

Working Paper 2016-11

# **Redefining a Rights-Based Approach in the Context of Temporary Labour Migration in Asia**

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Addressing Multiple Forms of Migrant Precarity:  
Beyond “Management” of Migration to an Integrated  
Rights-Based Approach

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# **Addressing Multiple Forms of Migrant Precarity: Beyond “Management” of Migration to an Integrated Rights-Based Approach**

This paper is part of a Working Paper series that synthesizes research that was presented at a workshop convened by UNRISD and members of the World Universities Network (WUN) in Geneva in September 2015.

At the workshop, researchers from an international consortium presented new empirical research findings from Asia, Africa and America from a recently concluded study of migrant precarity. The research project focused on intraregional migration, looking in particular at the linkages between migration and social protection from a rights perspective. It considered policies and practice related to three key groups of migrants: unaccompanied children, refugees and labour migrants.

For further information on the workshop visit <http://www.unrisd.org/migrant-precarity-workshop>.

The main workshop discussions were summarized in an UNRISD Event Brief, which is available at [www.unrisd.org/eb3](http://www.unrisd.org/eb3).

Series Editors: Katja Hujo and Nicola Piper

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## Contents

Acronyms .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Summary.....	iii
Introduction .....	1
Migration Precarity in Asia .....	3
Protracted Precarity .....	4
Temporary Migration, Decent Work and Social Protection – Institutional Gaps .....	7
Decent Work.....	9
Towards an Integrated Rights-Based Approach to Migration – Challenges and Opportunities .....	11
Concluding Remarks .....	15
References .....	16

## Acronyms

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>DESA</b>	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OWWA</b>	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
<b>POEA</b>	Philippines Overseas Employment Administration
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TF-AMW</b>	Task Force on ASEAN Migrant Workers
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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## Summary

This paper analyses the implications of the dominant framework that has so far guided migration policy in Asia and shaped intra-Asian migration patterns and dynamics. It identifies institutional gaps that hamper the realization of migrants' human and labour rights in East, Southeast, South and West Asia. The key argument advanced is that the dominant project of migration governance continues to fail in several key areas, reflected in decent work deficits in relation to labour rights, the nature of employment opportunities and lacking social protection at all stages of the migration process. The authors find that these manifestations of precarity are related to forces of structural inequalities that operate throughout the global (and regional) economy, institutional incapacity and lacking integration of labour governance within migration governance. They propose that migration governance will only deliver on its commitment to "benefit all" if it is grounded in a holistic understanding of the concept of precarity that takes account of its spatial, protracted and temporal foundations.

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