

## Webinar Series:

# Social Health Protection for Migrant Workers and Their Families

Organized by P4H-CONNECT and the Australian National University

### Background

The four-part webinar series entitled Social Health Protection for Migrant Workers and Their Families addresses social health protection (SHP) for international migrant workers. As defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), SHP is “a series of public or publicly organized and mandated private measures against social distress and economic loss caused by the reduction of productivity, stoppage or reduction of earnings or the cost of necessary treatment that can result from ill health”. SHP includes health care benefits, sickness benefits and paid maternity leave.

The primary focus of the webinar series is the region of Asia and the Pacific since the countries in this region are the source, transit and destination sites for migrants and their families. Approximately 83 million people in this region live outside their countries of birth; they constitute 30% of the world’s international migrant population. This region is also a major destination for migrant workers, attracting 24 million individuals (ILO 2021). The economies of many countries rely substantially on the labour of migrant workers and/or remittances from migrant workers.

The *UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*, states that migrant workers and their families are entitled to enjoy equal treatment with nationals of the state of employment regarding access to social and health services. The *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* contains several key objectives addressing social protection for health. In 2022, the first WHO World Report on the Health of Refugees and Migrants found that documented and undocumented migrants often have inadequate SHP. Insufficient or inadequate SHP for vulnerable populations has led to forgone care, financial burden and impoverishment among the migrant populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted, widened and intensified the coverage gap in some countries.

Challenges for countries in providing SHP include high levels of irregular and circular migration, support for returned migrant workers, and national resource constraints. Global shocks and threats like climate change and financial and governance crises intensify the flow of international migrant workers. Some countries within the region of Asia and the Pacific – particularly the six Champion Countries of the Global Compact – have introduced several innovations for migrant workers and their families. These include regularisation procedures for irregular migrants to enable access to a country’s SHP (e.g. Thailand), bilateral social security agreements (e.g., between Australia and Japan, and India and the Republic of Korea) and compulsory health insurance for overseas workers (e.g. the Philippines).

In this webinar series, we will hear from speakers from the region of Asia and the Pacific, as well as from countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Africa and South America, about the challenges surrounding and regional solutions for SHP for migrant workers.



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Labour  
Organization



World Health  
Organization



## Objectives

Through the webinar series, we aim to promote knowledge sharing and dialogue on SHP for migrant communities. We will focus on sharing lessons learned from Asia and the Pacific with other countries, as well as between the region's own countries. These are the objectives:

- (1) To outline the extent and focus of SHP for migrant workers and their families in host and sending countries.
- (2) To describe the challenges, gaps and plans in SHP for migrant workers and their families.
- (3) To identify key topics and concerns to support regional and national stakeholders in developing and implementing SHP for migrant communities in the region.

## Outputs

The presentations and discussions during the webinars will be captured in a report and shared among P4H stakeholders and in appropriate forums to stimulate further discussions on SHP for migrants.

Throughout the webinar series, we will survey to capture the perspectives of participants on both the knowledge gaps and areas that are important to help country or regional stakeholders design SHP policies for migrant communities. The survey outcome will be shared among participants and incorporated in the report to inform discussion on potential actions that can be undertaken collaboratively to improve the SHP of migrant communities. The survey outcomes will also help P4H collaborative actions, including follow-up studies and designing tools to translate knowledge into policy as feasible.

## Target audience

We propose to invite representatives from government, social security institutions and national programmes providing SHP to international migrant workers; key nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and academic institutions who have expertise and interest in SHP for migrant communities; regional and national stakeholders, including the ILO, International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO), Asian Development Bank, ASEAN Economic Committee and the Migration Council of Australia.