

DTP completed the 3rd module of its capacity building program in Malaysia on *Advocating for the Rights of Migrant Workers* from 18-21 August 2017. The module had a focus on business and human rights - and the challenges of ending abuses in the recruitment, manufacturing, construction and forestry/palm oil sectors – as well as abuses experienced by migrant domestic workers, mostly women.

The private sector plays a major role in the process of labour migration – in the business of recruitment and employment in particular. The responsibilities of companies in their treatment of migrant workers have been recognised in a wide range of international guidelines and standards. Lack of knowledge of these standards and guidelines, and of how to apply them is a major hurdle to their implementation. The module help build the knowledge of advocates about the UN Guiding Principles, industry guidelines and frameworks on Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC), and Fair Labour Association (FLA). The module also had a focus on the role of National Human Rights Commission of Malaysia – SUHAKAM, and discussed the role of SUHAKAM in the development of National Human Rights Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

Sessions were led by Professor Surya Deva - Chair of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG), Jerald Joseph - DTP alumnus and SUHAKAM Commissioner, and Marie Apostol – CEO at Fair Hiring Initiative, as well as representatives from business and from the RSPO.

The module presented an opportunity for participants to exchange views, and to develop their understanding of international standards and how they could be applied – to prevent and stop the abuses that have drawn international concern, and to provide avenues for redress. Participants presented cases and issues faced by migrant workers to the Chair of UNWG.

The program is being organised by the Diplomacy Training Program and Migrant Forum in Asia with the Malaysia Bar Council, North South Initiative (NSI), and Migration Working Group (MWG) – and is taking place over five modules of 4 days this year. This program brings together about 30 Malaysian civil society advocates to develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to more effectively advocate for changes in policy and practice in relation to the growing number of migrant workers in Malaysia.