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▶ **Talking to
policy makers /
politicians about
domestic work**

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Talking to policy makers / politicians about domestic work

What is domestic work?

Domestic workers do a range of tasks in private homes: cleaning, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, caring for children or the disabled or elderly; they provide driving, household maintenance, gardening and security services. These tasks are considered part of the broader care economy. Where these jobs take place within private home for pay, the workers are domestic workers, and the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) applies. Sometimes, in the Asia-Pacific region, these workers are known as 'aunties,' 'helpers,' 'girls' or even 'maids,' but the internationally agreed term is domestic workers.

According to the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

- a) the term domestic work means work performed in or for a household or households; and
- (b) the term domestic worker means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship;

There are a lot of reasons that people do domestic work. The sector is an important livelihood source for people with little formal education or qualifications, often women, who have few other employment opportunities. Some enter the role due to discrimination based on a combination of gender, caste, class, race, age or ethnicity. Cleaning, cooking and caring for people is almost universally traditionally 'women's work,' so men rarely compete for these jobs.

Demand for domestic work is increasing across the world, as more people live outside traditional multigenerational family structures, more women take jobs outside the home, populations age and when working and combining domestic work becomes more difficult.

Tips for the policy makers/ politicians

- ▶ **This guide equips you to answer the questions that we commonly hear about domestic work.** It also gives you the facts to back up your arguments – use them wisely! Not all arguments will likely be relevant in your policy work, so you will need to be selective and respond to the conversation as it is ongoing.
- ▶ **Unless you are a domestic worker yourself – in which case, great! – you are here as a policy maker/ politician advocate for domestic workers.** Remember that this means sharing information that you have about domestic work, rather than standing in the place of domestic workers themselves. Ideally, domestic workers should take the role of champion/advocate, but we're grateful for anyone who will advance the discussion.
- ▶ **Be respectful of your role as an advocate.** Reinforce the purpose of this conversation which should be to explore, to listen and to learn while discussing how to use the role of the policy maker/ politician to better advocate for domestic workers.
- ▶ **As the policy maker/ politician,** you should question if you and others are sharing generalizations or stereotypes about domestic workers and steer them away from belittling statements. Remember, this conversation may be part of a longer process. It takes time to change minds!
- ▶ **Set agreements to encourage dialogue, mutual respect and deep listening to what others share.** If you're holding a workshop on this issue, consider writing these agreements – such as 'Practice Active Listening,' 'Don't Interrupt,' and 'Assume Good Intentions' – in a visible place in the room. Hopefully, you can encourage other policy makers/ politicians to be relaxed and comfortable, especially as differences in beliefs and experiences emerge. A key for successful discussion is to be interested and deeply listen to what others have experienced and what they think.



1. Why should I focus on domestic workers?

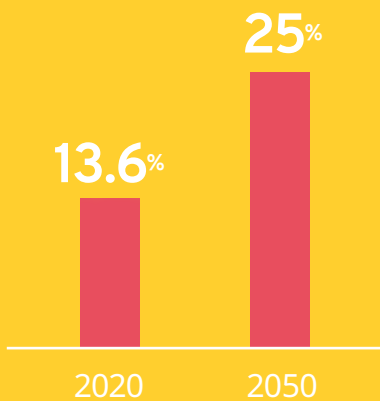
There are so many reasons why the policy makers/ politicians should focus on domestic work. But first, perhaps consider the most humane reason.

We all have needed, and most likely will need, care in our lives.

A lot of that care is provided by domestic workers in our homes. Washing dishes, doing housework, caring for children and family members is essential, and we all need this support. But domestic workers face some of the most exploitative working conditions and the lowest pay – despite performing some of societies’ most important roles. This essential work deserves fair compensation, decent working conditions and respect.

The need for domestic work is growing

Demand for domestic workers will increase in the coming years, especially in aging societies of ASEAN. **Can your party /Ministry/ Department afford to ignore domestic work?**



FACTS

According to UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the proportion of older persons (60 years or more) is predicted to rise from **13.6 per cent in 2020 to 25 per cent by 2050.**

Looking beyond elder care, a study conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute projects that by 2030, demand for occupations like childcare, early-childhood education, cleaning, cooking and gardening will increase, creating **50 million to 90 million** jobs globally.

UN ESCAP, "Overview of Levels and Trends in Population Ageing, Including Emerging Issues, and Their Impact on Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific," www.unescap.org, April 20, 2022

James Manyika et al., "Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: What the Future of Work Will Mean for Jobs, Skills, and Wages," McKinsey & Company (McKinsey & Company, November 28, 2017).

