

Mekong  
Migration  
Network (MMN)

## **MMN & ASEAN Declaration**



Mekong Migration Network (MMN)

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## MMN Members:

Currently have around 40 member organizations including migrant organizations, NGOs, mass organizations, research institutes etc.

*Cambodia ----- 6 groups*

*Yunan, China ----- 6 groups*

*Lao PDR ----- 2 groups*

*Thailand ----- 18 groups*

*Vietnam ----- 5 groups*

*Information monitoring*

- Joint research
- Joint Advocacy
- Capacity building





Migrants in the GMS work as:  
construction workers;  
in the fishing industry;  
in agriculture, horticulture,  
poultry farming,  
as domestic workers;  
as beggars,  
as factory workers;  
in the entertainment industry;  
as garbage collectors;  
in mines and quarries;  
in shops, as tailors,  
in the tourist industry



Nearly all the est. 5million migrants and their families in the Mekong are **UNDOCUMENTED**

In some areas, migrants crossing borders are issued with border passes, some migrants apply for the semi-legal status of a temporary work permit (without a passport) and a few have a passport and a work permit,. But less than 2% of the migrants in the Mekong can be said to be documented.





The ASEAN Declaration thus excludes the protection and promotion of the rights of 98% of the migrants in the Mekong region.



## Sending and Receiving countries

- **Because the Declaration relates only to documented migrants the language does not correspond to the reality of the Mekong**
- **In the Mekong there are no sending and receiving countries.**
- **People are leaving, migrating, moving, fleeing, escaping.**
- **Countries are turning a blind eye to entry, are turning people back, are profiteering from illegal entry.**



The ASEAN Declaration specifically mentions that for humanitarian reasons will cooperate in cases where migrants who through no fault of their own have subsequently become undocumented

To be relevant to the Mekong would need to have read : who through no fault of their own are undocumented

As it stands, none of the migrants in need of humanitarian response get it.



4. Nothing in the present Declaration shall be interpreted as implying the regularization of the situation of migrant workers who are undocumented;

For the Mekong, without a Declaration, there has been regularization of migrants who are undocumented. It is very difficult to put a cumulative figure on the number, but in Thailand, between 1.3 million and 5 million **migrant workers** have been regularised since 1996



# Mekong Migration Network Resource Books

- **Advocating in the Mekong has limitations due to the different political systems in place and the limited space for civil society in some countries.**
- **Since 2001 MMN members use the process of collecting information and jointly developing resource books as a major advocacy tool.**



## Resource Books

- **The Third Resource book focusses on the abuses and violence which migrants face during arrest, detention and deportation.**
- **To be launched this Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> at the FCCT**
- **Current resource book in progress is focussing on cross border economic zones.**
- **ASEAN Declaration recognises the contributions of migrant workers to the society and economy, ensure employment alternatives at home**

- **MMN together with the Mekong Institute is committed to a three year program of training of government officials in the Mekong on Labour Migration Management**

# MMN-MI Regional Training Course



## MMN and the ASEAN Declaration: more questions than answers

- **Will it be possible to advocate to the countries of origin regarding their responsibilities on providing employment in the home countries? Or to advocate on the root causes?**
- **When harmony and tolerance breaks down, can civil society appeal to ASEAN for rational and dignified responses?**
- **When the Declaration does not guarantee the rights of workers to unionise, how can workers in the Mekong assemble, organise and advocate for safer, humane and dignified work.**

- **The future of ASEAN depends on co-responsibility. ASEAN can only develop when there is a shared responsibility in its development.**
- **The current abuse of ASEAN workers by other ASEAN employers makes a sham of every ASEAN slogan. The labour force of ASEAN will diminish if it continues to suffer these extreme conditions and ASEAN's economic situation will deteriorate without an active, healthy workforce.**

- **Whilst countries of ASEAN refuse to interfere with their neighbours, they must bear the consequences. If Thailand stays silent on the abuses which drive migrants and refugees out of Burma, then Thailand must welcome the migrants and refugees.**

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***Thank you very much!***



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[www.mekongmigration.org](http://www.mekongmigration.org)