



UFDWRs

United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights



RECOGNISE DOMESTIC WORK AS WORK!

Domestic Workers need a day off Now!



Domestic Workers need a day off Now!

RECOGNISE DOMESTIC WORK AS WORK!

UFDWRs

United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights

Where this initiative originated from:

The need for better protection of the human rights of domestic workers has been brought to international attention by the cumulative advocacy of many migrants' organisations, women's rights groups, and migrants associations.

The idea for this campaign emerged from one step in this movement, a regional Summit held in 2002 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Summit, organised by CARAM Asia, brought together a range of civil society organisations to assess the status of Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) and identify their most pressing human rights concerns. Groups present at the Summit dedicated themselves to claiming and realising the rights of FDWs, with 132 participants signing the Colombo Declaration, proposing a legal framework of protection for FDWs.

It was clear from the Summit that much greater awareness of FDW's rights is needed if better protection is to be ensured.

Accordingly, CARAM Asia developed a campaign toolkit which was launched in Jakarta on International Labour Day, May 2007.

The next day, at a strategy meeting organised by CARAM Asia and APWLD, a number of the regional civil society organisations present in Jakarta came together to establish United for Foreign Domestic Workers' Rights (UFDWRs), a coalition working towards the increased protection and promotion of foreign domestic workers' rights.

UFDWRs launched their first regional campaign, *Recognise Domestic Work as Work – One Paid Day Off Per Week*, at the 3rd ASEAN Civil Society Conference in Singapore, November 2007.

Who we are:

The UFDWRs core committee comprises five regional and international civil society organisations that work directly with domestic workers and domestic worker organisations in the Asia Pacific region. Each organisation has its own focus, from organising and migrant action to research and policy analysis, creating a strong platform for advocacy. We are the:

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)
- Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM Asia)
- Mekong Migration Network (MMN)
- Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW)

Presently the coalition is co-hosted by APWLD and CARAM Asia.

What we are calling for:

The overarching message of our campaign is:

“Recognise domestic work as work”.

Under this banner, we are specifically calling for Foreign Domestic Workers to have:

- *One paid day off weekly*
- *Ensured access to health services and protection of health-related rights*
- *Ensured access to justice and redress*

Heeding the wishes expressed by thousands of FDWs and many other organisations that work with FDWs, the call for **“one-paid-day-off-weekly”** is the focus of this campaign from 2007 to 2009. The right for a weekly day off is a universal right for all workers, and has been included in a number of International Labour Conventions including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers. A day off is critical for domestic workers, who frequently work 10-16 hour days, seven days a week. A day off would also make it possible for domestic workers to organise themselves to demand their rights. Organising is an essential tactic in empowerment and capacity building for domestic workers.

We demand that Governments and international institutions recognise foreign domestic workers and do the following:

- *That governments enact laws and adopt other measures to ensure that the rights of domestic workers are protected legally and to change the national labour laws that do not protect domestic workers’ rights;*
- *That the United Nations and International Labour Organization (ILO) develop new mechanisms for the protection and realisation of domestic workers’ rights;*
- *That member States ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and*
- *That governments develop redress mechanisms for more effective accountability of non-State actors (employers, recruitment agencies, brokers) for violations against women domestic workers.*

What we do:

TO REALISE OUR GOALS, UFDWRs IS COMMITTED TO:

- Undertake advocacy activities to ensure that the rights of domestic workers are protected at all levels;
- Facilitate the flow of information among UFDWRs members' communities in the region (resources, ideas, materials), particularly to and from migrant domestic workers. While many domestic workers find it impossible to join in direct advocacy actions, it is crucial that we use creative means to let their voices be heard; and
- Expand the membership of UFDWRs to increase awareness of the issues and strengthen our voice. In particular, the involvement of domestic workers organisations will ensure, as much as possible, that the voices of domestic workers are being heard.

Target audience of our campaign:

- Foreign Domestic Workers
- United Nations (UN) Special Procedures – The Committee of the Migrant Workers' Human Rights Convention, UN Special Rapporteurs on themes that are relevant to women domestic workers, and UN agencies related to domestic workers
- Inter-governmental agencies – ILO and the Global Forum On Migration & Development (GFMD)
- Regional policy making bodies – Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- Social movements and migrants' movements

Who can join the campaign?

