

Advocating for the Rights of Migrant Workers in Malaysia – A Capacity Building Program

Module four of the capacity building program for civil society “*Advocating for the Rights of Migrant Workers in Malaysia*” was held from 2-5 December 2017 in Kuala Lumpur.

The focus of the module was on civil society engagement with UN Treaty Bodies focusing on CEDAW – one of the relevant conventions to MWs ratified by Malaysia. The module also had a focus on engagement with diplomatic missions to provide an opportunity for participants to educate and inform the diplomatic missions about the issues and concerns of MWs in Malaysia. Participants visited the European Delegation and Australian High Commission to meet with diplomats. Participants also engaged with diplomats from the Embassy of Nepal and Indonesia. The sessions with diplomatic missions facilitated an exchange of information between advocates and missions and help build skills in strategic advocacy.

The module had further focus on the ASEAN Consensus on the rights of MWs adopted in November 2017. Participants discussed in groups to explore and analyse how the instrument can be used by civil society in their advocacy.

The special national level program is designed to build knowledge, skills and networks to enhance and support civil society advocacy for the promotion and protection of migrant workers’ rights in Malaysia. The program brings together Malaysian advocates with advocates from countries of origin, including Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Cambodia and Indonesia to build links and networks and to develop shared advocacy strategies for greater impact in Malaysia and countries of origin. It is organised and facilitated as a partnership between the Bar Council Migrants, Refugees and Immigration Affairs Committee (MRIAC), North South Initiative (NSI), Migration Working Group (MWG) Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) Diplomacy Training Program (DTP).

Over 30 participants representing NGOs, faith-based groups, trade unions, migrant community and lawyer’s networks in Malaysia came together for this module. Representatives from Nepal, Thailand and Bangladesh civil society organizations working for migrant workers also participated.