

ITUC AP | ATUC | MTUC | ILO ASEAN TRIANGLE PROJECT  
ATUC Youth Rally and Dissemination Forum on  
Protecting Migrant Workers through Trade Union Agreements  
“INTEGRATING YOUTH ACROSS BOARDERS”  
3-5 September 2015, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The 2015 ATUC KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION  
on Youth, Migration and Decent Work

The ASEAN Trade Union Council<sup>1</sup>, in the first ATUC Youth Rally and Dissemination Forum on Protecting Migrant Workers through Trade Union Agreements in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 3-5 September 2015, with the participation of 200 young workers/delegates and principal officers of 16 affiliate national labor centers, from eight (8) ASEAN member states, including observers and resource persons from the International Labor Organization (ILO) ACTRAV, ILO ASEAN Triangle Project ATP), the International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific, and the ASEAN Secretariat;

**ENGAGED** the active participation of the youth delegates in the collective analysis and appreciation of the current state of young workers, labor market realities, decent work, migration, the labor movement, and social media through structured learning exercises, workshops, group discussion, games, and other fun activities;

**NOTED** salient realities, and facts and figures

*On Migrant Labor*

- 25 million Asian workers are currently employed outside of their home countries, and every year more than three million people in the region leave home to look for employment;
- the Asia-Pacific Region receives over US\$113 billion in remittances annually -- the highest regional total in the world, supporting their families and countries
- Asia Pacific hosts the largest undocumented migrant workers in the world and Asians migrating to work has tripled since the 1980's;
- policy and administrative structures of States in the region are not sufficiently supported to respond to situations of vulnerable migrants and to provide assistance to these groups;
- a huge number of migrants are deprived of their fundamental rights to organize and to bargain collectively, and frequently subjected to discrimination in treatment and opportunities,

*On Young Workers*

- AP region is home to over 45% of youth population, or around 700 million young people;
- youth unemployment is three times higher than for adults, with the unemployment rate exceeding 10% in the AP region;
- the ITUC AP Survey on Youth Employment says: (a) non-regular work among the youth is nearly 30%, (b) on youth unemployment, the average ratio is 2.3 times higher than their adult counterparts, (c) young people are vulnerable to low wages, long working hours and occupational hazards, (d) the youth have difficulty competing with experienced workers for

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<sup>1</sup> ATUC is a regional grouping of 18 national labor centers in nine (9) ASEAN member states representing some five million union members. ATUC affiliates include Cambodia (CLC, CCTU, CCU); Indonesia (K-SPI/CITU, K-SPSI, K-SBSI); Laos (LFTU); Malaysia (MTUC); Myanmar/Burma (CTUM); Philippines (TUCP, FFW); Singapore (NTUC); Thailand (LCT, SERC, TTUC, NCPE); Vietnam (VGCL). TLTUC of Timor Leste is associate member.

limited job opportunities, and (e) vocational and skills training schemes in many countries do not necessarily equip young people with skills which meet demands of labor the market.

**APPRECIATED** the reports on initiatives of ATUC affiliates on youth and migration, which include:

- management of migrant resource centers (MRC) that serve as one-stop shop for provision of legal, social, economic, and recreational services, counseling, education and training, and referral;
- designation of dedicated and trained trade union focal points for migrant workers;
- legislative advocacy for the adoption of migrant-friendly laws in both sending and receiving countries, and more stringent anti-trafficking in person laws;
- campaign for improved social protection mechanisms, i.e. better wages and benefits, life and medical insurance, housing, repatriation and reintegration, among others;
- pushing government and the private sector for generation of in-country decent jobs to make migration as a choice and not the only option;
- pre-Departure Orientation programs that include education and information on employment contracts, HIV and AIDS, and cultural integration;
- campaign for ratification and effective implementation of the relevant ILO Conventions, i.e., No. 97 (Migration for Employment), No. 143 (Migration in abusive conditions), No. 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers;
- accelerated implementation of bilateral, sub-regional and regional trade union agreements among ATUC, SARTUC, and Arab TUC towards strengthening the trade union network for the protection of migrants, promotion of portability of union membership, and ensuring equal application of labor laws to both locals and migrants; and
- lobbying for the inclusion of issues on labor migration in the policy agenda of the ASEAN, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), among others.

