



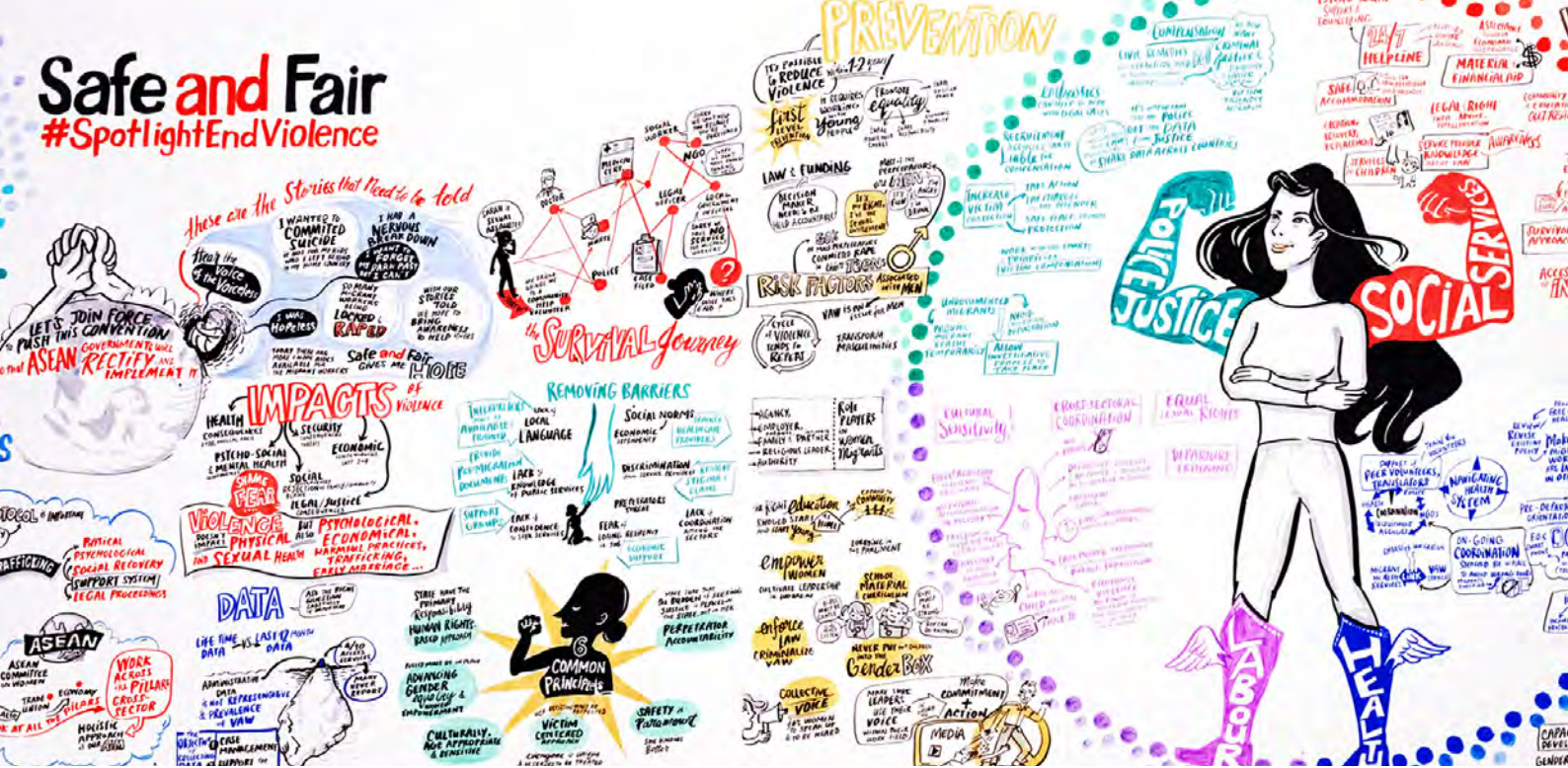
**Spotlight
Initiative**



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

Policy Brief: Coordinated Quality
Services for Ending Violence against
Women Migrant Workers

Safe and Fair #SpotlightEndViolence



In the 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.ⁱ Women’s labour migration is an important aspect of labour mobility in the region and can be a crucial source of empowerment for women migrant workers, who make vital social and economic contributions to their communities, their countries of origin and destination countries. Such as when they contribute toward remittances and when they bring skills back to their country of origin. Through migration, women also inform and change social, cultural, political and gender norms, and they influence positive change across households and communities. Research has shown that the health and education indicators of children of migrant workers are often better than those in non-migrant households. However, throughout the migration cycle, women migrant workers are disproportionately at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

Whether migrating through regular or irregular channels, women migrant workers can face the risk of violence and abuse from intermediaries and employers, as well as from partners and others. They experience intersectional forms of discrimination based on multiple identities including job sector, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, legal status, age, pregnancy status, marital status, and language, among others.

