

## **INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY**

### **DECLARATION OF THE OPEN FORUM: ACCOMPANYING DISTRESS MIGRANTS**

*In this **Open Forum: Accompanying Distress Migrants** held in Delhi on 18 December 2021, as part of this year's International Migrants Day, we the Migrant Assistance and Information Network (MAIN), migrant workers, people and organisations working with them, do hereby adopt and declare the following to:*

#### **Recognise, Empower and Support Migrant Workers.**

We recognise that this year's International Migrants Day, in commemoration of the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families by UN General Assembly in 1990, provides an opportunity for us to pause and reflect.

We recognise that majority of the migrant workforce in India are concentrated in the unorganised, informal sector;

While welcoming the signing of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, we recognise that more needs to be done to develop a common international framework for a life with dignity for all migrant workers;

We recognise that migration, especially distress migration, is due to various factors including socio-economic challenges, extreme poverty, disasters, climate change, and conflict in our society;

As a collective of conscientious citizens, we do recognise that migration and migrants have brought benefits in plenty, enriching our lives and livelihood in numerous ways, and migrants play a critical role towards the economic growth of not only our cities, but also our villages.

We stand by our determination to resist any attempts at criminalisation of migrant workers, their children and families, individually and collectively, where ever they are.

While endorsing this year's global theme of "Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility", we call upon:

- 1) State and policy makers at various levels to address the real concerns of migrant workers by tackling poverty, insecurity and social exclusion with appropriate policies for decent jobs, decent wages, social security and protection measures, and social justice respecting democratic coexistence in diversity and pluralism;
- 2) Fellow citizens and governments to join in the collective action required to respond the vulnerabilities faced by distress migrant workers;
- 3) Individuals, institutions, organisations including NGOs working with migrants, to contribute to develop adequate policy response in order to harness the potential of

migration, thereby ensuring that the basic and fundamental human rights of migrants are protected;

- 4) State to ensure and improve access to schemes, programmes and entitlements for all migrant workers; and
- 5) State to strengthen data systems to help policymakers, planners and programme implementers to design effective targeted interventions for distress migrants.

Finally, we call upon the state to restructure its policies around basic livelihood resources and their use to ensure that migrant workers' livelihoods are comprehensively ensured, and that food security, adequate housing, including shelters for migrant workers in cities, income security, social protection (including healthcare, insurance, childcare services) as well as bodily integrity are duly protected.

We, as MAIN, will extend our outreach to distress migrants to strengthen their voices to achieve their rights and entitlements for a life with dignity.