



Future Action in the Interest of Foreign Women Domestic Workers

As follow-up to the Regional Policy Dialogue on Foreign Women Domestic Workers: International Migration, Employment and National Policies, the Asian and Pacific Development Center (APDC) network of researchers recommended the following lines of action:

Information

☛ It was recognised that there is a need for a centralised information clearing house to process the data brought forth during this regional dialogue, as well as other available information. It was recommended that APDC act as the central clearing house with the participants of this meeting providing information, as well as disseminating the information to other groups. The clearing house should have updated letters with the latest information on the issue of migrant domestic workers.

☛ Due to the lack of data on the Middle East, it was suggested that an informal roundtable dialogue be held between the researchers and their Middle Eastern counterparts. Such a meeting can be convened by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It was also recommended that an international mission under the auspices of ILO/UNDP should collect data on the Middle East. (This recommendation was very positively supported at the plenary by ILO representatives.)

☛ Some of the materials to be developed include: the information sheets or a handbook to inform potential migrants about the possible risks involved in overseas work, as well as names and addresses of institutions where help can be obtained in crisis situations.

☛ National dialogues should be held to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the meeting.

Association of Domestic Workers

☛ Explore possibility of organizing potential migrant domestic workers at the home country before they leave.

☛ In places like the Middle East, make use of existing organizations, e.g., women's associations, clubs, community groups.

☛ Break the monopoly of recruiting agencies

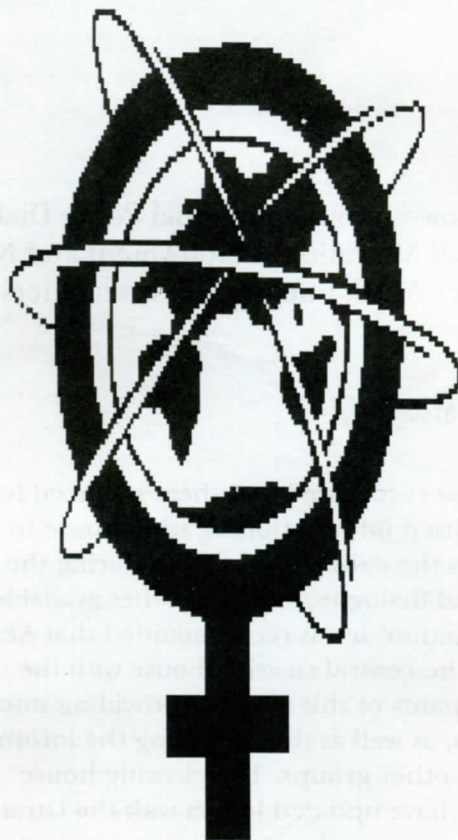


Gaps in Research and Documentation

- Research on undocumented workers especially on mechanisms and existing routes.
- An inventory of existing legal and legislative agreements among countries and organizations at regional and international levels. An overview paper on existing legislation in each country should be prepared in order to find out what more can be done.
- Documentation of recruitment agencies with a view to drawing up norms of what a good agency should be. Information should include fees, recruiting procedures, etc.
- Documentation of violence and sexuality in the context of overseas domestic work.

Advocacy and consciousness-raising

- The terminology and language used in relation to overseas employment needs to be reviewed and improved. There is a tendency to use language that describes domestic helpers as commodities — for example, “products”.
- Basic causes for migration such as poverty and unemployment need to be analyzed and considered. Within this context, it is important that governments consider international migration not as a permanent feature but as a transition process while countries develop their economic base. Governments need to think seriously about how to develop the economic sector so that conditions can bring about the creation of a more attractive and secure livelihood system.



Source: Report on *Regional Policy Dialogue, Foreign Women Domestic Workers: International Migration, Employment and National Policies*, 10-14 August 1992. Colombo, Sri Lanka. pp. 22-24. Published by APDC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