As outlined in the 2017 Report of the Secretary-General on Violence against Women Migrant Workers, “migration can foster women’s empowerment and, through new opportunities and personal expansion, improve their agency and autonomy, yet the feminized, informal sectors in which many migrant women work are characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, limited labour and social protections, and exposure to physical and sexual violence.”

i. Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region, https://www.ilo.org/asia/projects/WCMS_632458/lang--en/index.htm

“To understand the specific ways in which women are impacted, female migration should be studied from the perspective of gender inequality, traditional female roles, a gendered labour market, the universal prevalence of gender-based violence and the worldwide feminization of poverty and labour migration”.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). General Recommendation No. 26, on women migrant workers, paragraph 5.

Violence against women migrant workers is 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 restrictions and bans that prohibit the migration of women – also impact the migration opportunities available to women, limiting their ability to access regular migration channels and decent work. Women migrant survivors of violence face multiple challenges while seeking justice or accessing essential services. Because of little access to protection and support services, absence of protection orders, limited referral networks and coordination mechanisms, lack of language interpreters, as well as fear of deportation or of losing their jobs, many migrant women suffer in silence.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), are currently implementing the Safe and Fair programme in the ASEAN region. Safe and Fair is part of the Spotlight initiative, a joint effort by the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate violence against women and girls. The aim of the programme is to reduce the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers to violence and trafficking through improved access to information and well-coordinated, gender-responsive services. It challenges pervasive cultural stereotypes and victim-blaming related to violence against women through public campaigns and capacity-building activities targeting frontline service providers.

Principles, standards and normative frameworks

The international community has developed a series of instruments for protecting women migrant workers' rights. In the context of ending violence against women migrant

workers, the following frameworks and commitments, globally and regionally, are of relevance.

Relevant international and regional standards and normative frameworks

	Ratified/adopted in ASEAN	Provisions relevant to violence against women migrant workers
The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979	Ratified by all ASEAN Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Recommendation No. 19, on Violence Against Women • General Recommendation No.26, on Women Migrant Workers • General Recommendation No.33, on Women's Access to Justice • General Recommendation No. 35 , on Gender-based Violence Against Women, updating General Recommendation No. 19
The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990	Ratified by Indonesia and the Philippines, with Cambodia as a signatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 28 states that migrant workers and their families should have the right to receive urgent medical care. • Article 67 states that parties shall cooperate for orderly return, with a view to promoting adequate economic conditions for resettlement and facilitating durable social and cultural reintegration.
The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Strategic Objective D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (TIP Protocol), 2000	Ratified by all other ASEAN Member States with the exception of Brunei Darussalam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the privacy and identity of victims. • Providing for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – housing, counselling; – medical and psychological assistance; – employment, educational and training opportunities; – opportunities to obtain compensation;and – obtain temporary or permanent residency in destination country (Art.6).

Updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of VAW in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2010	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Contains concrete guidance on how States can implement their international obligation of due diligence to prevent, prosecute and punish the perpetrators and to protect and provide survivors of violence against women (VAW) with effective remedies.
UN Declaration of the High Level Dialogue on International Migration, 2013	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Recognizes the need to incorporate a gender perspective into migration policies. Brings focused attention on the need TO strengthen national laws, institutions and programmes to eliminate gender-based violence, including trafficking in persons and discrimination against women migrants.
CSW57 Agreed Conclusions, 2013 (Priority theme: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls)	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Covers all forms of violence against women and girls, including violence against women migrant workers. Recognizes that multiple forms of discrimination expose some women and girls to an increased risk of experiencing violence throughout the migration cycle.
67th World Health Assembly Resolution WHA 67.15, 2014	Endorsed by all ASEAN Member States.	Led to the development of the Global Plan of Action on strengthening the health system's response to violence against women and girls and against children.
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. SDG 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking. SDG 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants. SDG 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

