

Memorandum of Understanding  
Between  
General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions (GFBTU)  
And  
International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

**To Promote Migrant Domestic Workers' Rights and Welfare in  
Bahrain**

There are around 100,000 domestic workers in Bahrain for a population of 1.450.000. One fourth of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDWs) are from India, followed by Filipinos, Ethiopians (18.7%), and by domestic workers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Kenya who constitute 23.6% of the remaining MDWs' population.

In 2017, reforms were introduced in Bahrain following the approval by the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) in Bahrain of a dual/tripartite unified standard contract for domestic workers that must be signed between the recruitment agency, worker and employer, and a second one between the worker and the employer<sup>1</sup>. The unified contract is a step forward that would ensure the protection of MDWs in Bahrain; however, it needs further reform to outline working hours, minimum wage and rest time, in addition to an enforcement mechanism due to the inspectors' lack of authority to enter private homes<sup>2</sup>.

The GFBTU and IDWF, therefore, have entered into an agreement to help migrant domestic workers in Bahrain by empowering them through education, organizing and advocacies and to help them in their urgent problems which for many instances can be remedied by legal assistance.

To further hasten this cooperation, the parties of the MOU have agreed to uphold the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Conventions, especially the C189 related to the protection of workers' rights of domestic workers.

In particular, the parties agree to work together to achieve the following goals and objectives

<sup>1</sup> Kagan, S (NA). Bahrain Fact Sheet on Labour and Domestic Workers Laws, the International Labour Organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Gulf Insider (NA). Bahrain: New LMRA job contracts for domestic workers. <http://www.gulf-insider.com/bahrain-new-lmra-job-contracts-domestic-workers/>

1. Impactful policy change that would allow migrant domestic workers to more readily access their full labor and trade union rights and reach decent work for Migrant Domestic Workers
2. Migrant Domestic Workers are supported to organize with clear strategies, including alliance building, whenever necessary, with kindred and friendly civil society organizations.
3. GFBTU and IDWF have an established coordination mechanism for regular exchange of information on Bahraini labor policy and law; labor market; laws and regulations on recruitment or employment agencies; government bilateral agreements; and are able to undertake action research on enforcement and implementation of Migrant Domestic Workers' law and contract.
4. Improve the public's appreciation of the contributions made by migrant domestic workers in society by mobilizing and/or cooperating with partner organizations and allies, local and international, to conduct various activities, including the regular observance of International Domestic Workers' Day on 16 June and International Migrant Workers' Day on 18 December.

To realize these common goals, the individual parties to MOU commit to following:

The **GFBTU** shall:

1. Help in providing assistance to migrant domestic workers by delivering legal assistance, when possible; and/ or refer workers to service providers,
2. Raise awareness on MDWs' rights with employers and the Bahraini society as a whole, which would support GFBTU's efforts in reaching MDWs and possibly organize them with the support of local organizations/ associations/ trade unions such as the General Trade Union of Service Workers.
3. Continue the awareness raising efforts to MDWs on their rights in Bahrain
4. Participate in periodic review of the MOU.

The **IDWF** shall:

1. Gather input of migrant domestic workers by means of survey on the enforcement and implementation of the domestic workers' law & contract;
2. Provide education to migrant domestic workers (through training activities and reading materials) to inform them of their fundamental rights as defined by international conventions especially the C189 as well as provide them with basic knowledge on the legal processes in Bahrain.

3. Strengthen capacity of the domestic workers' leaders of IDWF affiliates and trade unions partners to advocate for policy changes in the countries of origin such as the (SEWA) Self Employed Women Association in India, SENTRO Trade Union Centre in The Philippines, (GEFONT) General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions in Nepal, (KUDHEIHA) Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers in Kenya and (MTDWA) Mulu Tesfa Domestic Workers Association in Ethiopia.
4. Share information with its affiliates and trade unions in the above-mentioned countries' of origin on laws/ regulations in Bahrain and contacts of GFBTU for potential MDWs travelling to Bahrain.
5. Participate in periodic review of the MOU.

Any proposed changes MOU can be initiated and communicated by any of the parties and mutually agreed upon by both parties concerned.

In case one party wish to terminate the MOU, such intention must be communicated in writing and discussed by both parties concerned; the termination of concerned obligation will take effect within six months upon mutual agreement of both parties concerned.

This MoU is valid for 2019 and 2020 and can be extended based on the evaluation of the implementation of the joint objectives.

Signed on: 15th June, 2019  
At: ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

For GFBTU



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**A. Qader A. Karim Al Shehabi**  
*Deputy General-Secretary*

For IDWF



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**Myrtle Witbooi**  
*President*