Migrant Information Note (MIN)

Issue #22 – January 2014

This issue of the Migrant Information Note (MIN) highlights the latest news/updates on labour migration policies in Thailand, including updates on the OSSC for migrants, the Thai-Lao Technical Meeting on Lao Migrant Workers in Thailand, the migrant workers' repatriation fund and exemption of work permit fee for victims of human trafficking.

One Stop Service Centers (OSSC)

One Stop Service Centers for visa renewal (for migrants who have completed 4 years of employment in Thailand) have not yet opened. This is creating challenges for migrant workers to retain their regular status.

Thailand-Myanmar negotiations on Migrant Workers in Thailand

- Thai and Myanmar officials are discussing a return period to Myanmar of only one day, in lieu of three years, for migrant workers who have already completed four years of employment in Thailand, in order to re-apply for employment.
- As of March 2014, ordinary passports will be issued to Myanmar workers entering Thailand through the MOU process. This was agreed upon during the bilateral meeting between Myanmar and Thai officials in October 2013.

Thai-Lao Technical Meeting on Lao Migrant Workers in Thailand

On 18 December 2013, a Thai-Lao technical meeting was held in Lao PDR. The delegations were led by the Director-General of the Department of Employment of the Ministry of Labour, Thailand, and the Director General of the Department of Skills Development and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao PDR. The delegations reached agreement on the following points:

- Regularize Lao migrant workers who have not completed the migrant regularization process.
- Set up One Stop Service Centers in which two teams of Lao authorities will be deployed to facilitate regularization of Lao irregular workers in Bangkok (to be set up by Thai authorities) and provide mobile services in other provinces.
- Revise the MOU on labour cooperation signed in 2002.

Furthermore, the Thai delegation requested the Lao side to provide pre-departure orientation sessions for Lao workers prior to departure to Thailand.

Migrant Worker's Repatriation Fund

- On 29 November 2013 the Ministry of Labour issued a ministerial regulation stating that the Migrant Worker's Repatriation Fund will become effective as of 1 March 2014. Employers are to deduct THB 1,000 from the workers' wage, which they are then required to remit into the Repatriation Fund. Migrants will be required to fill in the claim form at the Employment Offices to claim the THB 1,000 before they return to their country of origin. Migrants can then receive the money at the immigration offices when they depart Thailand. If migrants have already returned to their country and failed to claim the money, they can claim it within two years after the departure date from Thailand by sending the completed claim form to the Repatriation Fund Office of the Ministry of Labour within 2 years. If they fail to get their money back within two years of departure the Government will be allowed to use the Fund for deportation purposes.

For more information about the Fund, employers/employees can contact Provincial Employment Offices or http://www.doe.go.th/fund/

Migrants employed in the fishing sector: new registration

The next round of registration for migrant workers employed in the fishing sector will start in March 2014 covering 22 coastal provinces in Thailand.

Exemption of Work Permit Fees for Victims of Human Trafficking

The Ministry of Labour issued a ministerial regulation on 30 September 2013 exempting victims of human trafficking, as defined by the Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2008, from the work permit fee. The victims are given permission to temporarily stay in Thailand to assist in the prosecution process of the perpetrators, claim their rights, receive medical treatment, and receive support for physical and mental rehabilitation. During this period of temporary stay, victims of are also allowed to work in Thailand.

The migrant statistics are not available by Ministry of Labour due to the political situation in Thailand.