<p>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015</p>	<p>Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.</p>	<p>SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.</p> <p>SDG 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour and human trafficking.</p> <p>SDG 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants.</p> <p>SDG 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.</p> <p>SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p>
<p>CSW61 Agreed Conclusions, 2017 (Priority theme: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.)</p>	<p>Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.</p>	<p>Raised concerns regarding the vulnerability to abuse and exploitation of women migrant workers, particularly in the informal economy. The agreed conclusions highlight the role of men and boys as allies in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. It called for States to strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment against all women in the world of work.</p>
<p>Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, 2018</p>	<p>Adopted by all other ASEAN Member States, with the exception of Singapore.</p>	<p>Recognises the importance of developing gender-responsive labour mobility policies to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation. The issue of eliminating violence against migrants is addressed in objectives 6, 7 and 17. Objective 6 contains a specific commitment to review relevant national labour laws, employment policies and programmes to ensure that they include considerations of the specific needs and contributions of women migrant workers, especially in domestic work and lower-skilled occupations, and to adopt specific measures to prevent, report, address and provide effective remedy for all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence.</p>

ILO Conventions		
C097 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949	Ratified by the Philippines.	Applies to the whole labour migration continuum from entry to return. It also articulates the principle of their equal treatment with national workers regarding working conditions, trade union membership and enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining, accommodation, social security, employment taxes and legal proceedings relating to matters outlined in the convention.
C143 Migrant Workers' (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975	Ratified by the Philippines.	Concerns migrations in abusive conditions, including irregular migration, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers.
C189 Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011	Ratified by the Philippines.	Article 5 urges States to take measures to ensure that (migrant) domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence.
C190 Violence and Harassment Convention 2019	Recently adopted and not yet ratified by any country.	A new convention (No. 190) and an associated recommendation (No. 206) concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. The convention recognizes the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, while the recommendation requires members to take legislative or other measures to protect all migrant workers, in particular women migrant workers, regardless of migration status, in origin, transit and destination countries, from violence and harassment in the world of work.

ASEAN		
Declaration on the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region, 1988	Signed by Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.	To enable women in the region to undertake their important role as active agents and beneficiaries of national and regional development, particularly in promoting regional understanding and cooperation and in building more just and peaceful societies.
ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, 2007	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Calls on countries of origin and destination to ensure the dignity of migrant workers by outlining their obligations in the areas of: (i) protection from exploitation, discrimination, and violence; (ii) labour migration governance; and (iii) the fight against trafficking in persons.
Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children, 2010	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	To undertake concrete actions to end violence against women and children by strengthening gender sensitive legislation and plans of action to prevent and address violence through intensifying training for policymakers, programme developers, implementers and service providers.
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN, 2013	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	To strengthen regional cooperation, collaboration and coordination for the purpose of eliminating violence against women as follows: Regional and bilateral cooperation in the systematic research, collection, analysis and dissemination of data. Providing services to fulfil the needs of survivors, formulating and taking appropriate responses to offenders and perpetrators, understanding the nature and causes of violence against women and changing societal attitudes and behaviour. Develop and/or improve existing legislative, educational and social measures and support services aimed at the prevention of violence against women.
ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2015	Ratified by all ASEAN Member States with the exception of Brunei Darussalam.	Recognises the need for more coordinated enforcement and collaborative action across the region in order to better prevent trafficking and protect and assist victims.
ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, 2017	Adopted by all ASEAN Member States.	Includes non-binding commitments for sending and receiving states, in accordance with the national laws, regulations and policies of the ASEAN Member State, to protect migrant workers from violence and sexual harassment and to facilitate migrant workers with access to legal recourse and assistance, including language interpretation if necessary, when they become victims of discrimination, abuse, exploitation and/or violence.

The barriers that women migrant workers who are subjected to violence face

Women migrant workers face structural and systemic discrimination while accessing services throughout the migration cycle and multiple barriers prevent them from seeking help through both formal and informal channels.

Information and knowledge: Lack of familiarity with local language in country of destination impacts confidence and ability to seek services, as service information is likely to be provided in the local language. Migrant women may also be uncertain about ability to seek services due to unfamiliarity of systems, services or rights to services. There is also a lack of knowledge of public services available, e.g., health, social services, justice and policing, and safe shelter. Migrant women are often not familiar with the legal procedures in the destination country.

