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Taiwan: Church calls attention to plight of migrant domestic workers



Church-based organizations and local NGOs rally on

Taiwan, December 2009. ©ECMI

TAIWAN, 13 December 2009—Spearheaded by the Migrants’ Empowerment Network in Taiwan (MENT), Church-based organizations and local NGOs in Asia call attention to the plight of domestic workers and caregivers in Taiwan with a public rally and statement.

“All too often, we see that migrant domestic workers and caregivers become victim of unfair labour treatment”, notes Fr. Eliseo Napier, Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ECMI) in Taiwan. “We are distressed by the fact that these individuals continue to be unprotected”.

In an effort to call attention to the situation of migrant domestic workers and caregivers in the Asian region, ECMI joined with the MENT alliance and local actors including the Scalabrini International Migration Network Taipei, Hsinchu Catholic Diocese Migrants and Immigrants Service Center (HMISC), Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Foreign Brides Office (VMWBO), Caritas Taiwan and the Taiwan International Workers’ Association, among others, in presenting a statement on the need to improve migrant protections at the December rally.

Echoing the statement’s call for the ratification and effective implementation of international conventions pertaining to migrant rights—especially for vulnerable women—the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) has been active in promoting the issue internationally.

Together with NGOs, government representatives, international organizations, and labor organizations, ICMC joined members of the UN Committee on Migrant Workers in October 2009 for a day of discussion on Migrant Domestic Workers.

The event allowed ICMC to provide an international voice to the concerns of its Member organizations, and contributed to a process that the International Labor Organization (ILO) has launched to develop an international convention with labor standards for all domestic workers.

“Many of ICMC’s members are directly engaged in providing services, advocacy, even rescue and emergency shelter to migrants working as domestic workers around the world,” explains Johan Ketelers, Secretary General of ICMC. “Domestic work and workers are almost universally excluded from the protection of labour laws and foreigners working abroad in private settings typically hidden from view—a majority of them women—need the protection that a special framework of migrants can offer.”

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