Consider the goals of your party/Ministry/Department on economic development and the world of work. Millions of women support their families by working in other people’s homes. They and their families deserve to make more out of their migration. Beyond the gains that domestic workers make for their own families through their employment, domestic work enables much – if not all – other work outside the home to happen.

Domestic work enables other labour force participation – especially for women

If domestic work is not done, most workers aren’t able to attend their workplace. If children aren’t cared for, food and meals aren’t bought or prepared, homes and clothes cleaned, work outside the home becomes nearly impossible. In this way, domestic workers are the primary workers that should attract attention from trade unions and improved working conditions.

FACTS

In all subregions of the Asia-Pacific region, parenthood pushes fathers *into* work and mothers *out of* work. For women... the tendency is to withdraw from the labour market upon motherhood. This is reflected in the eight percentage point gap in labour force participation of women with children against women in all households. The parenthood labour force participation gap is greatest for women in South-East Asia (at 12 percentage points).

ILO, *Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2022: Rethinking sectoral strategies for a human-centred future of work*, November 2022. box 4, p. 9



2. Anyway, domestic workers are like members of the family, not workers



Domestic work is work, and needs to be protected like all other kinds of work

The idea that domestic workers are ‘members of the family’ is nice and might enable better working conditions in some cases, but also can be used as an excuse as to why policy and law makers don’t provide comprehensive legal protection for domestic workers. While being ‘part of the family;’ might sound welcoming and open, families are spaces that are loaded with power and status, with particular consequences for women. Being described as ‘family’ does not necessarily bring with it dignity, respect, equality – or decent working conditions.

Consider the values and ethos of your party/Ministry/Department. Domestic workers still experience horrendous exploitation and abuse – both in this country and abroad.

FACTS

Consider what workers and employers say about being ‘part of the family.’ Does this sound like family to you?

*“They say if they give high salary, it won’t be a family anymore”
- Karen domestic worker*

*“In our house everyone eats together... although my maid sits at another table, as we want to be able to chat amongst ourselves obviously”
- Malaysian employer of a domestic worker*

*“They will tell us the time to mop, time to sweep, time to wipe things clean... At the employer’s house, they decide on time, in our house, we decide on time”
- Indonesian domestic worker*

“I heard about minimum wage, day off, processing the immigration card, and health check-ups... So I told them... ‘Mae [mother in Thai], you have to give three/ four days off a month.’... She laughed” - Myanmar domestic worker

Worker, helper, auntie, maid?: Working conditions and attitudes experienced by migrant domestic workers in Thailand and Malaysia

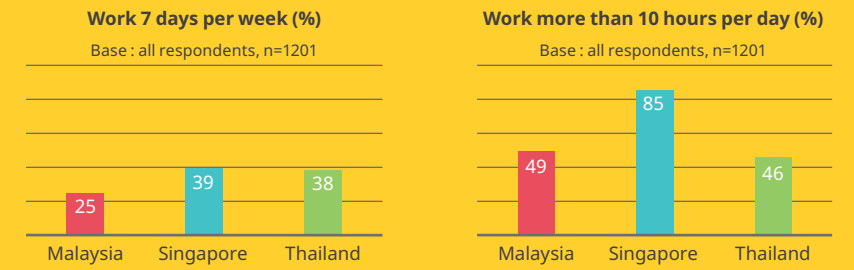
CASE STUDY – Erwiana Sulistyarningsih

Erwiana was an Indonesian domestic worker who faced terrible and life-threatening abuse by her employer in Hong Kong. For 8 months, Erwiana was forced to sleep on the floor, work over 20 hours a day and was not given any time off. She was beaten by her employer with a mop, a ruler and a clothes hanger. Erwiana’s wounds became infected but she was not allowed to see a doctor. She became unable to walk. At this point, her employer decided she should go back to Indonesia, booked her a ticket and gave her less than US\$10 to go home, threatening her parents if Erwiana told anyone about how she had suffered. Left at the Hong Kong airport, Erwiana found help when she met another migrant worker.

The social justice imperative for policy makers/ politicians is clear. Domestic workers are some of the most oppressed workers and most in need of urgent changes that improve their working conditions and lives. How our policies, legal systems and societies provide for domestic workers is a measure of the health and humanity of our communities and a measure of the success of your party/Ministry/department.