Social norms: Societal attitudes and behaviours could also discourage a survivor from seeking help. These may include victim blaming and shaming, seeing violence as a part of life, embarrassment or fear of what others will think. There is fear of social stigmatization and even blame for the violence from service providers. Some women migrant workers experience discrimination from service providers, embassy officials, intermediaries and others because they are women and migrants, and/or because of their job sector. They may also experience social pressure not to report or seek legal redress because of the economic dependency that their family back home has on them, as they may lose their job and will not be able to send money anymore. Migrant women may also face social stigma if they seek services upon return.

Structural barriers: Women migrant workers may lack social support in the destination country. Many women migrant workers do not seek services because they lack the legal documents required to access them. They fear losing their jobs, residency permits or stay permits, and fear being deported if they report abuse.

Neither is there adequate continuity between destination countries and countries of origin for women who return home and need longer-term support. Lack of clear referral procedures among countries and sectors may also impede access to essential services and may increase the risk of re-traumatization too. Women may also experience barriers to services in their country of origin, given their migration status or non-categorization as a trafficked person. Legal redress can take a long time as well, and the cost of returning to country of origin to handle legal affairs can be prohibitively high. This indicates a significant lack of coordination among the sectors of migration, violence against women, and trafficking.

Responding to violence thus requires services that understand and aim to meet the many needs of women migrant survivors of violence as top priority. Service providers must have a professional code of conduct on how to respond appropriately to women that have migrated and have experienced violence so that services are delivered in a way that is agreeable to the survivor, e.g., with respect her dignity, which guarantees confidentiality and which minimizes secondary victimization.



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In a woman's journey for help, she may reach out to friends or family, or she may go to a doctor or to the police. She may also seek counselling or shelter support or may require social services or the support of a lawyer. There may be instances too of mediation or visits to court, and for women migrant workers there will likely be additional actors she must engage: consulates; employers; trade unions; and/or recruitment agencies. Complaint mechanisms might also be different, with migrant-specific avenues for redress. Quality services must then be available, in sufficient quantity and quality and need to respond in ways that integrate human rights and cultural sensitivity.

It is worth noting that there are still no standards or guidelines that apply specifically to women migrant workers. However, some specific standards are particularly relevant, such as CEDAW General Recommendation 26, the CSW61 Agreed Conclusions, ILO Convention C190 and the associated Recommendation 206 concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. Key components of response are high-quality, accessible, survivor-centred (e.g., non-judgmental) services by health actors, police and justice, and social services, as well as effective coordination, as services cannot keep survivors safe and support healing when they work in isolation.

A coordinated quality response through multi-sectoral service provision

Services must be available in sufficient quantity and quality regardless of migration status, nationality, gender, marital status, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation or any other identity marker of the survivor. Service providers must have a professional code of conduct on how to respond appropriately to women who have migrated and who experience violence.

Principles of services with women migrant survivors of violence include: a human-rights-based approach; advancing gender equality; and women’s empowerment. Culturally sensitive and age-appropriate, survivor-centred approaches and safety are paramount, and services must ensure perpetrator accountability. These survivor-centred approaches place the rights, needs and desires of women migrant workers at the centre of focus of service

delivery. This requires consideration of the multiple needs of the survivor, of the various risks and vulnerabilities including fear of deportation, and the impact of decisions and actions taken, and it ensures that services are tailored to the unique requirements of each individual. Services must also promote women’s agency, where women migrant workers are entitled to make their own decisions, including decisions that refuse services.

Common characteristics of quality essential services include availability, accessibility, adaptability, appropriateness, prioritization of safety, data collection and information management, informed consent and confidentiality, effective communication, and linking through other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination.

