



**National Conference Recommendations
Implementation On Making Decent
Work A Reality For Domestic Workers.**

A Report by:

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BACKGROUND

All of us need care at different times in our lives. We need care to survive in infancy, when we suffer an accident or illness, whether the impact is short, chronic or long-term, to support families and households, and to ensure the best possible quality of life as we age, including at the close of life. Care work is also crucial to ensure the health, education and well-being of the current and future workforce and adequate care for the growing numbers of older people in many countries. In addition, given that women perform the majority of unpaid care work in households, paid care work offers possibilities for women to enter, advance and remain in the workforce. Care workers, whether paid or unpaid, are essential to meet this basic and multidimensional human need for care in many forms and through a broad range of tasks.

According to the 2021 ILO Global estimates on international migrant workers, there is a growing labour demand in the health and domestic work sectors. Many care workers, including nursing personnel and domestic workers, are also migrants and predominantly female. Nepali migrant workers are increasingly going abroad for work, mainly in domestic work and care economy. Many of these women migrate to Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to work as domestic workers.

Despite being a popular employment option, domestic and care sector workers often face poor working conditions and low wages. It is not exception to the workers in Nepal. According to a study by Amnesty International, domestic workers in Qatar and the UAE typically work for 12-16 hours a day, six days a week, and earn an average monthly salary of USD 200-275 (Amnesty International, 2014). Moreover, domestic workers are often subjected to physical and sexual abuse, with limited access to justice or support services. In Nepal, domestic work is not well regulated and is highly feminized, and majority of workers in domestic work and care sectors are female workers. Moreover, there is very little awareness on this issue amongst policymakers, development agencies, workers and employers.

PURPOSE

In this pretext, AMKAS together with development partners such as ILO and domestic workers' network, organized one day program following the recommendations from National Conference on International Domestic Workers Day 2023. The need for organizing such program emerged

from the conference organized by AMKAS on 16 June 2023 on the Domestic workers 'day. The recommendations from the conference are as follows:

1. Domestic work: Recognize it as one of the oldest professions globally and emphasize the importance of respecting it.
2. Care sector investment: View resources required for the care sector as an investment rather than an expense, with the potential to generate returns for the economy.
3. Ratify ILO C189: Highlight the importance of ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 to secure the rights and dignified lives of domestic workers.
4. Mindset shift: Advocate for a change in mindset towards domestic work, promoting respect and fair treatment.
5. Policy enhancement: Address the insufficiency of current policies and regulations to protect domestic workers' rights and dignity, emphasizing the need for ratifying ILO C189.
6. Employer responsibility: Emphasize the importance of employers respecting the rights and well-being of domestic workers.
7. Constant campaign: Continuously raise awareness about domestic work issues to drive meaningful change.
8. Preparing for migration: Stress the significance of learning the language of the destination country before moving there for better integration and opportunities for domestic workers.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

By organizing a provincial-level program with these objectives, the province can take significant steps towards advancing the dignity and rights of domestic workers, promoting a fair and inclusive society that values and respects their contributions:

1. Raise Awareness and Promote Respect: Increase public awareness about the significance and contributions of domestic and care work, fostering a culture of respect and recognition for domestic workers within the province.

2. Policy Reform and Ratification: Advocate for the ratification of ILO C189 from the provincial level to safeguard the rights and dignified lives of domestic workers.
3. To create a common understanding on the situation of domestic workers and care workers
4. To sensitize the concerned stakeholders and responsible government officials on the issue
5. and international standards on domestic work and care work
6. To prepare recommendations to all concerned stakeholders for promoting domestic workers and care sectors' rights and to the government for developing appropriate laws and policies

ORGANIZERS

AMKAS Nepal is proud to announce its role as the lead agency in organizing provincial level conference. This program was a collaborative effort with ILO, aimed at addressing the rights and protection of migrant domestic workers and create a common understanding on the situation of domestic workers and care workers, a cause that AMKAS Nepal has been actively advocating for since its establishment.

As an organization, our primary focus has been to push for the ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189, which sets important labor standards for domestic workers and provides crucial protections for this vulnerable workforce. To further this cause, we have organized numerous events, consultations, and campaigns, all aimed at raising awareness about the significance of ratification and putting pressure on the government to take action.

In December 2021, we successfully held a consultation program centered around the ratification of ILO C189. This event brought together stakeholders from the government, civil society, and the private sector, facilitating discussions on the importance of ratification and strategizing for advocacy and implementation. Similarly, in July 2021, we organized a media consultation focusing on a draft petition that called for the lifting of discriminatory bans on women migrant workers and the ratification of ILO C189. This event aimed to involve the media in our campaign and generate broader public awareness on the matter.

We have also been actively engaged in direct advocacy with government stakeholders. In November 2021, we held a productive roundtable meeting with government officials to discuss the need for ratification and develop an action plan for advocacy and implementation.

Additionally, on International Domestic Workers Day in 2022, we submitted a petition on the ratification of ILO C189 to the Minister of Labor, and during the 2023 conference, we organized a panel discussion where esteemed members of the government were present to ensure that migrant voices were heard.

