create** an informal Cross-Regional Labour Migration Steering Group, comprised of National Societies from the Asia Pacific and Middle East North Africa regions, supported by the IFRC and ICRC, and hosted by the Qatar Red Crescent Society, to continue to review progress against the actions called for in the Bangkok Call for Action, to coordinate with relevant Red Cross Red Crescent working groups and initiatives, including the APMN Working Group on Labour Migration and Trafficking, consider resource mobilisation opportunities to support the work of the IFRC and National Societies, to share information on relevant contextual, legal and policy changes, and to periodically produce informal reports and make recommendations on how to strengthen our collective initiatives to ensure safety, dignity and respect for migrant workers, and those affected by labour migration, including through links with the forthcoming Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2018, the International Conference in 2019 and the development of Strategy 2030.

### **Gathered Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies:**

Afghan Red Crescent Society, Australian Red Cross, Bahrain Red Crescent Society, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Cambodian Red Cross Society, Fiji Red Cross Society, Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), Jordan Red Crescent, The Republic of Korea National Red Cross, Lao Red Cross, Lebanese Red Cross, Malaysian Red Crescent Society, Maldivian Red Crescent, Mongolian Red Cross, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Nepal Red Cross Society, New Zealand Red Cross, Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, Philippine Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, Singapore Red Cross Society, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, The Thai Red Cross Society, Viet Nam Red Cross Society

### **Including, Partner National Societies:**

American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross,

### **Together, with:**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

## **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.