

Greetings, everyone. I speak on behalf of the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism.

Year 2021 and modern day slavery still prevails.

Around the world, 11.5 million people, mostly women, earn their living as migrant domestic workers. Many suffer as modern slaves. Just last month, Herlina, an Indonesian domestic worker escaped her employers in Hong Kong after 18 months of severe physical abuse and torture. The treatment of migrants around the world mirrors the problem of leaving millions behind.

Some people are more vulnerable to crises than others; arising from who they are, the jobs they do, and the failure of the existing systems to protect and respect human rights – people without access to public health system, the homeless, people living in slums, migrant workers, precarious workers forced to continue working without the luxury of self-isolation. Moreover, patriarchy, casteism, racism and feudalism push women, Dalits and indigenous peoples deeper in the crises.

As long as the current economic system sees migrants as disposable commodities, SDGS will be impossible to achieve and modern slavery will persist.

The Global Compact for Migration, hinged on the Agenda 2030, is a step towards upholding human rights and dignity of migrants. However, it can only be realized if the GCM's objectives are localized and migrants are recognized and actualized as key stakeholders across processes.

More than a year into the pandemic, migrants are still perceived as virus carriers, experience racism and discrimination, exploited - testament to the depravities of this unjust neoliberal model.

Communities are not forgetfully 'left behind'. Instead, some are catapulted ahead through global economic and political systems dependent on exclusion, exploitation of others. Only by changing the system can we leave no one behind and make modern slavery history. Thank you very much.