FACTS

Domestic workers face some of the worst working conditions of all sectors. An upcoming study from the ILO finds that all migrant domestic workers surveyed received at least US\$100 under the minimum wage and a large majority worked excessive hours.



ILO, forthcoming

While Erwiana’s case is one of the most famous, she is not alone. Domestic workers in the region report assault, rape, confinement and excessive working hours and demands all too regularly.

Domestic workers in Asia Pacific are still discriminated against in law

FACTS

- ▶ In Asia and the Pacific, 61.5 per cent of domestic workers remain fully excluded from labour law.
- ▶ 84.3 per cent of domestic workers in the region are in informal employment.
- ▶ 64 per cent of domestic workers remain excluded from the right to weekly rest in Asia and the Pacific.
- ▶ Only 19 per cent of domestic workers in the region have the same entitlements to annual leave as other workers.
- ▶ Most domestic workers in the region (71 per cent) remain without any limits on their normal weekly hours.
- ▶ Half of all domestic workers in Asia and the Pacific work more than 48 hours per week.

ILO, *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, June 2021, p. 64

The ILO, through the Convention 189 on Domestic Work, clearly stated that domestic work is work and set minimum standards over a decade ago. Your country is a member of the ILO and has an inherent commitment through membership to working towards the realization of decent work, including for domestic workers.

3. But the Government/ Party/Department has such a lot to tackle. Why would we add on domestic work?



Domestic work shouldn't be considered an inconvenient 'add on' to your work. It is a critical economic and employment sector, especially for women workers, and globally important, as international migrants increasingly are providing care in homes. Consider if your party/Ministry/Department has any other broader investment in care or ways to invest in the care economy to support the needs of an aging population. Consider also if your country uses the outmigration of domestic workers as a way to fill employment gaps in the local labour market.

Domestic work contributes economically and socially, at global, regional and local levels.

FACTS

The Southeast Asia and the Pacific subregion employs 4.8 million domestic workers, with women accounting for 80.5 per cent of domestic workers in the region. Within the subregion the Philippines (1.9 million), Indonesia (1.2 million) and Thailand (290,000) are the largest employers of domestic workers.

In Asia and the Pacific, domestic workers account for 4.6 per cent of all employees.

ILO, *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, June 2021, p. 33.

Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189)

Article 3: ILO fundamental principles and rights at work: 1) freedom of association and right to collective bargaining; 2) elimination of forced labour; 3) abolition of child labour; 4) elimination of discrimination.

Article 4: protection of children, including setting a minimum age in line with Minimum Age Convention, 1973

Article 5: protection from all forms of abuse, violence, and harassment

Article 6: fair terms of employment, decent working conditions and decent living conditions

Article 7: information about terms of employment, preferably in a written contract

Article 8: migrant-specific protections, including a written job offer or employment contract prior to migrating.

Article 9: freedom to choose living arrangements, prohibition of confinement of live-in domestic workers and domestic workers can keep identify documents/ passport

Article 10: equal treatment between domestic and other workers on work hours, overtime, rest and annual leave

Article 11: minimum wage coverage where it exists

Article 12: regular payment, at least once a month, and limited payment in-kind

Article 13: occupational safety and health

Article 14: equal treatment in respect to social security, including maternity protection

Article 15: regulation of recruitment agencies including investigation of complaints, establishment of operational guidelines, penalties for violation, fees charged not to be deducted from wages

Article 16: access to justice, effective access to courts, tribunals, or other dispute resolution mechanisms

Article 17: effective and accessible complaint mechanisms, including measures for labour inspection, enforcement, and penalties, and access to households



4. Domestic work is a major employer of women, especially those who haven't had a chance to attend school or gain formal qualifications.

"It's women's jobs anyway, they aren't so important"

Women's jobs are crucial for economic and social development of your country. In fact, the longer the current gender gaps in employment persist, the more your country misses out. Domestic work needs to be formalized to reap the benefits of what it can offer to women working within the sector.

FACTS

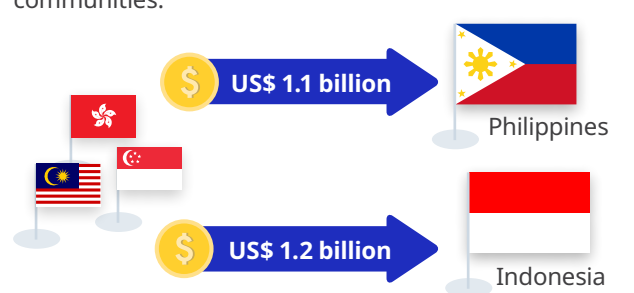
- ▶ According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), women make up almost half of the world's working-age population of nearly five billion people, but only about 50 percent of those women participate in the labor force, compared with 80 percent of men.
- ▶ Low participation of women in the labour force is further impacted when we note that women who are paid for their work are disproportionately employed in the informal sector—especially in developing economies.
- ▶ The Gender Employment Gap Index (GEGI) indicates that, on average across countries, long-run GDP per capita would be almost 20 per cent higher if all gender employment gaps were to be closed.

