



MIGRANTS' PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED AT THE THIRD REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND THEMATIC SEMINARS OF MIRPAL IN DUSHANBE

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 21-23 May 2012 - Serena Hotel welcomed the third Regional Conference and Thematic Seminars of MIRPAL Network. The participants of the conference, representatives from 9 CIS countries discussed migrants' pre-departure orientation issues and the best experiences of leading countries in CIS. The overall objective was to bring together all relevant representatives of the state agencies, NGOs and experts society to learn from best international experience and practices on pre-departure programs for labour migrants; to take stock of efforts made and need for additional measures to create pre-departure training infrastructure in the CIS countries and to prepare inputs to the regional and country specific action plans in this area for the upcoming year.

During three days, the conference participants discussed the encountered problems and perspectives in the field of labor migration in CIS region, labor market and considered possible solutions to these issues to develop concrete steps in order to create an efficient infrastructure for migrants' pre-departure orientation in countries representing both sides of the migration process. Despite of all problems related to labour migration within CIS region, remittances remain the main source of income for majority of households in many CIS countries including Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and key conditions for countries' development, as it noted in many presentations at the conference.

The first day of the conference work was focused on defining the role of the Governments in managing labor migration programs. At this session participants evaluated the developments in the field of migration obtained in 2011 in Tajikistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, and learned the best experiences of leading countries on pre-departure orientation of labor migrants. During the second and the third days of the conference the participants discussed migrants' pre-departure orientation issues and their preparation to work abroad: role of sending and receiving countries. Conference participants discussed how to unite all key government representatives, NGOs and educational institutions in order to study the best international practices in the field of migrants' pre-departure orientation. Issues were raised around migrants professional education and training, health, poverty, security, regional integration and migrants' post-departure integration. In this regards, some best practices on pre-departure orientation programs run in Philippines, Kyrgyzstan and Russia were presented to participants for general discussion.

By the outcome of the conference it was expected to work out country specific action plans for 2013 to strengthen the infrastructure of migrants' pre-departure orientation and social integration for labour

migrants and members of their families, taking into account regional and national circumstances of MIRPAL member countries. Along with other issues, the necessity of educating labor migrants about the countries of destination, including language of the host country, culture, history, legal and political system of the host countries were highlighted by conference participants.

Challenges and problems met by female migrants and perspectives for their safe migration were raised by representatives of UN Women. A special attention was paid to:

- ✓ *Increasing share of females among migrant workers including illegal (e.g. according to Tajik migration service estimates the female share in irregular migration doubled since 2003 and reached about 12%);*
- ✓ *The fact that domestic work in CIS region is mostly occupied by women (as well as in the world totally - 83% of domestic workers in the world are women) but this side of migration and all related to it issues are invisible, less studied and known to public and policy makers;*
- ✓ *Vulnerability of female migrants, especially domestic workers, to discriminatory, dangerous, abusive working conditions;*
- ✓ *Introduction of patents for labour migrants (as a simplified format of legal work permission of migrants intended to work as private entrepreneurs) in Russia in 2010 largely facilitated migrant work outside formal employment relationships - a path taken by many former illegal migrants including women;*

Participants agreed on a need for a comprehensive assessment and constant monitoring of situation of female migrants, including migrants - domestic workers, in CIS region to find solutions to the existing challenges and problems in this direction both in sending and receiving countries as it is also specifically pointed by CEDAW General Recommendations N 26 - a need for “*data collection and analysis to identify the problems and needs faced by women migrant workers in every phase of the migration process*”.

A special session led by UN Women at the last day of the conference was devoted to discussions on a current status, challenges and opportunities for improving social adaptation and integration of labour migrants and members of their families in two key countries of destination of labour migrants in CIS (Russia and Kazakhstan). Here approaches currently used by UN Women and its local partners in Russia and Kazakhstan to develop a strategy for social integration were presented and discussed. The strategy is being developed taking into account the CEDAW recommendations for the destination countries to pay attention to the following elements contributing to a successful social integration of migrants:

- prevention of restrictions or bans over women’s engagement in some sectors (as a consequence of these restrictions women mostly work as domestic labor or are engaged in some form of the entertainment business);
- needs for signing bilateral agreements envisaging requirements and conditions for work and leisure;
- non-acceptability of bulky procedures, language barriers or high fee for transfer of remittances;
- the necessity of ensuring adequate access to medical services, including services on reproductive health;
- preventing mandatory pregnancy examinations with further deportation in case of positive results;



- necessity of promoting reunification of families in equal for all migrant workers;
- ensuring access to human rights protection tools for female migrant workers, including free state legal protection;
- application of model labour agreements for domestic workers.

Responsibilities of all countries of the CIS region ratified UN CEDAW to practically and efficiently fulfill their commitments under CEDAW and follow standards suggested by its General Recommendations N26 on female migrants and a new ILO Convention on domestic workers were highlighted. Participants were also provided with an opportunity to learn best experience of other countries of the world on the social integration of labour migrants and members of their families.

All presentations and speeches delivered at the conference are posted at <http://bit.ly//mirpal2012>



About MIRPAL

Migration and Remittances Peer-Assisted Learning (MIRPAL) is a network of practitioners representing both governmental and non-governmental agencies, leading experts and professionals in the field of migration and remittances. At the moment MIRPAL brings together 9 CIS countries –Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

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