Any organisation or individual that subscribes to the belief that domestic work is work and should be recognised legally and socially can join the campaign. An organisation can become a collaborating organisation simply by subscribing to the UFDWRs listserv and signing a petition (Statement of Unity). The campaign collaborators/networks are encouraged to participate in UFDWRs initiatives and activities, conducted at any level (local, national, regional, or international), and of whatever kind (public awareness, capacity building, lobbying and advocacy, research and documentation) for the protection of domestic workers. UFDWRs will keep collaborating organisations fully informed about all UFDWRs events and calls for action.

UFDWRs Campaign members

1. SOLIDARITY MIGRANTE (PHILIPPINES)
2. SOLIDARITAS MIGRAN SAN CABRINI (INDONESIA)
3. ENGENDER
4. SOLIDARITAS PEREMPUAN (SP INDONESIA)
5. ASIAN MIGRANT COORDINATING BODY (AMCB)
6. TRANSIENT WORKERS COUNT TOO (TWC2)
7. HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION ECONOMICS (HOME)

What the Core Committee brings to the Campaign

Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Hong Kong

APMM is a cause-oriented regional center in Hong Kong which is committed to supporting and building a migrants' movement in Hong Kong, South Korea, the Middle East, Taiwan, Macau, Japan and Australia. APMM emerged out of the Filipino migrants' movement in Hong Kong and works with all migrants through advocacy, organising, and building linkages for the advancement of migrants' rights. Considering that women migrants comprise almost half of the total number of migrant workers in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions, the FDWs program is a major thematic program of APMM. This program works very closely with our Women's program as well as the Organising and Advocacy program.



As a strategy, APMM is committed to help develop migrant's movements at the national, regional, and global levels by strengthening overseas migrants' capabilities. In Hong Kong, APMM played an important role in the establishment of the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB), a coalition of grassroots migrant workers organisations in Hong Kong whose membership are mostly women FDWs from Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Philippines. AMCB is also a member of the recently founded International Migrants Alliance (IMA).

APMM launches advocacy campaigns at all levels, conducts research studies, and publishes different documents in order to help migrant workers and their organisations in understanding issues that confront them. Also, APMM establishes partnerships with existing migrant workers groups and helps establish new formations in the APMM focus areas such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Australia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia for migrant workers empowerment. APMM is also a part of various issue-based, research, and ecumenical networks in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions.

Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development, Chiang Mai, Thailand

APWLD is a network of organisations around the Asia Pacific which was launched by women lawyers and other activists in 1986. The objectives of APWLD are to enable women in the region to use law as an instrument of change for the empowerment of women in their struggle for justice, peace, equality and development, and to promote basic concepts of human rights in the region. APWLD has a Labour & Migration (L&M) Task Force which was formed with the awareness that the vulnerability of women migrant workers in the informal sectors is multiplied by increased militarism, anti-immigrant policies, fundamentalism, and the existing limiting patriarchal structures in the region.



As such, Task Force members from Bangladesh, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand have a particular focus: to address the lack of legal protection and human rights standards for foreign domestic workers, particularly looking into State laws and policies under economic globalisation that exploit women workers and women migrant workers. APWLD's extensive network among women and human rights groups and the legal expertise of its members, positions the L&M programme to strategically address the lack of legal protection for these workers.

To address these issues, a multi-pronged strategy was adopted: identifying and exposing discriminatory laws, policies, and human rights violations against migrant and national women workers, advocating for the recognition of domestic work, and realising the human rights of women workers.

Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM Asia), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CARAM Asia is a regional network working on migration and health issues. Formed in 1997, it has developed into a network of members spread across South East Asia, North East Asia, the Gulf and Middle East.



CARAM Asia advocates for better access to health care, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the mental and physical well-being of FDWs at all stages of migration by currently campaigning to lobby for the legal recognition and protection of domestic work.

