

The Implication of the Shift to Skilled Workers in Indonesia's Labor Export Policy: Migrant and Domestic Workers in Indonesia and C189

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This presentation examines the relationship between formalization policies of migrant domestic workers that Indonesia is currently aiming for and the implementations of associated domestic bills for the ratification of the ILO 189 Convention (C189).

During the 100th ILO General Assembly held in June 2011, then-President Yudhoyono gave a speech declaring an initiative for protecting the rights of Indonesian migrant domestic workers and the improvement in the treatments of domestic workers within Indonesia. This was the first attempt by a president in the history of Indonesia, so it was discussed extensively within the country. However, an incident in which an Indonesia domestic worker was executed to death for allegedly murdering her employer took place two days after the speech, and the Indonesian media aggressively reported this incident in conjunction with C189. Given this, Indonesia stepped to momentarily halt sending domestic workers to Saudi Arabia, which had been one of the two major countries of destination for domestic workers (the other being Malaysia) since 1994. As of September 2016, this moratorium measure has covered a total of nineteen Middle East and African countries. Next, the measure to halt the dispatching of domestic workers until 2017-2018 was announced. What does a series of transitions related to the policies of migrant domestic workers, driven by C189, signify? Based on the fieldwork, this presentation will discuss the following points: 1) Migrant domestic workers shifting toward East Asia; 2) Transitioning instigated by C189 from "helper" to "laborers" (Keck and Sikkink 1998) which is similar to the experience the Philippines had through the 1990's to the 2000s (Ogaya, 2015); and 3) Shifts toward contract workers.