Availability	Services must be available in sufficient quantity and quality regardless of residence, marital status, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation or any other identity marker of the survivor.
Accessibility	Essential services must be accessible to all women – physically, economically and linguistically.
Adaptability	Quality services must recognize the different impacts of violence on different groups and communities. Services need to respond in ways that integrate human rights and cultural sensitivity.
Appropriateness	Appropriate quality services are delivered in a way that is agreeable to the survivor, e.g., respects her dignity, guarantees confidentiality and minimizes secondary victimization.
Prioritize safety	Services use a range of risk management options, solutions and safety measures to support the safety of the survivor. Best practice risk assessment and management includes consistent and coordinated approaches within and between social, health, police and justice and other relevant sectors.
Data collection and information management	Ensure there is a documented and secure system for the consistent and accurate collection, recording and storing of all information and data that is important in supporting the continuous improvement of services.
Informed consent and confidentiality	All essential services must be delivered in a way that protects the survivor’s privacy, guarantees her confidentiality and discloses information only with her informed consent, to the extent possible.
Effective communication	Service providers must be non-judgmental, empathetic and supportive. A survivor needs to know that she is being listened to and that her needs are being understood and addressed.
Linking with other sectors and agencies through referral and coordination	Procedures between services for information sharing and referral are consistent, known by agency staff and communicated clearly to survivors.

Needs of a migrant woman survivor of violence for services may includeⁱⁱ



The health sector response

A quality health service response to violence against women migrant workers is crucial. Violence is an underlying cause of injury and ill health, and the health system is a place where women who have experienced violence are more likely to go to in order to receive services and support for their physical and mental health needs. In the context of violence against women migrant workers due to layers of challenges faced, it is important to have multiple entry points for women migrant workers to receive support, including health actors in destination countries and countries of origin and pre-migration training or awareness raising on health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and VAW issues in migration.

The police and justice sector response

A quality police and justice response is crucial in ensuring that relevant laws against VAW: meet international standards; are enforced keep women and girls safe from violence (including from the re-occurrence of further violence); respond sensitively to VAW and regularly document and act on reported cases hold perpetrators accountable; and provide for effective reparations for survivors. Essential justice and policing services should cover all survivors' interactions with the police and the justice system, from reporting or initial contact to ensuring appropriate remedies. Cross-border collaboration among authorities is also essential to ensure that women migrant workers' access to justice is realized in practice.

ii. Not all survivors will want or need all services. Due to her experience with violence, and the control that this experience took from her, it is important that control is returned to her through giving her options and letting her make decisions about what will happen next. It is important that she has options and the right to report.

Social services

Social services comprise a range of services that are critical in supporting the rights, safety and wellbeing of women and girls experiencing violence. They include crisis counselling, safe accommodation, crisis information, material and financial aid, legal information, support with economic independence and more. Social service providers are often crucial actors in the coordination of case management, providing referrals, emotional and social support, information and advocacy at key moments in the journey of women who have experienced violence.

Labour migration actors

Labour migration actors, such as ministries of labour, embassy officials and recruitment agencies, should provide pre-decision guidance, and pre-departure and post-arrival training, to provide women migrant workers with job-specific skills and knowledge, cultural understanding and greater awareness of their rights, entitlements and responsibilities. Service directories should be developed and disseminated to make information on existing VAW-related services more available to women too.

All service providers, from health, to police and justice, to social services and labour migration, must have professional awareness on how to respond appropriately to women who have migrated and who have experienced violence. This includes having an understanding of their fears around deportation and sharing of confidential data, knowing how to provide appropriate care and knowing how to give reassurance when women report violence, including having realistic expectations based on the laws of the country. Services should be available in various locations and diverse

settings, such as markets, parks, or any places where migrant women gather, and should be available at convenient times, such as Saturdays, Sundays or after work so that they are not absent from work and risk loss of employment. Hotlines or other communications methods should also be available in their language.

Coordination, and governance of coordination

Linkages should be promoted internationally, through regional, multi-lateral and/or bi-lateral agreements and mechanisms, for example through ASEAN Regional Action Plans or bilateral social protection agreements that include a specific response to violence against women migrant workers. Embassies should also work together to ensure that essential services are available and are coordinated both in the migration location and upon return to home country. It may also be necessary for provinces and states that receive women migrants to coordinate directly.

Linkages should be established between the sectors of anti-trafficking, ending violence against women, and migration, to ensure that essential services are available, accessible and coordinated. Trafficking NGOs or community health services are often a first entry point for women migrant workers who have experienced violence, and a coordinated response would be able to recognize the survivor's multiple needs, link her with informed and skilled service providers and reduce the risk of re-traumatization. Extremely valuable here are service directories listing available services in all countries. And these should be easy to find online, should assist women migrant workers who face violence, and should include information on labour and migration services, including embassies, listing languages that services are available in.