In addition to our advocacy work, we have launched the Marigold Campaign, a vital initiative aimed at addressing the challenges faced by women migrant workers. Through this campaign, we seek to raise awareness about these issues and provide essential support and services to migrant workers. We have also been actively assisting individual workers in need by helping them access legal services and obtain necessary documentation.

AMKAS Nepal is committed to being a tireless advocate for the rights and protection of migrant domestic workers in Nepal, with a particular focus on women migrants. Through our advocacy efforts, campaigns, and direct assistance, we have successfully raised awareness about the challenges faced by this vulnerable workforce and have worked towards policy change and implementation.

VENUE AND DATE

The event was held at Hotel Basecamp, Bhedetar, Dharan-4 Nepal on 28th August, 2023, and was attended by a total of 100 diverse individuals representing government agencies, migrant domestic workers, national domestic workers, non-profit organizations, care sector service providers, media partners, and CSOs, among others.

EVENT PROCEEDINGS

Morning Session

The Provincial Conference organized by AMKAS Nepal commenced punctually at 10:00 am, setting the tone for a day filled with impactful discussions and valuable insights. This session was characterized by its formal proceedings and thoughtful deliberations, with the participation of esteemed guests and stakeholders from various districts. Here is a comprehensive account of the morning's events:

Commencement: The session initiated under the distinguished chairmanship of our chief guest, Hon. Parliamentarian Sapana Pariyar, and Ms. Puspa Thapa, Chairperson of AMKAS Nepal, who expertly chaired the session. The presence of special guests, including Hon. Mayor of Damak Municipality, Mr. Ram Kumar Thapa, Hon. Deputy Mayor of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan, Mr. Aindra Bikram Begha, and Mr. Roshan Prasad Dhakal, spokesperson and chair of Ward No 12 in Sundarharaicha Municipality, added significant gravitas to the proceedings. Notable dignitaries from all three districts also graced the event with their esteemed presence.

Delegation from Morang: Morang district was prominently represented by respected individuals, including Ms. Dharana Khanal, Female Member of Ward No. 1 in Sundarharaicha; Ms. Babita Khapung, Member of the Executive Committee for Ward No. 10; Ms. Kalpana Ghimire from Naari Adhikar Manch in Sudarharaicha 3; and Ms. Sushila Pathak, a Social Counselor in Sundarharaicha 10.

Representation from Jhapa: Jhapa district contributed valuable insights through the representation of Ms. Indu Khadka, Ward 7 Member of Damak Municipality, along with the esteemed presence of Mr. Keshav Prasai and Mr. Prabin Khadka from the Social Development Department and Education Department, respectively.

Distinguished Guests from Sunsari: Sunsari district was well represented, with attendees including Ms. Dipa Adhikari from the Health Department, Ms. Yagya Subedi from Nepal Police, and Ms. Shila Bajracharya, a Former Member of Women Network.

Inaugural Proceedings: Ms. Chetana Shreng, the facilitator, extended a warm welcome to all distinguished guests, creating an atmosphere of inclusivity and collaboration. The formal

inauguration was conducted jointly by Chief Guest Hon. Pariyar and Hon. Mayor Mr. Ram Kumar Thapa. A unison rendition of the National Anthem marked the initiation of the second session, which focused on opening remarks.

Warm Welcome: Ms. Uma Devi Sedhai, Chairperson of AMKAS Morang, delivered a heartfelt and appreciative welcome speech, emphasizing the importance of extending AMKAS Nepal's programs beyond the Bagmati province to foster inclusivity and broaden outreach.

Overview of AMKAS Nepal's Work: Ms. Bijaya Kumari Rai Shrestha, Executive Director of AMKAS Nepal, presented a comprehensive overview of AMKAS Nepal's extensive work and services to date. She provided insights into the impactful Marigold Campaign and further illustrated it through a video presentation.

Conference Objectives: Advocate Sadikshya Maharjan, Legal Officer of AMKAS Nepal, presented the precise objectives of the Provincial Conference and reiterated the recommendations from the National Conference, setting a clear roadmap for the day's discussions.

Commitments from Distinguished Guests: The session culminated with heartfelt commitments from our esteemed panel, special guests, and the chief guest. Hon. Pariyar expressed her wholehearted support for AMKAS Nepal's initiatives, recognizing the pressing need for action in the context of Women Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers. Similarly, Hon. Mayor Mr. Ram Kumar Thapa, Hon. Deputy Mayor Mr. Aindra Bikram Begha, and Mr. Roshan Prasad Dhakal from Sundarharaicha Municipality extended their support and gratitude for AMKAS Nepal's invaluable services.

The morning session laid a solid foundation for the day's proceedings, characterized by thoughtful discussions and a shared commitment to empower domestic workers.

