

Report

Regional Consultation on Young Trade Union Leaders' Engagement in Labour Migration Governance in South Asia

2-3 July 2024

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Background

Labour migration from South Asia has significantly shaped the economic landscape of the region, with millions of youth seeking opportunities abroad due to various socio-economic factors. Despite contributing substantially to remittance inflows, migrant workers often face challenges such as unfair recruitment practices, exploitation, wage theft, and limited access to justice and social protections. Recognizing these issues, SARTUC, in partnership with Mondiaal FNV, conducted the "**Regional Consultation on Young Trade Union Leaders' Engagement in Labour Migration Governance in South Asia**" in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 2-3 July 2024. This consultation aimed to empower young trade union leaders to advocate for the rights and welfare of migrant workers effectively and equipped with advocacy and campaign tools.



Objectives

- To engage youth leadership from SARTUC affiliates on the issues of labour migration governance in South Asia;
- To enhance the ideas of campaigning and advocacy for promoting safer migration and enhancing labour migration governance in South Asia at regional as well as national levels through the SARTUC affiliates;
- To capacitate the organising skills of the youth Trade Union leaders to encourage more youth involvement in the trade union movements, advocating for the rights of migrant workers and engaging in policy dialogues;



SARTUC

Opening Remarks

Mr. Laxman Basnet, General Secretary, SARTUC

The opening session commenced with an inspiring address by **Brother Laxman Basnet**, the General Secretary of SARTUC, welcoming all the delegates and trade union leaders to the regional consultation. He expressed, the gathering is not merely a discussion on labour migration, but an act to empower our youth engagement towards the powerful trade union movement. He further encouraged youth leaders with the importance and need for the collective voice to strengthen the worker's voice, including migrant workers. Moreover, his opening remarks set the tone for the consultation, emphasizing the critical role of young leaders in shaping the path of labour migration governance. By highlighting the objective of the regional consultation, he expressed SARTUC's unwavering commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of migrant workers. Finally, he raised the essence of solidarity that binds trade unions across borders, emphasizing the collective responsibility to combat exploitation and injustice to the migrant workers not only to South Asian migrant workers but across the world.



Mr. Leslie Devendra, General Secretary, SLNSS and Vice President, SARTUC

Brother Leslie Devendra, a prominent figure in the labour movement not only in Sri Lanka but also a respected trade union leader in South Asia, advocated for the workers' rights and the youths' responsibility to take the trade union movement ahead in South Asia. His remarks highlighted Sri Lanka's dedication to supporting initiatives that promote fair labour practices and enhance protections for migrant workers. Furthermore, Brother Leslie highlighted Sri Lanka's severe political and economic crisis. Amidst this disorder, employers have taken advantage of the situation to propose labour law reforms that could weaken the labour movement, including a "compressed week" requiring workers to work for 12 hours a day over four days, and new provisions allowing night work for women. Despite resistance from trade unions concerned about worker safety and health, these changes continue, exacerbating the hardships already faced due to the pandemic-induced job losses, increased with the economic crisis and wage theft. He expressed the decline of democracy and the failure of inclusive government. He stressed the need for systemic change within the democratic framework to revitalize the country's economic and political landscape. He also criticized the government's dismissal of trade union inputs on labour reforms, leading to a formal complaint to the ILO and subsequent inaction. Additionally, he highlighted the situation of migrant workers and encouraged young trade unionists to engage in the protection of the rights of migrant workers.

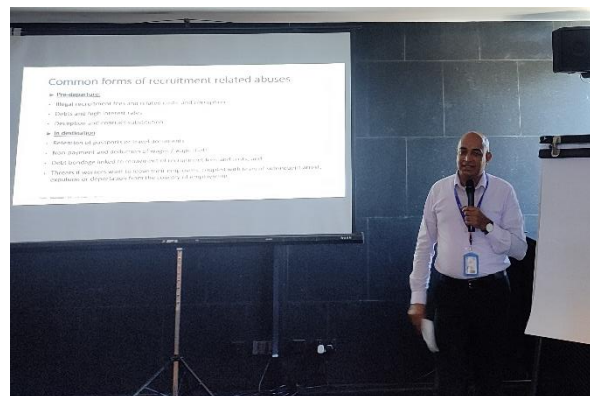


Introduction of Participants

The introduction of participants, conducted by SARTUC was essential for adopting a sense of oneness and collaboration. During this session, participants shared their names, the unions they represent, and their roles within those unions. This initial communication helped to establish a supportive environment, enabling participants to share their experiences and build valuable networks. Importantly, understanding each other's backgrounds and responsibilities enhanced discussions and helped meaningful exchanges of ideas, setting the tone for a successful and engaging regional consultation.