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One of the roles of embassies and consulates often highlighted is to serve and protect its citizens who reside abroad or who or are temporarily abroad. Diplomatic personnel tasked with this responsibility can be important actors in ensuring that essential services are available and are coordinated in the migration location and upon return to the country of origin.

“Coordinated systems” means that all sectors/service providers have clarity about their roles and responsibilities through agreed protocols and standards. This can have a greater impact in responding to violence and can create greater efficiencies over agencies working in isolation. Partnerships among sectors are enhanced through regular, face-to-face meetings, shared policies and protocols, joint planning and joint activities. They provide for joint training of staff and for sharing information about survivors and perpetrators, while supporting respect for victim confidentiality and privacy and ensuring safety, consent, and ongoing data collection to monitor case progress and outcomes.

To allow women migrants to seek immediate help without fear of deportation, it is also important for firewalls to be in place creating an “administrative separation” between immigration enforcement and public service provision, such as when women seek critical, time-sensitive and life-saving health and psychosocial care, police protection or legal advice that without triggering immigration enforcement procedures.

Confidentiality is also crucial when linking survivors to services in their home communities, because of stigmatization related to their experience. This includes keeping their information confidential even among the victim’s support system, including friends and family.

Policy recommendations and priorities

While the ASEAN region has seen advances in addressing violence against women, much more needs to be done to effectively prevent and respond to violence against women migrant workers. In practice, it is necessary to change cultural norms around violence against women in the context of migration, and strengthen rights-based and gender-responsive approaches and services to prevent and respond to violence against women migrant workers, in order to ensure that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region. States are encouraged to implement the recommendations and priorities outlined below in order to eliminate violence against women migrant workers and enhance their access to coordinated essential services.

Ratify and enforce global and regional commitments and normative frameworks:

1. Ratify and implement international and regional instruments relevant to tackling violence against women migrant workers that are mentioned earlier in this document.
2. Monitor the implementation of, and adherence to, the global and regional normative frameworks and mandates that ASEAN countries have ratified and/or have committed to. (Non-state actors)
3. Advocate for the ratification of the new ILO Convention C190 concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work by ASEAN countries.

Strengthen national law, policies and institutional frameworks:

4. Review, amend and synchronize existing policies addressing migration, VAW and trafficking with specificities on prevention and the response to violence against women migrant workers, aligning them to international and regional normative frameworks.
5. Hold governments accountable for the implementation and enforcement of national laws and policies in the fields of ending violence against women, labour migration and trafficking. (Non-state actors.)
6. Mobilise resources, allocate public resources and establish a dedicated budget line in national plans for the prevention of, and response to, violence against women migrant workers.
7. Advocate for leaders to become champions of change to send out a strong message that VAW is never acceptable and hold them accountable to address and prevent sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

Increase access to services and strengthen capacities of service providers:

8. Establish accessible, confidential and coordinated gender-based violence prevention and response services, which are linguistically and culturally appropriate, and include provision of information on the rights of women migrant workers, referral, healthcare, hotlines, dispute resolution mechanisms, legal aid, psychological support and counselling, social

- services, women-only spaces, and access to women's shelters. Ensure that the measures included in the sixteen essentials for quality multisectoral service provision to women migrant workers subject to violence are in place.
9. Establish firewalls to create administrative separation between immigration enforcement activities and public service provision - such as critical and time-sensitive health and psychosocial care, police protection or legal advice - to allow women migrants to seek immediate help and report crimes without fear of deportation.
 10. Set up adequate legal aid bodies in support of the pre-trial process and beyond, given that women migrant workers often do not understand the legal processes and need support. A more survivor-centred process would encourage women subject to violence to come forward safely. Legal aid is key in the litigation process and special law/legal procedures are needed including parallel civil and criminal processes.
 11. Women migrant survivors of violence should not be charged for services. It is good practice for governments and insurance providers to cover services addressing violence against women, including health services, loss of income, emergency contraception, forensic examinations, repatriation, and material and financial aid after return.
 12. Develop capacities of all stakeholders, including policymakers, labour actors and service providers, on violence against women migrant workers with a focus on improving VAW referral, coordination of services, and survivor-friendly services. Service providers must have a professional code of conduct on how to respond appropriately to women who have migrated and have experienced violence, adopting a survivor-centred approach. Instructions related to confidentiality should be part of the standards or code of conduct for service providers.
 13. Advocate for an increase in the number of female labour attachés, other Foreign Service officials and embassy personnel in destination countries to support women migrant workers.
 14. Strengthen pre-decision, pre-departure, pre-employment, and post-arrival orientations including specific modules and/or information on violence against women and safe migration. Women migrant workers should be provided with reliable information on relevant laws, policies and procedures, cultural differences or risks to the migrant woman based on cultural norms before they even reach their destination country, including where to seek help from available support services, should they experience violence.
 15. Develop service directories that include the contact details of essential services available in the country of destination and referrals lists, and ensure that these are available to migrant women, networks of migrant women, NGOs, embassies, labour and migration agencies and actors.

