



Safe & Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region

PROGRAMME NARRATIVE

Safe & Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region Programme, is part of the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, a global, multi-year initiative between the European Union and United Nations. *Safe & Fair* is implemented through a partnership between the ILO and UN Women with the overriding objective of **ensuring that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region**.

The programme aims to address women migrant workers' vulnerabilities to violence and trafficking, strengthen rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to violence against women and labour migration governance and support access to essential services by:

- ✓ improving the frameworks that govern labour migration and ending violence against women;
- ✓ improving access to information and services for women migrant workers and opportunities for them to network and organise;
- ✓ producing data and evidence on the experiences of women migrant workers; and
- ✓ campaigning to generate a better understanding of the contribution of women migrants.



Photo: UN Women/Piyavit Thogsa-Ard

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- 1: Women migrant workers are better protected by gender-sensitive labour migration governance frameworks;
- 2: Women migrant workers are less vulnerable to violence and trafficking and benefit from coordinated responsive quality services;
- 3: Data, knowledge and attitudes on the rights and contributions of women migrant workers are improved.

IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES

	Brunei Darussalam		Myanmar
	Cambodia		Philippines
	Indonesia		Singapore
	Lao PDR		Thailand
	Malaysia		Viet Nam

AT A GLANCE

Duration: 2018 – 2022

Implementing Organizations: ILO and UN Women

Stakeholders: women migrant workers, ASEAN Member States' government authorities, ASEAN institutions, and worker, employer, civil society and community-based organizations.

Budget: EUR: 25.5 Million

Target beneficiaries: current, potential and returnee women migrant workers and their families

Cross-cutting themes: women's voice and agency; rights-based approaches; broad engagement of stakeholders.



BACKGROUND

In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, women are increasingly migrating. International labour migration in ASEAN has increased over the past decades with almost half of the 10 million migrants in the ASEAN region being women. Women's labour migration is an important aspect of labour mobility in the region and can be a crucial source of empowerment for women with women migrant workers making vital social and economic contributions to their communities and countries of origin and destination. However, through the migration cycle, women migrant workers face the risk of violence and trafficking, and discrimination that limits their access to fair recruitment and decent work, with little access to protection and support services. The positive experiences and contributions of women migrant workers can only be fully ensured if their safety, labour and human rights are fully protected.



Photo: UN Women/Piyavit Thogsa-Ard

Violence against women continues to play a significant role in migration – both in driving women into precarious migration pathways, and as part of migration and labour itself. Irregular migrants and migrant domestic workers are at particular risk of exploitation, abuse, violence, forced labour and trafficking due to their status and isolation. Whether migrating through regular or irregular channels, women migrants can face the risk of violence and abuse from intermediaries and employers, as well as from partners and others. Violence against women migrant workers, and trafficking, are part of the broader spectrum of violence against women, and the cultural and gendered norms that drive it. Such cultural and gendered norms – including the use of gender specific bans that prohibit the migration of women – also impact the migration opportunities available to women, restricting their ability to access regular migration into skilled, safe and well-paid employment.

For survivors of violence against women and trafficking, services are not well equipped to meet their needs. Services are frequently challenging to reach, and are often not well coordinated among institutions, including policing, criminal justice, health and social welfare services.

While the ASEAN region has seen advances in addressing violence against women, much more needs to be done. Changing cultural norms around violence against women throughout migration and strengthening rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to safe and fair labour migration governance is necessary in order to achieve labour migration that is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region.

CONTACT

For matters related to the Safe & Fair Programme please contact:

Nilim Baruah, Senior Migration Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific | Tel: +66 2 288 1855
baruah@ilo.org

For matters related to the Spotlight Initiative please contact:

Olga Aleshina, Head of Management Unit, Spotlight Secretariat | Tel: +1 917 601 6128 | olga.aleshina@undp.org