



Mekong Migration Network (MMN)

Press Release: Launch of MMN Report, “Surviving the Pandemic: To Stay or Go? A Study into the Decision-making of Mekong Migrants”

On 22 November 2021, the Mekong Migration Network (MMN), launched “Surviving the Pandemic: To Stay or Go? A study into the decision-making of Mekong migrants”. The report provides an in-depth analysis of migrant decision-making amid the wave of redundancies and border closures brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on qualitative interviews with migrant workers from Cambodia and Myanmar in Thailand and recent returnees of those nationalities, the study examines the factors that shaped their decisions to either remain in Thailand or return to countries of origin during the early stages of the pandemic in 2020. It provides a vivid account of individual decisions and explores how migrant decision-making can inform policy as we move through the pandemic era.

The online launch was attended by more than 80 stakeholders, including officials from Thailand’s Ministries of Labour and Public Health; Cambodia’s Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training; the Cambodian Embassy in Thailand; diplomatic missions from various countries; UN bodies such as ILO, IOM, UN Women; development agencies, such as ADB; humanitarian organisations such as ICRC; and a range of civil society migration advocates.

Presenting the report’s key findings, Ms. Reiko Harima, MMN Regional Coordinator, said that MMN’s research suggests that migrants are “active resilient decision-makers who respond pragmatically both as individuals and family units to the problems they encounter during the pandemic”. She added that “the pandemic had exacerbated various pre-existing problems regarding the provision of social protection to migrant workers and their families”, and that “the ability of migrants to make informed decisions during the stress and anxiety of the pandemic continues to be hampered by the lack of official information available in migrant languages”.

The report contains 24 policy recommendations directed at the governments of Thailand and countries of origin for applying lessons that can be learned from MMN’s research into the decision-making of migrants amid the pandemic. Presenting the report’s key recommendations, Mr. Brahm Press, Chair of the MMN Steering Committee, emphasised that “steps should be taken to ensure that all migrants in Thailand, regardless of immigration status, be granted access to public healthcare in relation to the diagnosis, treatment and vaccination for Covid-19”, and that “the authorities should publicly announce that immigration checks will not take place during healthcare interactions”. He added that “creating targeted programmes using healthcare workers trusted within migrant communities will encourage vaccination uptake”.

www.mekongmigration.org

MMN Secretariat

info@mekongmigration.org

[Hong Kong Office](#)

Asian Migrant Centre, c/o Kowloon Union Church, 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel: +85223120031, Fax: +85229920111

[Chiang Mai Office](#)

P.O. Box 195 Chiang Mai University, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200 Thailand

c/o Foundation for Migrants from the Mekong Neighbourhood, 156/118, Moo 10, Canal Road, T. Sunthep, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200 Thailand
phone: +66-53283259, fax: +66-53283259



Mekong Migration Network (MMN)

The report's other key recommendations urge the Thai government to make their amnesty policies for migrant workers as affordable and inclusive as possible, and that extra efforts be made to provide timely information to migrants in languages they understand. Among the recommendations directed at countries of origin, the report urges policymakers to move forward with establishing a mechanism for the portability of social security; and for diplomatic missions to enhance the support provided to their migrant nationals in Thailand.

[END]

ABOUT THE MEKONG MIGRATION NETWORK

Mekong Migration Network (MMN), founded in 2003, is a sub-regional network of migrant support NGOs, migrant grassroots groups and research institutes. The central goal of MMN is to promote the welfare, well-being, dignity and human rights of migrants in the Greater Mekong Subregion and to build mutual support and solidarity among migrants and advocates. To achieve this goal MMN jointly carries out research, advocacy, capacity building and networking. For more information about our work, please visit our webpage at: www.mekongmigration.org.

The full report in English is available [here](#).

The Executive Summary and Recommendations are available in [English](#), [Thai](#) and [Burmese](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Reiko Harima, MMN Regional Coordinator, at reiko@mekongmigration.org (English or Japanese) or WhatsApp +852 93692244; and

Ms. Wichita Jantawong, MMN Project Coordinator (Thai or English) at: wichitra@mekongmigration.org.

www.mekongmigration.org

MMN Secretariat

info@mekongmigration.org

Hong Kong Office

Asian Migrant Centre, c/o Kowloon Union Church, 4 Jordan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel: +85223120031, Fax: +85229920111

Chiang Mai Office

P.O. Box 195 Chiang Mai University, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200 Thailand

c/o Foundation for Migrants from the Mekong Neighbourhood, 156/118, Moo 10, Canal Road, T. Sunthep, Muang, Chiang Mai 50200 Thailand
phone: +66-53283259, fax: +66-53283259