And migrant domestic workers – who are mainly women - contribute more than you might think.

Economic contribution

Economic contribution to countries of origin:

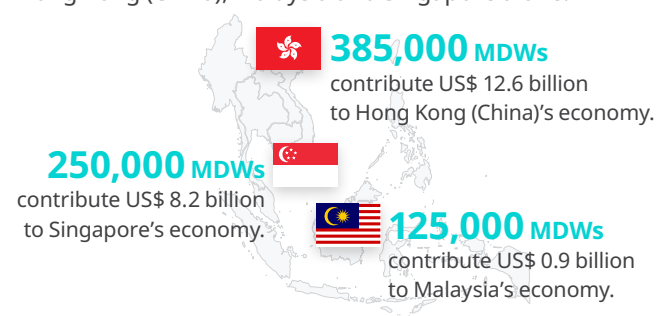
Migrant domestic workers from the Philippines and Indonesia sent over US\$ 2 billion to their home communities.



Country	Contribution
Philippines	US\$ 1.1 billion
Indonesia	US\$ 1.2 billion

Economic contribution to countries of destination:

Migrant domestic workers contribute over US\$ 20 billion to Hong Kong (China), Malaysia and Singapore alone.



Country	MDWs	Contribution
Hong Kong (China)	385,000	US\$ 12.6 billion
Singapore	250,000	US\$ 8.2 billion
Malaysia	125,000	US\$ 0.9 billion

Enrich and Experian. [The Value of Care](#), March 2019.

Not having women, including domestic workers, factored in as a critical part of your economy means missing out on this valuable resource that can also breathe new life into our economies. Post-pandemic, an economy that centralizes decent work in care and domestic work is the most sensible – and humane - strategy.

5. I'm a man – it isn't my fight

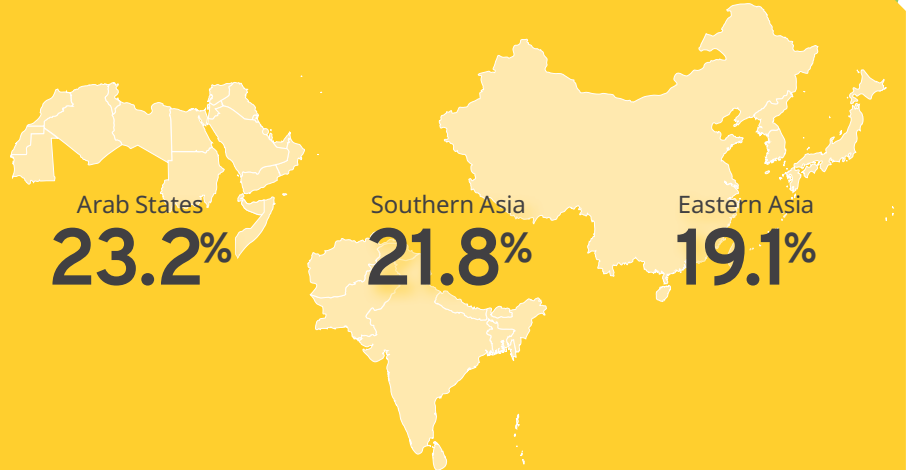


Domestic work is everyone's issue. Not only do almost all people benefit from domestic work performed in their own homes, men are also domestic workers.

Men are domestic workers... >>>

FACTS

Men make up nearly one quarter of domestic workers. Among male domestic workers, the largest group is in the Arab States (23.2 per cent), followed by Southern Asia (21.8 per cent) and Eastern Asia (19.1 per cent). Men outnumber women in domestic work in the Arab States (63.4 per cent) and represent an almost equal share in Southern Asia (42.6 per cent). Often these men are drivers, gardeners and security guards, but all are domestic workers.



ILO, *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, June 2021, p. xviii.



>>> ... and can be powerful advocates for domestic workers

(Re)negotiating equality and power is key to economic and social development – moving towards gender equality should be central to your party/Ministry/Department goals. This means having more women in your organizations and support teams, and in decision-making roles, in part to attract more women to your institution, and to reflect women's issues better in policy and practice. Family-friendly policies, including decent work for domestic workers, are critical in realizing a more just world.