The Foreign Domestic Workers Task force of CARAM Asia works towards the recognition of domestic work as a socio-economic activity and its inclusion in national employment and labour laws. Key activities include human rights advocacy, campaigns and awareness raising programmes. Members of CARAM Asia's Task force for FDWs are located in 11 different countries in North Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Middle East (Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal, Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Jordan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Malaysia). Each member works with FDWs in their community.

Following the 2002 summit in Colombo, CARAM Asia produced a campaign toolkit for the rights of FDWs' for use by its members. The Toolkit was created through a collective effort of national and community level activities and consultations, involving domestic workers, community based organisations and NGOs.

A Participatory Action Research (PAR) method of information gathering was used for the toolkit which enabled the organising and mobilising of FDWs as well as the collection of direct experiences of FDWs at all stages of migration for inclusion in the kit. Many toolkit chapters were tested using focus group discussions with prospective, current and returnee domestic workers and then the material was refined. Team members involved in finalising the Toolkit included former domestic workers who gave authority to the material.

During the discussions, FDWs repeatedly stressed the need for a regular day off and for legal protection of their occupation. They urged the creation of a campaign for "one day off". Presently, members of the Task force are carrying out national and community level One Day Off campaigns in tandem with the region wide campaign of UFDWRs.

Mekong Migration Network (MMN), Chiang Mai, Thailand

Stemming from the network of a collaborative research project (2001-2003), the Mekong Migration Network (MMN) was officially launched in October 2003. Members of the MMN include migrant support NGOs, migrant grassroots organisations, research institutes, and mass organisations.



Guided by the MMN Terms of Partnership and the MMN Plan of Action, the MMN has since jointly carried out a number of activities in the areas of advocacy, capacity building, information monitoring, research, and publication.

The rights of migrant or foreign domestic workers (M/FDWs) in the Mekong are not protected under national labour laws and the majority do not have a written contract or regular paid days off. MDWs receive extremely low pay and many of them are under the legal age of employment, furthering their vulnerability. The MMN stands firm on the principle of "domestic work is work" and promotes the recognition and protection of rights for MDWs.

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), Bangkok Thailand

GAATW is an alliance of more than 90 non-governmental organisations from all regions of the world that work on trafficking, migration and migrants rights issues, with a particular focus on women migrants.



Member organisations include self-organised groups, migrant rights organisations, anti-trafficking organisations, human rights and women's rights organisations, and direct service providers.

Six members in Asia and Latin America work specifically to promote the rights of foreign domestic workers, and many others support the cause through their broader work. GAATW was established in 1994 and is based in Bangkok.

The Alliance is committed towards effecting change at the local level through its members and allies, and internationally through the work of the IS and GAATW's special consultative status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Some activities that have promoted the rights of foreign domestic workers include:

The Migrating Women's Handbook

This manual was developed as part of GAATW's campaign to promote safe migration and fair working conditions. It provides practical information on arranging travel documents, work permits, and workers' rights and wages as well as suggestions on how to protect one's rights.

It was published in 1999 in Bahasa Indonesia, English, and Thai and has since been translated into many different languages around the world.

Realising Rights

The Realising Rights programme was born in 2006 with the aim of strengthening the socio-economic empowerment and political participation of self-organised groups of women within GAATW's membership.

Several of these groups are collectives of domestic workers or include domestic workers. Activities include linking groups with each other, giving trainings and supporting local advocacy.

Video Advocacy

Working closely with the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Hong Kong (ATKI-HK), a GAATW member and self-organised group, GAATW is producing a 10-minute advocacy video to raise awareness about the negative impact of placement fees on Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong.

The video advocacy project will also support ATKI's campaign for the full recognition and protection of FDWs rights.





CONTACT THE PRESENT SECRETARIAT OF UFDWRs:

www.apwld.org and www.caramasia.org

189/3 Changklan Road, Amphoe Muang
Chiang Mai 50101, Thailand

Tel: (66) 53 284527, 284856

Fax: (66) 53 280847

Email: apwld@apwld.org

8th Floor, Wisma MLS 31, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman
50100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: +603-2697 0708 / +603-2697 0219

Fax: +603-2697 0282

Email: caraminfo@caramasia.org