Youth, Labour Migration, and Decent Work in South Asia

Mr. Nishantha Warnasooriya, National Project Coordinator, ILO, Sri Lanka, provided an outline of the global labour migration context, emphasising that there are 169 million migrant workers globally, constituting nearly 5 per cent of the global labour force, with the majority being men. He presented data on the outflows of migrant workers from selected Asian countries, including the Philippines, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, showing a significant decline in outflows during the COVID-19 pandemic. He discussed common forms of recruitment-related abuses, such as illegal recruitment fees, debt bondage, retention of passports, non-payment of wages, and threats of arrest or deportation. He highlighted the key decent work issues for migrant workers, including fair wages, working conditions, job security, social protection, legal rights, integration, and mental health challenges due to family separation. He also outlined the responsibilities of various stakeholders, including international organizations, governments, trade unions, employers' associations, civil society, and migrant workers themselves, as well as the different phases of the migration process, from pre-decision to return. Finally, he shared the initiatives undertaken by ILO Sri Lanka, such as the development of a National Policy on Migration for Employment, the South Asia Qualification Reference Framework (SAQRF), the Skills Passport, E-Recognition of Prior Learning, and engagement with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon and the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (ALFEA).



Young Trade Union Leaders in Advocating for the Rights of Migrant Workers

Dr. SM Fahimuddin Pasha, Director, Workers' Rights at ITUC-Asia Pacific, highlighted the importance of young trade union leaders in advocating for migrant workers' rights and engaging in policy dialogues under a new social contract. The ITUC-AP represents over 60 million members across 36 countries, striving for human rights, social justice, equality, and democracy. He emphasised active worker participation in policymaking and outlined six key demands of a new social contract: jobs, rights, wages, social protection, equality, and inclusion. He highlighted the areas of trade union action for a new social contract – building workers' power; promoting social dialogue; and making social waves to create a just and inclusive work



environment. Focusing on migrant workers, he addressed their significant economic contributions and the challenges they face – high recruitment costs; low wages; wage theft; denial of freedom of association and collective bargaining; discrimination; racism; and xenophobia, urging trade unions to integrate and organise migrant workers into their fold and advocate for their rights through international collaborations and policy reforms. He also highlighted the efforts and activities done by SARTUC and ITUC-AP on labour migration at regional as well as international levels. He concluded by stressing the need for unified efforts to address these issues and promote a fair and equitable future for all workers, notably, migration should be a trade union agenda and young migrant workers should be brought into the trade union movement.



Exploring the Opportunities and Challenges of Youth Labour Migration in South Asia

Dr. Manorajan Pegu, Country Program Director at Solidarity Centre, Sri Lanka, presented a thought-provoking discussion highlighting the ambiguity surrounding the definition of origin and destination countries in the labour migration concept, using examples of Nepal, India, and Maldives, which are both origin and destination countries. The primary reasons for labour migration, he stated, are the availability of job opportunities, social protection, better wages, and political instability/war. He emphasized the need for the engagement of young trade union leaders and the importance of South Asian unions being more progressive and inclusive, embracing not only their citizens but to migrant workers as well. He shared his experiences from recently conducted research work in Maldives, where migrant workers face challenges such as passport confiscation, delayed salary payments, and low wages, like forced labour situations. Additionally, he discussed the higher remittance costs in South Asia, leading workers to choose illegal channels. He stressed the complex web of involvement from various ministries in the destination countries and the hierarchical situation due to the power of passports. He also highlighted the need to fight against xenophobia, particularly through the efforts of young trade unionists. He highlighted the engagement of young trade unionists in addressing the challenges of labour migration in South Asia where they can make a significant impact. He stressed the need for young trade unionists to be at the forefront of advocacy and campaigning for the rights of migrant workers, and organising migrant workers at the destination as well as, raising their voices to demand that the "*working class shall have the same rights*," regardless of their origin or destination.





Country Reports about the Overall Situation of Youths and Union Activities

Representatives from each country presented reports focusing on key issues related to youth engagement in trade union movements and policies to promote their involvement.

Bangladesh

Mr. Sifat Chowdhury (ITUC-BC) presented a report on youth in Bangladesh, emphasizing the significant youth population of 47 million (30 per cent of the total population) and the challenges they face, including high unemployment and underemployment in the informal sector. He highlighted the exploitation and lack of legal protection for young migrant workers and detailed trade unions' efforts to engage youth through awareness programmes, leadership training, skill development, and youth committees. Moreover, he discussed trade unions' policy advocacy for youth-friendly labour policies and collaboration with government bodies and civil societies. Finally, he identified the key barriers to youth engagement - including lack of awareness, information gaps, image crisis (of trade unionists), distrust, fear of consequences, and cultural and social barriers. Importantly, he proposed strategies to address these challenges, such as enhanced communication, targeted outreach, building trust, and inclusive policies.

India

Ms. Anshu Jha presented India's country report, highlighting youth engagement in trade unions and labour migration. Youth aged 15-29 make up over than one-fourth of the population - with around 13 per cent unemployed - higher among women and educated individuals. Most young workers are in urban service sectors, while rural areas still depend on agriculture. She further highlighted that 83 per cent of the country's youth grapple with soaring unemployment, and the proportion of educated youth among the total unemployed youth has increased significantly. She emphasized SEWA's efforts to boost youth participation through *Youth Mandals* and union involvement. Finally, she discussed the challenges faced by unions, including the need to encourage leaders, create a welcoming environment for young members, and address perceptions of short-term involvement.

Maldives

The country report from Maldives was presented by both representatives (**Ms. Aishath Raaya**; and **Mr. Saam Ismail**) and provided an overview of the engagement of young trade union leaders in labour migration governance in the country. The presentation highlighted the unique geographical and economic context of the Maldives, where the population is scattered across the islands, presenting challenges in forming and organizing youth unions. The report discussed the various initiatives undertaken by the Maldives Trade Union Congress (MTUC) and its affiliated unions, such as organizing training sessions, awareness campaigns, and the formation of youth committees within the unions. However, they also identified several challenges, being less aware of the unions, lack of interest in joining unions, and the perception of unions as outdated. Essentially, to address these challenges, they suggested to use digital platforms to educate and connect young workers across the islands, as well as conducting educational campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits and roles of trade unions.

The country report from Nepal was presented by **Mr. Bike Shrestha**, highlighting Nepal's youth population, comprising of more than 40 per cent of the total population, which faces significant challenges, including high unemployment rates, underemployment, and educational insufficiencies. These factors drive many young people to seek employment abroad, contributing to brain drain. Major trade unions like GEFONT, NTUC, and ANTUF are actively working to empower and educate young workers, establishing youth committees at various levels to address their specific concerns. These unions provide leadership training and capacity-building programmes to equip youths with the skills necessary for effective participation in trade unions and workplace negotiations. To address the challenges faced by Nepali youths, the immediate need of comprehensive policies and targeted interventions, including investments in education, vocational training, and the creation of more domestic employment opportunities are needed.

Pakistan

Ms. Iqbal Mustabeen presented Pakistan's country report, emphasizing the significant youth population, with many under the age of 30. Cultural norms remain barriers for young women despite efforts to promote gender equality in education and employment. Likewise, access to quality healthcare and education varies across regions, with challenges in ensuring quality services for all youth. Economic factors often drive youth to migrate within Pakistan or abroad, presenting both opportunities and challenges related to exploitation, integration, and social protection. Trade unions play a crucial role in advocating for workers' rights and improving working conditions, with efforts to engage youth through outreach programmes, representation, skill development, digital engagement, campaigns on youth issues, and partnerships with youth organizations. She expressed that the perspectives on unions vary, with some youth seeing them as effective advocates, while others are sceptical due to perceived ineffectiveness or corruption. Essentially, she stressed the importance of educating and engaging young people about the role and importance of trade unions in promoting labour rights and social justice, fostering active youth participation in the labour movement.

Sri Lanka

Ms. Kanishta Michael presented Sri Lanka's report highlighting the significant youth population and the challenges they face, including unemployment, limited access to quality education, and health inequalities. She emphasised the importance of trade union engagement in addressing these issues. According to her, trade unions in Sri Lanka are encouraged to actively recruit young members, create youth-friendly environments, and involve them in decision-making processes. Therefore suggested strategies like establishing youth quotas, incorporating youth perspectives into trade union strategies, and building partnerships with youth organisations to improve youth engagement. She also stressed the need for trade unions to provide training and support to young members, enabling them to become effective advocates for their rights and interests.

Strategies for Youth Engagement in Trade Unions

Brother Mahendra Sharma, Advisor, SARTUC, facilitated an interactive session on effective strategies for enhancing youth engagement in trade union activities. He discussed leadership development initiatives,

organised informal sectors and digital platforms as critical tools for empowering young leaders to drive meaningful change within their respective trade unions and communities. He discussed the new era of the world of work with the emergence of AI and the advancement of technologies – we can focus on Gig and platform workers and trade unions can attract those workers into the trade union movement providing the example of a research conducted in “India Prisoners On Wheels?” by Paigam in collaboration with the Indian Federation of App-based Transport (IFAT). Discussions emphasized the importance of fostering inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that strengthen youth voices and ensure their contributions are integral to shaping labour migration policies and practices.



Organising Migrant Workers in Countries of Origin and Destination

Dr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi, the Secretary General of the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), Sri Lanka, provided a comprehensive trade union perspective on organizing migrant workers in both the country of origin and destination. He highlighted the importance of trade union representation at the policy level, the support of the government and authorities, and the active involvement and engagement of trade unions in various aspects of the migration process, such as access to prospective migrant workers, pre-departure training, agreements with trade unions in destination countries, and organizing returnees. He emphasized the key roles of trade unions in engaging with migrant workers to understand their issues and build trust, providing services and support, advocating for policy changes, monitoring fair recruitment practices, and capacitating trade union members on migration governance and the welfare of migrant workers, while also discussing the barriers to migration decisions and the responsibilities of various stakeholders, including international organizations, governments, trade unions, employers' associations, civil society, and migrant workers and their families.



Day 2: 3rd July 2024

Reflections and learning from Day 1

Participants shared insights and learnings from Day 1, underlining their understanding of the critical issues surrounding youth engagement in labour migration governance, and the migration scenario of South Asian Countries. Additionally, they shared the learning on the new social contract and its importance to the working class and trade unions. **Ms. Iqbal Mustabeen** from Pakistan shared her learnings on international and internal migration and gained ideas on the trade union perspective on labour migration in the region. **Mr. Shane Vadivel** from Sri Lanka shared the issues of local migration and highlighted the



importance of the new social contract. **Ms. Aishath Raaya** stated the challenges and opportunities of labour migration which was discussed by Brother Manoranjan in his session. **Ms. Anshu Jha** from India explained the stages of migration along with the social contract, moreover, she also suggested looking into the inclusive policies of constitutions inside their union.

After reflections from the participants, SARTUC showcased the animated video on the labour migration process to enter into the discussion on advocacy and campaigning on the rights of labour migrants.

Campaigns on “Migrate with Dignity: Ensuring Rights for Migrant Workers”

#MigrateWithDignity

Brother Mahendra Sharma led discussions on campaign strategies focused on ensuring rights for migrant workers, covering topics such as fair recruitment, occupational safety and health (OSH), and social protection. The session was an open discussion where the participants actively participated in the situations and the experiences of labour migration in the region. The discussion expanded to the role of trade unions to protect workers’ rights as of now most of the trade unions are not considering migrant workers seriously in their agenda. He further, expressed from his experience, that many migrant workers, including seafarers, often bypass legal channels when seeking employment abroad, instead opting for illegal means such as using tourist visas to enter countries like UAE, where they then fall prey to unscrupulous agents. He emphasized the need for unions and national centres to establish dedicated cells specifically tasked with addressing migrant worker issues, as the union leadership is often occupied with other matters. Moreover, he stressed the importance of ensuring migrant workers about their rights, contracts, and the contact information of embassies and consulates in their destination countries. He also highlighted the necessity of adhering to the ILO convention on fair recruitment, where workers should not bear any costs. Additionally, the speaker suggested that unions should familiarize themselves with model contracts, provide comprehensive pre-departure orientation, and explore the possibility of migrant workers joining unions in the destination countries, where such unions exist. Finally, the speaker acknowledged the social challenges faced by returning migrant workers, particularly women, and proposed that unions could play a role in addressing these issues through awareness campaigns and support programmes.

Dr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha, Director, Workers’ Rights at ITUC-Asia Pacific

Brother Fahimuddin Pasha, discussed the #ForDemocracy campaign by the ITUC and its significance in promoting and defending democracy worldwide, highlighting that 2024 is a pivotal year for democracy. ITUC-AP believes that the backsliding democracy was identified as one of the threats from the recent global trends and provides importance to just and inclusive democracy. He explained that the campaign emphasised the crucial role of trade unions in safeguarding and advancing democratic values, calling for robust and inclusive systems that ensure people’s sovereignty, represent diverse interests, and protect fundamental rights. He expressed the trade union movement as the largest democratic movement globally which can be useful to defend and expand democracy, not only at the election but also at work, in society, and at global institutions. The campaign outlines specific actions for trade unions to strengthen democracy, including promoting workers’ rights, upholding gender equality, and advocating for

environmental sustainability. Moreover, the campaign encourages youth participation in strengthening democracy, advocating for youth representation, and raising their demands at policy levels. Also, he urged trade unions to hold governments accountable for human rights violations and to ensure people's participation in policymaking. He showcased campaign materials produced by ITUC-AP and highlighted the need for young trade union leaders to think creatively and progressively while using social media and technologies for advocacy and campaigns. Additionally, he promoted the use of videos, photos, posters, and pamphlets as campaign tools to protect the rights of migrant workers.

Campaigns by Participants; Presentation of Their Campaigns

Participants were divided into three groups to discuss the issues of labour migration and the situation of migrant workers in the region. They were assigned to express their learnings of two days into the creative presentation in the form of campaigns which they can take forward in future as well. The groups were given 30 minutes for the discussion and presenting the campaigns. They were encouraged to express their creativity to deliver their collective voice in a group.

Group one made a video for the campaign where they raised voice for the rights of the migrant workers highlighting safe migration and decent work for all. Whereas Group two and Group three expressed themselves through play/drama – focusing on the situation of migrant workers, their rights, the behaviours of employers towards them, and the role of trade unions. The campaigns and presentation expressed their creative ideas along with commitments towards advocacy for the rights of migrant workers.



Brother Pasha provided his observations and comments on the campaigns. He was highly impressed by the collective group efforts in such a short time from all the groups. Moreover, he praised the issues that were raised and their realistic acting approach and negotiation abilities, especially in a scenario involving the return of a passport by management. Overall, Brother Pasha expressed gratitude for the dedication and commitment shown by the individuals involved in these interactions.

Address by the Special Guest to SARTUC Youth Committee Members

Hon. Suresh Vadivel, M.P., Sri Lanka and the president of NTUF visited the regional consultation to meet and address the young trade union leaders and convey his best wishes for the Youth Committee Election. Brother Laxman welcomed him to the regional consultation and requested him to deliver the address as the special guest. Brother Laxman believed that his speech would be inspiring and motivating to youth committee members.

Hon. Suresh Vadivel, M.P., Sri Lanka and President, NTUF, who has a long history in both the trade union movement and government, delivered a speech highlighting the challenges and problems faced by migrant workers in Sri Lanka and across South Asia. He thanked Brother Laxman and SARTUC for choosing Sri Lanka as the venue for the regional consultation and SARTUC Youth Committee Election. He emphasized the importance of training and awareness for workers, particularly those in the plantation sector and migrant workers, who often face exploitation due to a lack of knowledge about their rights and available resources. He shared his personal experience of dealing with the tragic consequences due to lack of awareness, mentioning that he had personally encountered seven corpses of migrant workers who had died due to unsafe working conditions, lack of proper training and PDOT. He expressed his gratitude to Brother Laxman; Brother Pasha from ITUC-AP; Brother Mahendra; and the entire SARTUC for their efforts in providing training and awareness programmes for workers across the region and called for greater emphasis on the implementation of these programmes at grassroots levels. He mentioned SARTUC as a platform of more than 50 million workers to promote workers' rights in the region, so, all trade unionists must work collectively. Furthermore, he expressed the importance of leadership and continuous learning for those in leadership positions, encouraging the young trade union leaders/members to actively participate in the initiatives for the ongoing development of the trade union movement with their dedication, hard work, and continuous efforts.



Brother Fahimuddin Pasha expressed gratitude on behalf of SARTUC and ITUC-AP to Brother Hon. Suresh Vadivel's visit amidst his busy schedules. He praised Brother Hon. Suresh Vadivel's humbleness and effective communication despite his prestigious position as a member of parliament. He emphasized the importance of kindness and humility in leadership, drawing lessons from Brother Hon. Suresh. Overall, Brother Pasha conveyed appreciation for the visit and hoped for a continued positive relationship for the betterment of the trade union movement in South Asia.

Observations and Learning Experiences from Participants

Before entering the Closing remarks, two of the participants voluntarily provided their impressions and observations on the two days of regional consultation:

Ms. Anshu Jha from India shared her insights and experiences from participating in the regional consultation for two days. She described the sessions as an eye-opener, highlighting the challenges her organization faces in addressing internal migration and its efforts to expand into international migration. She shared the work done by SEWA in India regarding internal migration and, through consultation, learned how to involve her union in broader migration programmes. She gained valuable knowledge about bilateral agreements, specifically trade union-to-trade union agreements, and emphasized the need to incorporate international migration issues into her union's agenda. Furthermore, she expressed her intention to initiate a youth committee within her union to address these challenges.

Mr. Shane Vadivel from Sri Lanka shared his experiences and learnings from the regional consultation, where he discussed local migration, particularly workers entering Colombo, and gained a clearer understanding of international migration. He appreciated the platform for bringing youths together and found the discussions among participants immensely helpful for exchanging ideas and solutions. He emphasized the six demands in the new social contract: jobs, rights, wages, social protection, equality, and inclusion. Moreover, he expressed the importance of discussing how to achieve these rights as a trade union and addressing the challenges faced by young people. He thanked everyone for their contributions and cooperation, highlighting the value of learning from each other.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Rajamany Siniah, Vice President, CWC

Brother Rajamany expressed his gratitude to SARTUC for organizing the regional consultation in Sri Lanka. He highlighted the significance of the event, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka's vision for expanding global spaces for its citizens. He emphasized the role of migration for employment in reducing unemployment and contributing to the Sri Lankan economy, citing the extensive number of Sri Lankans working abroad. He acknowledged the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers and the Sri Lankan economy, emphasizing the need for trade unions to address the issue of migrant employment in their constitutions. He expressed confidence that the action plan developed during the event would receive the deep attention of all SARTUC countries for implementation.



Dr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi, Secretary General, NTUF

Brother Padmasiri expressed appreciation for the energy, enthusiasm, and innovativeness displayed by participants. He acknowledged the efforts made to organize the event, especially when faced with obstacles, such as finding an alternative venue. He highlighted the importance of attracting tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka to address economic challenges. He extended his gratitude to the organizers, with a special mention of the youth leaders involved, emphasizing the need for courage and bold decision-making in trade union leadership. Lastly, he conveyed his wishes to all participants for success and a safe journey back home.

Mr. Laxman Basnet, General Secretary of SARTUC

Brother Laxman Basnet emphasised the importance of political rights for migrant workers in the South Asian region. He advised the government to make decisions and negotiate on behalf of the workers, rather than just focusing on remittances. Moreover, he urged the youth to advocate for migrant workers through their unions and to push for better agreements with destination countries. He also highlighted the need to address the conditions of women and take action against inhuman treatment. Overall, he stated the importance of understanding and advocating for the rights of migrant workers and the role of young trade



union leaders/members. He concluded the consultation with a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants for their active participation and intensive discussion throughout the two days, including their creative ideas for campaigns; Brother Pasha from ITUC-AP; ILO Sri Lanka; Brother Mahendra, Advisor, SARTUC; Trade union leaders from host country (Sri Lanka) for their contributions and commitment to advancing labour migration governance in South Asia.

Conclusion

The regional consultation successfully engaged young trade union leaders in a meaningful discussion, fostering collaboration and empowering them to advocate for migrant workers' rights effectively. Moving forward, SARTUC aims to build on the outcomes of this consultation to further strengthen the role of youth in shaping labour migration policies and practices across South Asia. The regional consultation proved to be a valuable platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and fostering collaboration among young trade union leaders in South Asia. The programme equipped participants with the necessary tools and strategies to advocate and campaign for improved working conditions, fair recruitment, and the rights of migrant workers in the region. The spirit of collaboration and the commitment to action demonstrated by the participants offer a shine of hope for a future where South Asian migrant workers can work with dignity and contribute to the development of both their origin and destination countries. The participants agreed to discuss the issues of labour migration and migrant workers with their trade unions. Importantly, the participants also expressed their commitment to discussing the topics of migrant workers with their senior leadership and the youth committee will be activated to work for the betterment and welfare of migrant workers promoting advocacy and campaigns from trade union levels to country levels to regional levels, collaborating with other national trade union centres and SARTUC.