Women of parliamentary seats **20%**

FACTS

On average, women held 20 per cent of parliamentary seats in Southeast Asian countries in 2018, a 1.7 percentage point increase compared to the 2008. Overall, the direction of change has been positive, with notable increases of nine percentage points in the Philippines and eight percentage points in Indonesia during that time period. Only Singapore and Thailand witnessed a decline in women's parliamentary representation between 2008 and 2018, by 1.5 percentage points and 6.9 percentage points, respectively.

There is a great deal of variation in the region, however. Women's parliamentary representation ranges from 30 per cent in the Philippines, 28 per cent in Lao PDR and 27 per cent in Viet Nam to a mere five per cent in Thailand and nine per cent in Brunei Darussalam.

OECD. *OECD Government at a Glance*, 2019.

Most parliamentarians are also employers of domestic workers. Are you? Does that influence your approach to domestic work issues? Positively or negatively? We all need to consider our own biases and how they affect our advocacy. Parliamentarian employers of domestic workers need to carefully consider their dual role as advocates and employers.



6. In my country, they're most often migrants anyway, so they don't vote for us



Migrants, and especially migrant workers, are a critical part of your country, whether your country is an origin or destination for migration. Migrants contribute to the economic and social development in numerous measurable ways, but the richness, diversity and community contributions they make are less often recognized.

Firstly, migrants vote in their home countries and are more likely to vote for policies and parties that support better protection for migrant workers. And migrant domestic workers – and their families – are a significant voting bloc, in several countries of origin.

Your party/ Department should foster an environment that is welcoming and supporting to migrant domestic workers, egalitarian and committed to strength in diversity. If you fight for domestic workers, they will fight for you!

Countries need, and should welcome, migrant domestic workers – especially as the care sector continues to grow

FACTS

Southeast Asia and the Pacific is host to a large number of migrant workers. **Of the 11.7 million migrant workers estimated as working in the region in 2013, 19 per cent work as domestic workers.** Migrant domestic workers account for almost a quarter (24.7 per cent) of all domestic workers in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The global care workforce represents 11.5 per cent of total global employment and it is estimated that increasing investment in the care economy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will result in a total of 475 million jobs by 2030, or 117 million new jobs.

ILO, *ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers*, December 2015.

It should be noted that although there are estimates on the number of migrant domestic workers in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the exact number is unknown as many migrant workers migrate through irregular channels and are not counted in official statistics (ILO 2018).

ILO, *Report: Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work (ilo.org)*, June 2018.

Care economies in ASEAN countries of destination cannot function without migrant domestic workers. Providing decent work for domestic workers is an economic necessity, not just the right thing to do. A globalized world and a globalized workforce needs policy and law makers to recognize this and tailor laws and implementation to embrace this diversity.

FACTS

Employers demand domestic workers and call on governments to find ways to meet these needs. A country needs to be attractive to domestic workers to ensure a steady stream of inbound migrant domestic workers. Being attractive to domestic workers includes offering decent conditions, so that countries of origin do not halt the flow of their citizens into domestic work. The general public and voters get very concerned when public policies mean domestic workers are not available. Consider these reports:



'The Association of Employment Agencies has asked MOM to grant more entry approvals for domestic helpers, said its president, Ms K Jayaprema, pointing out that the maids help to support the economy indirectly by freeing up employers to work. "For a lot of families, it's not a luxury to have a domestic helper but a necessity (to help with caregiving)," she said.'

Demand for new maids high despite extra costs amid COVID-19 restrictions, risk of imported cases (Singapore)

'At today's meeting, I saw the light at the end of the tunnel where the Indonesian and Malaysian governments share the same aspiration to champion the cause of immigrant workers and protect their rights'

Pilot plan to ease maid shortage (Malaysia)



'Employment agencies in Singapore said demand for foreign domestic workers outstrips supply' *Singapore sees a shortage of maids; employment agencies attributes this to lack of new applicants (Singapore)*

'Due to the scarcity of these foreign nationals, recruitment agencies are now charging an exorbitant amount of money when it was previously dear but fair.'