Evening Session / Panel Discussion

The afternoon session, following a sumptuous lunch, was dedicated to a panel discussion. Moderated by Ms. Bijaya Kumari Rai Shrestha, the panel comprised Hon. Mayor of Damak Municipality, Mr. Ram Kumar Thapa; Hon. Deputy Mayor of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan, Mr. Aindra Bikram Begha; Mr. Roshan Prasad Dhakal, the spokesperson and chair of Ward No 12 of Sundarharaicha Municipality, Morang; and Ms. Yagya Subedi representing Nepal Police. This

session delved deeper into critical topics and insights, facilitating substantial knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas and commitments to support AMKAS Nepal in implementation of their activities to achieve the objective for a safer, managed and dignified migration.

Each panelist's unique perspective shed light on the multifaceted challenges faced by women in their communities.

Hon. Mayor Ram Kumar Thapa:

Mayor Thapa commenced the discussion by acknowledging the remarkable efforts of returnee women migrants in Damak. He praised their initiative to raise awareness about safe migration and human trafficking within their communities. He extended his appreciation to AMKAS Nepal for empowering these women, enabling them to become change-makers in their society.

The mayor made a significant commitment on behalf of Damak Municipality. He pledged that the municipality would allocate resources and actively involve returnee women migrants in their programs. Recognizing the persistent allure of local agents that leads women to migrate, he emphasized the need to explore more employment opportunities to make migration a choice rather than a forced necessity.

Hon. Deputy Mayor Aindra Bikram Begha:

Deputy Mayor Begha expressed his admiration for AMKAS Nepal's longstanding work in Dharan, particularly in empowering members of Samana Nepal, a community-based organization. He recounted his efforts to support Samana Nepal's work by allocating resources to empower returnee women migrants in Dharan.

Dharan, known as a hub for returnee women migrants, holds immense potential to address migration and anti-human trafficking issues. Deputy Mayor Begha committed to mobilizing these empowered women as leaders to conduct programs that address these pressing challenges in Dharan.

Mr. Roshan Prasad Dhakal:

Mr. Dhakal, the spokesperson and chair of Ward No 12 of Sundarharaicha Municipality in Morang, shared his commitment to supporting AMKAS's vital work. He emphasized his presence at the

conference as a testament to his dedication to the cause. He pledged to share the knowledge he gained from the conference with his team and exerted his commitment to allocate more resources towards empowering AMKAS Morang's members in his community.

In addition, Mr. Dhakal proposed the collaborative organization of programs with his ward office, aiming to orient more of his colleagues on the critical issues of anti-human trafficking and unsafe migration.

Yagya Subedi, Nepal Police Force:

Ms. Yagya Subedi, representing Nepal Police from Sunsari District, provided valuable insights into her role in solving critical cases of cheating and fraud faced by vulnerable returnee and aspiring women migrants. She acknowledged her collaboration with Samana Nepal in Dharan and their efforts to combat these issues.

Ms. Subedi candidly apologized for occasional misconceptions within their team against the victims of trafficking and unsafe migration, attributing these misunderstandings to a lack of adequate knowledge on migration and human trafficking. She appreciated Samana Nepal's work and thanked AMKAS Nepal for their continuous support in reaching out to Returnee Women Migrants (RWMWs) in Sunsari District.

Ms. Subedi concluded by pledging to continue her support in minimizing the cheating and fraudulence faced by women, considering it her duty towards the nation.

Conclusion:

The panel discussion illuminated the commitment of these distinguished individuals to address the challenges faced by women migrants and combat human trafficking. Their insights and commitments serve as a testament to the collective determination to empower women in their communities and work collaboratively towards safer, managed, and dignified migration. The panel discussion was a pivotal moment in the Provincial Conference, furthering the cause of domestic workers and migrants in Nepal.

Closing Session

The conference concluded with a closing session that featured remarks from key figures. The panel included Ms. Uma Devi Sedhai, Chair of AMKAS Morang; Ms. Amala Chamling, Chair of AMKAS Jhapa; Ms. Chetana Shreng, Chair of Samana Nepal; and Ms. Puspa Thapa, Chair of AMKAS Nepal. Their closing remarks encapsulated the spirit of collaboration, advocacy, and commitment that defined the entire conference.

The Provincial Conference organized by AMKAS Nepal served as a platform for meaningful dialogue and engagement, furthering the cause of domestic workers. It was a testament to the collective determination to empower this vital workforce and advocate for their rights and welfare.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Significance of Care Work:** Care work is crucial for human survival, spanning from infancy to old age, and plays a vital role in households, families, and societies.
2. **Challenges in Domestic Work:** Despite its popularity, domestic workers, including those in Nepal, often face poor working conditions and low wages, emphasizing the need for reforms.
3. **Program Objectives:** The provincial-level program aimed to raise awareness, promote respect for domestic and care work, advocate for policy reform, create a common understanding, sensitize stakeholders, and generate recommendations.
4. **Morning Session Insights:** The morning session featured esteemed guests and stakeholders, including government officials and representatives from various districts, emphasizing the importance of recognizing domestic and care work and enhancing respect for domestic workers.
5. **Evening Panel Discussion:** The afternoon session included a panel discussion with key figures expressing admiration for AMKAS Nepal's work and committing to support empowering returnee women migrants, highlighting the need for collaboration and action to address challenges in migration and human trafficking.