

## The Bangkok Call for Justice for Women Migrant Workers

**Partners in Change**, brought together a number of people from across Asia who have been working from their specific locations to articulate and affirm the human rights framework. This was a unique gathering in that many of our participants belong to the so called 'marginalised groups'—trafficked women, domestic workers and sex workers. However, all of them have rejected 'permanent victimhood', organised themselves, questioned the attitude of mainstream society and policy makers towards them, and claimed their rights as human beings. **Partners in Change** celebrated and analysed those courageous efforts, and discussed future collaborative strategies.

At this conference the following statement was formulated:

### The Bangkok Call for Justice for Women Migrant Workers

We, women migrant workers, are a group of individuals and organizations who have experienced the systematic violation of our civil rights and personal dreams by various forces of power and privilege.

We are migrant workers in the informal sectors, human rights activists, migrant rights NGOs and supporters of migrant workers' rights.

During our recent gathering in Bangkok, from 06 to 08 November 2002, we identified the following issues, as being barriers to our community.

- Macro migration policies and structural institutions that are prejudicial and anti-poor.
  - Lack of sustainable regular labour opportunities and social benefits in countries of origin
  - Exploitation by sending and receiving states, recruiters and employers, that deny migration benefits to women
  - Lack of enforceable civil rights in countries of origin and destination
  - Lucrative profit of foreign revenue by the sending country through institutionalisation and systemic labour export policy
- Institutional and cultural obsessions regarding the control of women's mobility
  - Migration decisions imposed on women by others
  - Restrictions on the freedom of movement of women migrant workers by country of origin

- Anti-trafficking campaigns that promote fear of migration

- Discriminatory and prejudicial practices that infantilise or demonize migrant women

- Xenophobia/terrorism that presumes that we are an economic or security threat

- Using fear of HIV as an anti-migration message

- Trafficking and sex work stigma that is attached to all women migrant workers

Therefore we demand:

- That the state respect, promote, ensure and fulfill our rights as human beings and as migrant workers
- Our inclusion in any stakeholder group that impacts on our lives, so our voices might be heard and consulted before policy is developed and implemented

We also resolve:

- To develop the capacity to resist the violence of state and non-state agents who seek to exploit us, who violate our human/civil rights, who ignore our voices and seek to perpetuate our invisibility.

**We declare that through our own empowerment, we will gain freedom from state and societal oppression and bring about social justice, economic progress and peace !**