Maid Shortage Remains a COVID issue (Brunei Darussalam)



7. It's not a skilled job, so it is ok to pay low wages

It is a myth that domestic work is unskilled. Think about the tasks a domestic worker might perform. Childcare, ironing and washing, elder care, cleaning and cooking, security, pet care and garden maintenance all require particular and specific skills sets. Child and elder care are especially specific skillsets and tasks that are commonly performed by domestic workers within the home. If an individual is doing the same tasks in a kindergarten, commercial kitchen, nursery school or eldercare institution, they are much better paid, with fixed and regular hours and often result in access to social protection. Why are these skills less valued when performed in the home? Beyond these technical skills, domestic workers often speak several languages and demonstrate as emotional or caring skills which are often critical for their jobs .



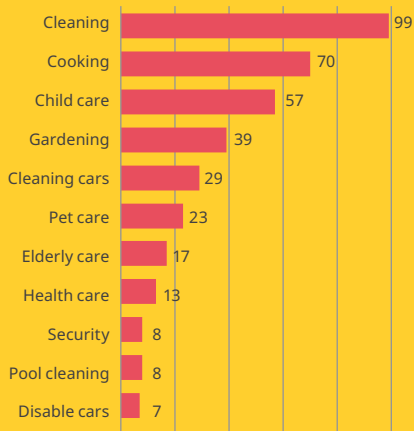
Domestic work is skilled work.

FACTS

Domestic workers in the region are regularly performing tasks that are classified in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) as Level 2, or medium skilled.

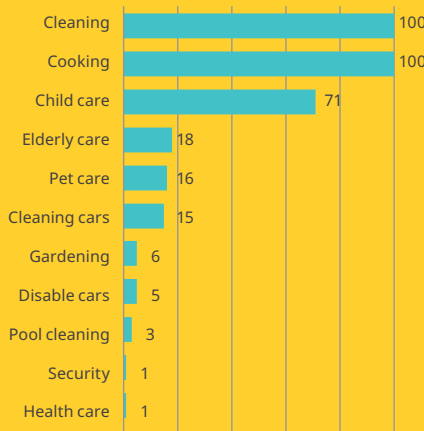
Work duties - Malaysia (%)

Base all respondents, n=400



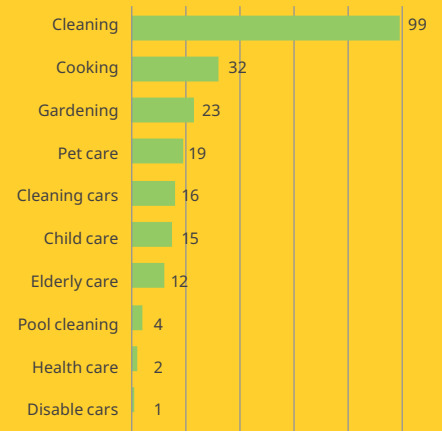
Work duties - Singapore (%)

Base all respondents, n=401



Work duties - Thailand (%)

Base all respondents, n=400



ILO forthcoming

"The normal domestic worker works as an "all around" - taking care of the whole family - taking care of the children - we wash, we cook - these are the basics. This is a normal job scope for the domestic worker."

Filipino migrant domestic worker, Singapore



8. We can't afford to pay domestic workers minimum wage; we have to keep domestic work wages low



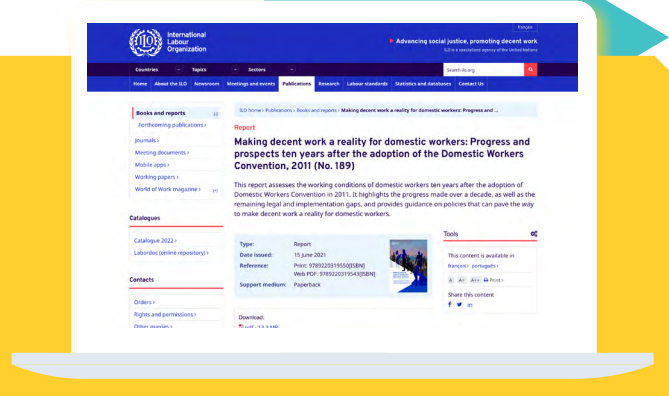
The fact is that minimum wage is put in place at a level that allows the worker to cover their minimum needs. If your society is hiring a whole sector of workers that are not, with their pay, able to cover their minimum needs, the health and humanity of that society must be questioned. Is your party /Department truly suggesting that this sector of work must sacrifice a basic standard of living when taking up these roles?

FACTS

The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189) gives domestic workers the right to minimum wage, in line with all other workers.

Only 11 per cent of domestic workers in the region enjoy the minimum wage to the same extent as other workers.

ILO, *Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, June 2021.



