



Capacity Building Program on Human Rights and Migrant Workers in Qatar

**Diplomacy Training Program (DTP), in partnership with Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and
Georgetown University Qatar 23-26 September 2018 Doha, Qatar**

Summary Report

Mr. Mohammad Hassan Al Obaidli, Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADLSA), Qatar officially opened a four-day national-level capacity building program on human rights and migrant workers in Doha, Qatar from September 23-26. The program was organised by DTP in partnership with MFA and Georgetown University Qatar (GUQ).

The program brought together over 35 individuals from migrant communities, the private sector, governments (including diplomats) and civil society to learn more about human rights, the rights of migrant workers, recent reforms in Qatar - and to share experience and practice.

The spotlight on the treatment of migrant workers in Qatar has intensified as FIFA 2022 gets closer and concerns are raised about the treatment of the workers from Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines and increasingly Africa who are building the stadiums and infrastructure, staffing the hotels and shops, homes, and the oil and gas industry.

Migrant workers are subject to discrimination, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, non-payment of wages, violence, poor housing and food and detention. In many cases, migrant workers are forced to live on the fringes of society, beyond the usual protection of the law. The problems often begin before they leave as they are charged high debt-inducing fees to secure their jobs, by a recruitment industry becoming notorious for corruption and exploitation. Qatar's government has recently announced a series of significant reforms addressing many of the concerns that have been raised by human rights, labour organisations and governments. Changes in laws governing domestic workers, rights to leave employers and the country, access to wages, and the right to association have been made. The Qatar government has recently invited a technical mission from the ILO to assist in implementation of the reforms.

There were sessions with William Gois (MFA), Professor Ray Jureidini, author of the ILO White Paper on reforming recruitment, Mariam Bhacker, Project Manager BHRRC, Alaa Kaoud, OHCHR Information Centre - Doha, Professor Ryszard Cholewinski, International Labour Organization and Houtan Homayounpour, (ILO) Director of ILO Project Office in Qatar.

The program assisted participants to work together in developing practical strategies to protect and promote migrant workers' rights at the national level. The program built the knowledge and networks of participants and the feedback was very positive. Going forward, participants formed a WhatsApp group to stay connected and have agreed to come together and organise regular forums. One of the challenges put forward by William Gois to the participants of the program was to come up with a program/celebration to mark the International Migrant Worker's Day on December 18 this year.

