

## **TREATING DOMESTIC WORKERS LIKE ALL OTHER MIGRANT WORKERS WOULD MINIMIZE COMPLAINTS AND ABUSE.**

The Indonesian government's policy decision to put a freeze on sending their citizens to work in Malaysia as domestic maids is understandable. The Indonesian Embassy in Malaysia manages a shelter for Indonesian domestic maids rescued from abuse and torture. Thus they are conscious of this perennial problem.

MTUC supports and welcomes their proposal that their citizens recruited as domestic workers should also be treated like any other migrant worker. Their decision will benefit their citizens and it will immediately eliminate or at least greatly reduce the opportunity for abuse. This would also mean there would be coverage under the provisions of the Employment Act thus ensuring that minimum wage, limit on working hours and all other minimum standards would be accorded to Domestic Workers as well.

MTUC's has repeatedly demanded that domestic workers be accorded protection and safeguards within the scope of the Employment Act : unfortunately over the last 5 years, the government has only made empty promises and nothing materialised.

The Malaysian government having witnessed and recorded all the complaints of ill treatment including murder, they should examine the Indonesian proposal of removing the migrant workers from the confines of the home. Introducing a "live-out" domestic worker system can be a good solution as they would be recognised as "formal workers" employed for one specific task. This system is indeed good for our government as Malaysia's image would not be further tarnished. Philippines is the only country within the Asean region paying a lot of attention to the working and living conditions and the welfare of their citizens going out to work in other countries including Malaysia.

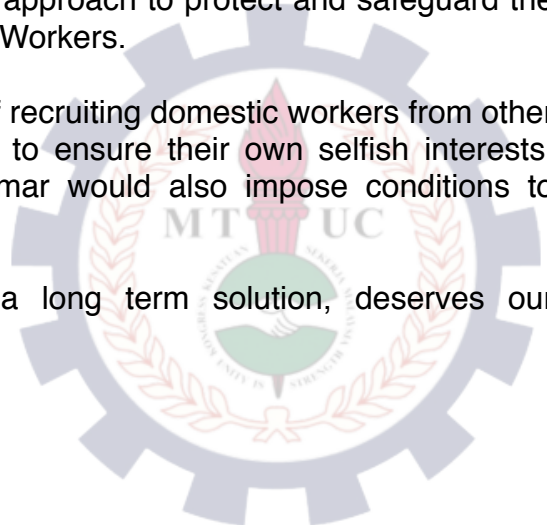
The MTUC will now work with trade unions especially Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar and those who send workers here to take up this issue with their own government and persuade them to pursue this matter. We will also seek the assistance of the International Trade Union movement - the ITUC to get them involved in this.

MTUC is in favour of the Indonesian government's approach to protect and safeguard the interests of their citizens working here as Domestic Workers.

Maid agencies' proposal to explore the possibility of recruiting domestic workers from other sources like Cambodia and Myanmar would help to ensure their own selfish interests. Ultimately Governments of Cambodia and Myanmar would also impose conditions to safeguard the interests of their citizen.

"Live-out" formal domestic worker system, as a long term solution, deserves our Government's serious consideration.

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