There are practical ways to make domestic workers affordable to more families while paying them minimum wage and respecting their labour rights, for example by enabling part-time domestic work. Some employers may need to consider having a part-time worker or reducing the number of hours a domestic worker spends in their home. Some of these measures have alleviated the shocks that may be experienced if domestic workers are suddenly due the minimum wage. Hiring a domestic worker should also not be the only option available nationwide to care for the young, old and frail in the family, but needs to be supported by other care options such as affordable good quality childcare and other institutional care services.

Many households can afford and should pay their domestic workers minimum wage

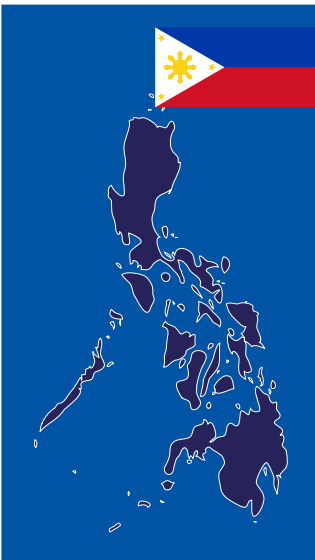
A differentiated wage for domestic workers has also been implemented in the Philippines.

CASE STUDY – the Philippines Minimum Wage for domestic workers

Article 11 of the Domestic Workers Convention 2011 (No. 189) requires all ILO member states to take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy minimum wage coverage and without discrimination based on sex. In compliance, the Philippines enacted Republic Act No. 10361 of 2012, known as the Domestic Workers Act or *Batas Kasambahay*, which upholds the rights of domestic workers, thus ensuring their safe and healthy working environment and fair terms of employment.

The Philippines has opted not to align the minimum wage levels of the domestic workers with that of the national minimum wage level of the labour force. The country aims to employ the gradual approach in setting the minimum wage of domestic workers, wherein this sector's minimum wage is initially set lower than the national minimum wage but will be gradually increased over time to equal the national minimum wage level.

[Organizing women migrant workers: Handout compendium](#)





9. Ok, ok, but we can't afford to offer the same social protection

In the same way that some claim they 'can't afford' to pay minimum wage, we've also heard that social protection systems 'can't afford' to extend protection to domestic workers, or migrant domestic workers. If your country is an origin for migrant domestic workers, their exclusion might be an expression of values, rather than financial constraint. You might advocate for research into the proposal to include domestic workers in the scheme and see what is viable without risk to other insured people.

For countries of destination, social protection systems benefit from the inclusion of migrant domestic workers. Migrant workers are young, fit and employed, and therefore as a group net contributors to social security. Their inclusion increases the total value of social security funds and makes the fund more robust, alongside the obvious advantages of ensuring social protection for this group of workers.

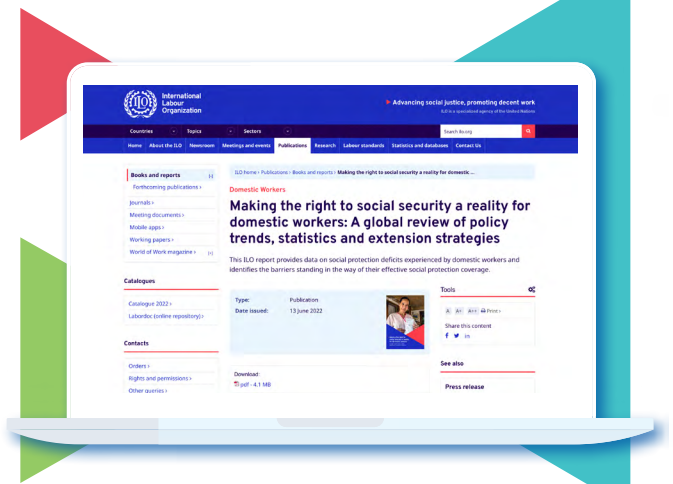
Care for the carers

Domestic workers have their own care needs. They still get sick, have accidents and lose their jobs – all areas where social protection schemes could support their needs.

FACTS

The human right to social security is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Still, domestic workers are over-represented in the 53 per cent of the world population that is deprived of this fundamental right. Domestic workers are nearly two times less likely to be registered under social insurance schemes.

ILO, *Making the right to social security a reality for domestic workers*, June 2022, p. xii.



The irony here, of course, is that many domestic workers are hired to provide aged, child and disability care precisely because of a lack or gaps in the social protection schemes. But protection under the schemes is possible, and will have ancillary benefits, including potentially formalizing the domestic work workforce.

