

ACSC/APF 2017 Convergence Space**LABOUR MOBILITY AND MIXED MIGRATION**

Issues: labor migration, abandoned families, marriage migration, mixed/dynamic migration, climate displacement

Background:

2015 was a special year for the ASEAN region because of its regional economic integration that allows free flow of goods and services and labour. However, this integration was strongly criticised by civil society in the region as it will only serve the interests of businesses and economic giants vying for the markets of ASEAN. While the ASEAN economic integration will provide greater opportunity for greater mobility of workers, the discussions have primarily been focused on labor mobility for skilled workers that provide freedom of movement and rights across the region for professionals in eight fields. The bigger challenge of protecting the rights of the majority of migrant workers in the region who are found in semi and low-skilled sectors is not being addressed. Moreover, tens of thousands of people searching for livelihood and safety including refugees, stateless persons, displaced persons and other migration flows such as climate migrants and marriage migrants have been left vulnerable to abuse and various forms of exploitation due to State's restrictive policies and increased securitization of borders.

Due to lack of regular channels, migrants and refugees have increasingly make use of the same routes and means of transport to reach their destination. They resort to exploitative migration flows along irregular routes which often result to a range of human rights abuses. This includes but is not limited to smuggling, trafficking, forced labor, torture or even death. In 2015, ASEAN witnessed another humanitarian crisis with Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in their home countries have been left adrift in the Indian Ocean. For too long, ASEAN has remained silent about this issue.

The large flows of migrants and refugees and the need for protection oriented responses have been the subject of international community which led to the New York Declaration on Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees in September 2015. The Declaration contains bold commitments to address the issues concerning migrants and refugees.

The APF will provide space for organizations/groups or networks working on migrants and refugee issues to come together to better understand how labour migration other mobility flows intersect with each other and develop a common narrative that establishes the links among these issues and agree on ways on how to advance the protection of migrants and refugees in the region.