Improve data and evidence:

16. Strengthen the availability and use of sex-disaggregated data and prevalence data against the SDGs overall, and on violence faced by women migrant workers in particular.
17. Conduct gender-responsive research and analysis on the experiences and realities of migrant women, particularly cases of violence against migrant women and violations of their rights.
18. More research on the effects of government policies on women migrant workers is also needed by research institutions, NGOs and advocates for the rights of women and migrant workers.

Enhance coordination and foster cross-border and multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships:

19. Enhance existing coordination mechanisms in the field of VAW, migration and trafficking to effectively incorporate violence against women migrant workers, foster cross-sector collaboration and enhance coordination with labour migration actors such as recruitment agencies, trade unions, employers, Ministries of Labour and embassies and migrant women's networks, involving all levels.
20. Acknowledge the role of recruitment agencies, involve them and highlight their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting migrant women workers, and systematize the work with recruitment agencies through developing operational manuals, training programmes and knowledge and information sharing to ensure that they can respond sensitively and immediately to allegations of violence.

21. Promote cross-border linkages through regional, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agreements, and advocate for a cross-border coordination mechanism to address violence against women migrant workers, including the provision of coordinated services for women migrant survivors in sending and receiving countries within the ASEAN. Bilateral agreements could also be useful to overcome differences in the legal systems and services of destination and origin countries. This could also enhance perpetrator accountability.
22. Foster cross-border linkages with embassies and NGOs to ensure that essential services are available and coordinated, and that referral systems (1) are in place and (2) consider formal and informal coordination processes, protocols and standard operating procedures to better respond to specific needs of women migrant workers. Origin and destination country trade unions can also serve a major role through bilateral cooperation, creating the opportunity for end-to-end services and referral support.
23. Appoint social welfare focal points in all relevant ministries (not just within the Ministry of Labour) to facilitate multi-sectoral collaboration in ending violence against women migrant workers, allocating human and financial resources to migration management and women migrant workers' needs.



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Promote and strengthen women migrant workers' agency:

- 24. Listen to the voices of, and actively involve, women migrant workers in formulating policies, strategies and programmes, including their participation in high-level ASEAN and international meetings, and have their voices and opinions elevated so that they are able to directly inform the policies that affect them.
- 25. Encourage and support the establishment of women migrant workers' networks in country of origin, transit and destination, and across countries, for peer support, cross-border referral and information sharing. CSOs and women's organizations could provide the necessary structure and support.
- 26. Advocate with employers and recruiters to appreciate the role of unions and migrant worker associations in providing support and information to migrant workers and for migrant women to organize and join trade unions.

- 27. Identify potential women leaders from within the membership of trade unions and migrant worker networks and associations and provide resources necessary to support increased capacity of these women leaders, including on addressing violence against women migrant workers.
- 28. Ensure that advocacy groups and organizations that work for women migrant workers receive sufficient funding to be able to continue their work advocating for women migrant workers' rights and holding government, private sector and development partners to account.

For all of these recommendations and priorities, strong advocacy is needed, to ensure buy-in at all levels. Utilising existing regional ASEAN and international frameworks will greatly facilitate these efforts.

This policy brief is based on regional and national priorities and recommendations identified during the three-day “Regional Dialogue on Coordinated Quality Services for Ending Violence against Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN”, which took place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 10 to 12 July 2019. The meeting was hosted by the Safe and Fair Programme implemented by the ILO and UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC, under the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, a global multi-year initiative between the European Union and the United Nations. The Safe and Fair programme delivers technical assistance and support to national and regional stakeholders with the overall objective of making labour migration safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region.

Selected Resources

Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women. WHO clinical and policy guidelines. WHO, 2013. <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241548595/en/>

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Spotlight Initiative

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