Recommendations on International Labour Day or "May Day" 2017

May 1 of every year is "International Labor Day," a day in which workers around the world commemorate the struggle for fairness in the workplace. It is a day that recognizes and acknowledges the importance of people working in all types of jobs and careers, and the right to work as a human being with dignity equal to that of other peoples. It is a day to emphasize that workers are an important part of driving the economy forward and equitably with other countries.

On this occasion, the Northern Labour Network, which is comprised of 15 organizations, academics from Chiang Mai and workers representatives, organized a workshop to discuss current issues workers are facing, identify problems and solutions.

- Workers in various industries in the North continue to face obstacles in establishing trade unions, and are not involved in tripartite committees.
- Domestic workers and agricultural workers cannot enter the social security system, and are not covered by Labour protection laws such as the minimum wage, paid days off or holidays.
- Migrant workers generally do not receive their basic labour rights as established by the Labour Law. They do not have one regular day off a week, no paid days off or holidays as required by law, and are required to work overtime involuntarily. They are not covered under the social security system because certain occupations are not entitled to enroll and because of the documents required. Some employers do not register their employees in Social Security system. There are workers who enter the social security system who have problems accessing benefits they are entitled to such as child allowance, and the pension fund.
- Migrant workers have restrictions on their freedom of movement, and are extorted regularly.
- Women migrant workers are discriminated for their sex by being paid a lower wage than men.

Workers in the services sector are still discriminated against and stigmatized by society for their sexual differences, and are still not able to access health benefits like other workers.

To resolve these problems and promote the value and importance of all labourers, the Northern Labour Network with workers from a diversity of occupations calls on all relevant government agencies to implement the following:

Recommendations to the Thai Government

1) To reduce prejudice and create a positive attitude towards migrant workers in Thai society, we request the Thai Government not to use the term "Alien Labourers" in any official or unofficial capacity and encourage the use of the term "Migrant Workers" instead.
2) Adjust the minimum wage to 450 Baht a day, making it A Living Wage that provides workers and their families with increased financial security.
3) Sign ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and expedite the adoption of the ILO Convention No. 98 on the right to Collective Bargaining and Negotiation by 2017.
4) Accelerate signing of ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers by 2017 and promote recognition of Domestic Workers' labour rights.
5) Allow workers from all occupations enter Social Security and equally receive all benefits without discrimination.
6) Recognize workers from all occupations, including domestic workers and workers in the informal sector such as agriculture workers who do not have employment all year round, as labourers protected under all relevant Labour Laws.
7) Make a Cabinet Resolution which expands the area migrants are allowed to work as the whole province without having to make a request to the government.
8) Amend the Working of Alien Act B.E. 2551 to allow migrants to work in all occupations according to their abilities without restriction, and extend the working age to 60 years of age.

To the Ministry of Interior

1) Make amendments on regulations regarding migrants' mobility to allow migrants, including those without documents or those with highlander cards, the freedom to travel.

To the Ministry of Labour

1) Migrant workers must have the right to access skills development under the Department of Skills Development and receive certificates which they can use to advance their careers.
2) Create an agency responsible for providing training and development of workers on the right to organize and collective bargaining without discrimination.

To the Governor of Chiang Mai

1) For the safety of all residents of Chiang Mai establish a safe and effective public transportation system that is accessible and inexpensive for all.

To the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

1) Ensure that workers who return to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar have access to their various basic rights such as household registration, access to education, public health and occupational health and all civil rights.

2) Allow migrant workers from the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to register marriage certificates and identification cards in the Embassy or Consulate of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
3) Urgently establish a Social Security system in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for all its citizens.

To the Governments of Thailand and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

1) Comply with ILO Convention 181 on private recruitment agencies under Section 7, which established that recruitment agencies shall not charge any fees for recruitment or placement from workers, whether directly or indirectly.

For you to consider and implement immediately,

Respectfully,

Members of The Northern Labour Network:

MAP Foundation

Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF)

EMPOWER Foundation

MPlus

Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)

Shan Youth Power

Migrant Worker Federation (MWF)

Workers Solidarity Association (WSA)

Workers' Rights Promotion Association

Federation of Garment Factory and Textile Workers Union

Federation of Jewelry and Accessories Workers Union

Migrant Workers Rights Network (MWRN)

Home-Based Workers Group

Gab Fai Community Theatre

Mekong Migration Network (MMN)

Sankampaeng Non-formal Working Group

Sparkling Education Foundation