Financing modalities will need to be tailored to domestic workers and their employers, but it is also clear that many employers are quite willing to pay these costs. Domestic workers and employers are largely positive about making contributions towards social security.

CASE STUDY – Malaysia



In 2021, the Malaysian Social Security Organization (SOCSO) announced the extension of social security protection coverage to domestic workers, including migrant domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers could then be covered under the 'Employment Injury Scheme' which allows claims for workplace accidents resulting in medical costs, disability and death.

FACTS

Consider these statements by domestic workers and their employers in Thailand.

"Like other types of workers, there should be social protection. The platform, the employer, or the client should all be involved in paying social security contributions [for] domestic workers. The Government should set the wage rate in stages to figure out how much the contributions should be made."

– Thai domestic worker

"If we have to pay, we have to pay. It is not about the money; it is about the necessities."

"Yes, definitely [I am willing to pay social security contributions]. I think if a domestic worker becomes ill or has an accident, these can also affect me."

– employer of migrant domestic worker

ILO, forthcoming

10. So, if we do all this, why should we also ratify C189?

Ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189) is an important expression of your country's values and attitudes towards international labour standards and domestic workers. There are many resources – technical and financial – that your party /Department may be able to access through the ILO and others promoting the convention.

FACTS

Over a hundred years ago, the ILO was set up to promote social justice. The founders of the ILO chose the setting and supervising the application of international labour standards as the key strategy to achieve that objective. Throughout the last century, international labour standards have guided countries “to adopt humane conditions of labour” and in doing so have prevented them from becoming “an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries”.

This work is not completed and cooperation between countries to pursue social justice remains a pillar of the multilateral system. Ratification **is a political act in support of such cooperation.**

Thirty-five countries, including the Philippines, have ratified ILO Convention 189, along with Recommendation 201.

ILO, *ILO Centenary Ratification Campaign FAQs*, January 2019, p. 2.

ILO, *Ratifications of C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*, n.d.

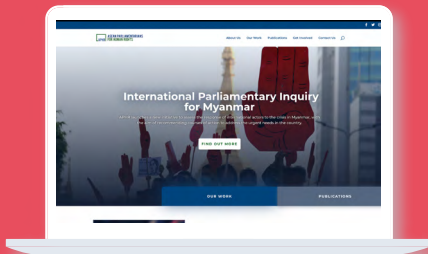


Ratification will also mean that your country becomes a leader on domestic work issues in the region. For both countries of origin and destination, this has strong advantages for making recruitment to and from your country attractive.

11. Well, we certainly can't do this alone – who can we work with?

The ILO has a clear mandate on domestic work

The ILO is dedicated to the realization of decent work for domestic workers and will be a partner in your advocacy. Various other regional organizations are also dedicated to the furtherance of human rights in ASEAN. Consider reaching out to these organizations to multiply your impact



ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) was founded in June 2013 with the objective of promoting democracy and human rights across Southeast Asia. APHR's founding members include many of the region's most progressive Members of Parliament (MPs), with a proven track record of human rights advocacy work.

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, [Our Mission](#), n.d.

Workers organizations, trade unions, community and women's groups may all also be natural allies in this fight. Be creative and consider a mapping of potential partners, including looking towards global leadership on this issue, like the International Domestic Workers Federation.

The International Domestic Workers Federation is the peak union body



International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

IDWF is a membership-based global organization of domestic and household workers. As of December 2022, the IDWF is made up of **87 affiliates** from **67 countries**, serving a **membership of over 670,000** domestic/household workers' members. Most are organized in trade unions and others in associations, networks and workers' cooperatives.

And now, for action!

What can you and your union do to take this conversation forward today? This week? This year? Make personal and organizational commitments to bringing domestic work within the union ambit. This is our shared fight. And this is just the beginning...

▶ Talking to policy makers / politicians about domestic work

Want to ensure policy and legislation better considers and protects domestic workers?

This guide equips advocates and champions to answer the questions often heard when talking to parliamentarians and policy makers about improving protection for domestic workers. It also gives the facts to back up these arguments.

If you're going to have conversation about how parliamentarians/policy makers can – and should - better meet the needs of domestic workers, and think you'll face some resistance, this guide is for you!

This booklet is published by the ILO and the ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC). ATUC unites 18 national labor centers and confederations from ASEAN member states, excluding Brunei but including Timor Leste, advocating for the voices and interests of workers without distinction within ASEAN processes.

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