

Recommendations to CEDAW re Female Migrant Workers from Bangladesh

From participants of the DTP/MFA¹ Capacity Building Program: ‘Building Advocacy for Migrant Workers and Safe Migration’

This submission is being made by the participants of the DTP/MFA program on ‘*Building Advocacy for Migrant Workers and Safe Migration*’ organised in partnership with WARBE and RMMRU². These recommendations were prepared following a training session on CEDAW delivered by Ms Rekha Shah, Director of Programme, Steps Towards Development, on 22nd August 2016.

The recommendations address the issues and challenges of women migrant workers from Bangladesh identified by the program participants who work with and for migrant workers in a number of CSOs, NGOs and trade unions³.

The program participants request the *Citizens’ Initiatives on CEDAW* to consider including the following recommendations for inclusion in its final submissions to the CEDAW Committee. The recommendations have been grouped into areas of the concern.

The participants hope that the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee can encourage the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to fulfil its commitments to vulnerable women migrant workers in Bangladesh and in the countries of destination that they work in.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Bilateral Agreements (BLA)

- GoB should review all existing MoUs , government to government and bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) to ensure their consistency with CEDAW
- GoB should publish existing MoUs/BLAs and make them publicly available
- Protectionist policies that are discriminatory towards women on the basis of their gender or age such as banning women from migrating to certain countries, age bans and requiring the consent of male relative prior to migration should be repealed

Pre-Departure Training

- GoB should ensure that standard pre-departure training for female migrant workers (FMW) includes information on human rights and international labour standards, information related to consular support, legal redress, shelter support and complain receiving and service delivery mechanism
- Pre-departure training for women migrant workers should also include provisions on CEDAW and rights as foreign domestic workers (FDW)

¹ Diplomacy Training Program/Migrant Forum Asia

² Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit

³ See annex for list of participants and their organization

Skills Development

- GoB should take initiatives for developing skills of potential women migrant workers in relation to Information Technology (IT) and professions in demand in (countries of destination)

Role of Missions/Embassies

- GoB should ensure that the cause of death of women migrant workers is established by autopsy or medical certificate prior to the body being returned to Bangladesh and that families are provided with a death certificate
- GoB should ensure that Labour Attaches (LA) and staff in Bangladesh's Embassies/Missions have training on gender and CEDAW (with a specific focus to address the need of the women migrant workers), and develop specific policies and programs addressing the vulnerability and policies of MWs
- GoB should consider deployment of suitably qualified staff (especially female staff) with dedicated and specific roles to address rights and situation of women migrant workers at risk

Return and Reintegration

- GoB should maintain a standard database of returned women migrant workers and provide specialised services to ensure proper rehabilitation
- GoB should provide special medical services psycho-social counselling for sick returned women migrant workers in every public hospital
- GoB should provide vocational and entrepreneurship training for returned migrant workers aimed at enabling them to earn a living
- GoB should establish rehabilitation centres for stigmatized returnee migrant workers
- GoB should ensure access to legal aid both at the destination and home countries

Health

- GoB should ensure that FMWs are provided with free health checks in countries of destination every 6 months – provided by the employer
- GoB should seek an end to compulsory pregnancy testing of FMWs by governments of destination countries and should provide counselling to women before and after voluntary pregnancy tests
- GoB should seek to ensure that appropriate counselling is made available to all female migrant workers compulsorily tested for HIV/AIDS and TB
- GoB should ensure that migrant workers have access to health and reproductive health services in countries of destination

Annex

Participant List – participants present during the discussion.

Name	Organization
AKM Fazlur Rahman	Local Governance Program Sharique
Anindya Dutta	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Anirban Saha	Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)
Nasrin Sultana	Jibon Unnayan Sangstha (JUS)
Emdadul Haque	Southeast University
Jasmine Akter	WARBE Development Foundation
Jesmin Akter Kajal	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)
Khaleda Sarkar	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)
Md Liakat Ali	Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)
Md. Mahbub Alam Feroz	SHIELD
Md. Nazrul Islam Dhali	Social Un Obstructive Help Association (SUHA)
Md. Suhrawardhy Hussain	WARBE Development Foundation
Md.Abdullah Al Mamun	OKUP
Md.Nazmul Ahsan	Orchita Integrated Development Society
Mohammad Nora Alam	Caritas Bangladesh
Murshida Akter	NDWWU
Muslima Akter	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)
Nahidul Hasan Nayan	Awaj Foundation
Nayela Akter	HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation
Noorjahan Rina	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)
Prabir Biswas	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)
Ranjit Chandra Das	BASTOB – initiative for People’s Self Development
Salma Akter	BGIWF
Shahinur Akter	OKUP
Shamima Sultana	Awaj Foundation
Shemanta Shiraz	Help for Disability and Distress (HDD)
Shohel Chowdhury	IMA Research Foundation
Shyamal Chandra Mazumder	Caritas Bangladesh
Syed Azizur Rahman	Swapna Dektay Sikhi-Swadesi
Syed Reaz Monowar	ORNOB (Organization for Rural and Nature Oriented Bangladesh)
Sumaiya Islam	Bangladeshi Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA)