

Protecting Migrants during times of Crisis: Immediate Responses and Sustainable Strategies

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Crisis Situations

- Crisis may occur as a natural disasters or a pandemic emergency
- Vulnerabilities may depend on the nature of crisis
- To address issues, a plan on '**Preparedness**' should be available at national, regional and international level
- To overcome crises joint efforts of both home and host are essentially needed.

Experiences of Sri Lanka

Gulf war in 1990,

- More than 90,000 Sri Lankans were victims due to war situation
- Sri Lanka had to use chartered flights and implement a massive programme to evacuate Sri Lankans. Compensation for migrants was paid by UNCC.

Lebanon War in 2006,

more than 6,000 Sri Lankans were victimized

- International organizations supported repatriation process
- The SLBFE made arrangements with employers to pay compensation to migrant workers who had been repatriated

Issues to be considered in preparation of a plan on “Preparedness”

- Lack of Information
- Lack of Contractual Obligation
- Less awareness of diplomatic missions
- Lack of contingency plans
- Lack of Interstate Cooperation
- Lack of legislative frameworks

Lack of Information

- Difficulty in finding data related to stock of migrants on country/location basis
- Sri Lanka is in the process of linking migrant worker database with immigration/emigration database, to find more accurate figures of labour stocks rather than estimations

Lack of contractual obligations

- Including terms and conditions relevant to 'crisis' situations in the contract generally signed between the Migrant worker and the Local recruitment agent
- Strengthen the links between local recruitment agents and foreign recruiting agents through embassies in a crisis

Less Awareness of Diplomatic Missions

- Make labour attaches aware on existing mechanisms for crises.
- Strong links with migrant workers, especially women migrant workers who are vulnerable
- Department of Immi & Emi. introduced a new format for temporary travel documents
- SLBFE is in the process of introducing SIM cards to migrants.

Lack of Contingency Plans

- Risk has to be assessed based on the stock of migrants and the political and economic condition of the host country
- Risk aversion and risk mitigation strategies have to be introduced
- Risk management strategies should be applicable in both home and host countries

Lack of Interstate Cooperation

- Strong information sharing links between host and home countries are required (Web based information system that updates migrant labour stocks and their spatial distribution and can be accessed even through google mapping).
- Study labour mobility among different countries and introduce strategies to monitor it
- Organize international forums on the subject of 'Crisis Management' in migration.

Lack of legislative frameworks

- Introduce new laws that would strengthen the existing legal systems of both home and host countries, giving more rooms to protect migrant workers and evacuate/receive them in crisis situations
- Make crisis management a top priority area by giving paramount importance to implementation of laws connected with it



Thank You