**CONSIDERED** the provisional results of the ATUC Study on Protecting Migrant Workers through Trade Union Agreements, and the proposed (a) ATUC Policy Brief “ASEAN Integration and Migrant Workers: Toward a Trade Union Roadmap” based on the pillars of decent work and core international standards [Facilitation + Effective Protection = Social Justice], and (b) refocusing the ASEAN Social Charter to cover nine (9) areas, i.e. *fundamental rights at work, social protection, working conditions, occupational safety and health, gender equality, migrant workers, dispute settlement, youth and child labor, and economic integration and free trade agreements (FTAs)*;

**ANALYSED** the current state of youth and unemployment in the ASEAN, youth participation in trade union leadership, organizing, the impact of social media on the young migrants, and how social media can be maximized for the protection of young and women workers in migration;

**APPRECIATED** the continuing engagement of the ITUC AP, the ILO TRIANGLE Project, and ILO ACTRAV in the programmes and activities of ATUC and its affiliates, as well as the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) and its Youth Committee for hosting this first ever ATUC Youth Rally;

**RESOLVED:**

## **ON YOUNG WORKERS AND LABOR MIGRATION**

- 1) To enable an empowered YOUTH VOICE in the ASEAN by institutionalization of an ATUC Youth Arm at the ASEAN and national affiliate levels, with special attention to young women;

- 2) Continuing engagement with the ILO, the ASEAN Triangle Project, the ITUC AP, and the ASEAN Secretariat in support of trade union youth and young women activities for capacity development, skills programs and migrant labor engagement;
- 3) Better engagement for young migrant workers with ASEAN structures, member states, organized labor, and organization of employers, and other stakeholders, to include creation of decent jobs, comprehensive social protection schemes, decent wages, better education and skills development, and participation in decision-making processes and social dialogue schemes;
- 4) To level up the ATUC Youth Rally as a biennial ATUC event, to include an assessment of programs for the youth in migration, development of needs-based youth programs and activities, including friendly sports competition, interaction with senior leaders of the ATUC, and interface with ASEAN leaders and Secretariat;
- 5) To intensify ATUC Youth Arm participation in ASEAN processes, including in the annual ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labor (AFML), ASEAN Women Conferences, ASEAN OSH Net, ASEAN Youth activities, including the ASEAN youth camp and forums and the Ship for SEA Youth Program, ASEAN structures and Tripartite Conference on Social Protection, among others;
- 6) To organise and increase membership of migrant workers into the union.

### **ON THE ATUC INTER-UNION COOPERATION AGREEMENT AMONG ASEAN UNIONS AS STRATEGY TO PROMOTE DECENT WORK**

- 7) Accelerate implementation of the Agreement at the regional and national levels through regular dialogue with ASEAN and affiliates' respective governments, and pro-active participation of national affiliates in tripartite discussions, particularly on labor migration issues and policy development;
- 8) Formalize a regular assessment mechanism and documentation of national and ATUC milestones related to the implementation of provisions of the Agreement;
- 9) Seek technical and fund support from SSOs and social partners for the implementation of the Agreement;
- 10) Urge the ITUC AP, the ILO TRIANGLE Project, and ILO ACTRAV to upgrade support for ATUC programs, including for youth and young women.

### **ON AN ATUC POLICY BRIEF ON ASEAN LABOR MIGRATION**

- 11) Approve the proposed framework for the development of an ATUC Policy Brief titled "ASEAN Integration and Youth and Migrant Workers: Towards a Trade Union Road Map";
- 12) Recommend the adoption of the final ATUC Policy Draft on ASEAN Labor Integration during ATUC's meeting in October 2015; and
- 13) Recommend that ASEAN Member States appropriate at least 1% of national budget for the servicing of migrant workers.

Adopted on 05 September 2015, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.