Annex-I Agenda

Regional Consultation on Young Trade Union Leaders' Engagement in Labour Migration Governance in South Asia

Day 1: 2 nd July 2024 (Tuesday)		
9:00 - 9:30	Registration	
9:30 - 9:45	Opening Opening and welcome address: Mr Laxman Basnet , General Secretary, SARTUC Address by Mr. Leslie Devendra , General Secretary, SLNSS; and Vice President, SARTUC	
9:45 - 10:00	Introduction of Participants	SARTUC
10:00 - 11:00	Youth, Labour migration, and Decent work in South Asia	Mr. Nishantha Warnasooriya , National Project Coordinator, ILO, Sri Lanka
11:00 - 11:15	Tea/Coffee Break	
11:15 - 12:15	Young Trade Union Leaders in Advocating for the Rights of Migrant Workers and Engaging in Policy Dialogues Through New Social Contract	Dr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha , Director, Workers’ Rights, ITUC-AP
12:15 - 13:00	Exploring the opportunities and challenges of youth labour migration in South Asia	Dr. Manorajan Pegu , Country Program Director, Solidarity Centre
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 - 15:00	Country reports about the overall situation of youths in a country; and union activities and policies on Youths to promote youth engagement in the trade union movement <i>(Participants shall prepare this in advance focusing on key issues related to youths in a country)</i> One country – one presentation (10 minutes for each presentation)	SARTUC
15:00 - 15:45	Strategies for Youth Engagement in Trade Unions	Mr. Mahendra Sharma , Advisor, SARTUC
15:45 - 16:00	Tea/Coffee Break	
16:00 - 16:45	Organising migrant workers in country of origin and country of destination: A trade union perspective	Dr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi , Secretary General, NTUF
16:45 - 17:00	Reflections and learning from Day 1	
End of Day 1		
Day 2: 3 rd July 2024 (Wednesday)		



SARTUC



9:00 - 9:30	Registration	
9:30 - 10:30	Campaigns on the “ Migrate with Dignity: Ensuring Rights for Migrant Workers ” – effective PDOT; fair recruitment; promoting OSH at the workplace; social protection to migrant workers; reintegration	Dr. S. M. Fahimuddin Pasha, and Mr. Mahendra Sharma
10:30 - 10:45	Tea/Coffee Break	
10:45 – 12:30	Campaigns by participants; and presentation of their campaigns	
12:30 – 12:40	Remarks by Special Guest - Hon. Suresh Vadivel , M.P., Sri Lanka; and President, NTUF	
12:40 – 13:00	Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks Closing remarks by Mr. Rajamany Siniah , Vice President, CWC Closing remarks by Dr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi , Secretary General, NTUF Closing remarks and vote of thanks by Mr Laxman Basnet , General Secretary, SARTUC	
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break End of the Regional Consultation	

Annex-II
List of Participants

SN	Country	Union	Name	Email
1	Bangladesh	JSL	Ms. Samiha Binta Billal	samihabintabillal@gmail.com
2		BMSF	Ms. Tania Akter	binte.taania@gmail.com
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19		SLNSS	Ms. M.R. Nilanthi Kumari	kumarinilanthi@gmail.com
20	National Project Coordinator, ILO, Sri Lanka		Mr. Nishantha Warnasooriya	warnasooriya@ilo.org
21	Country Program Director, Solidarity Center, Sri Lanka		Dr. Manorajan Pegu	mpegu@solidaritycenter.org
21	Director, Workers' Rights, ITUC- AP		Dr. SM. Fahimuddin Pasha	fpasha@ituc-ap.org
22	General Secretary, SLNSS; Vice President, SARTUC		Mr. Leslie Devendra	esliedevendra43@gmail.com
23	M.P., Sri Lanka and President, NTUF		Hon. Suresh Vadivel	vadivelsuresh123@gmail.com
24	Secretary General, NTUF		Dr. Padmasiri Ranawakaarachchi	dgpadmasiri@gmail.com
25	Vice President, CWC		Mr. Rajamany Siniah	rajamanycwc@gmail.com
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28			Mr. Kishor Bikram Shah	
29			Mr. Laxman Bahadur Basnet	