



An open letter

Demands on migrant worker management in response to severe flooding in the South

28 November 2025

Subject: Recommendations on migrant worker management in response to severe flooding in the South

Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Labour

The severe flooding has been hitting hard and long in the Southern parts of Thailand, particularly in Hat Yai district of Songkhla causing massive impacts on the public, business entrepreneurs and employees. Government agencies are providing services to local people who have been severely affected while civil society organizations and rescue agencies have mobilized their resources to offer assistance to the local people as much as they can.

The Migrant Working Group (MWG) has been monitoring the flood disaster in the Lower South, particularly in Songkhla. According to statistics, the provinces of Songkhla, Pattani, and Satun are home to about 55,208 migrant workers including 41,602 in Songkhla, 6,148 in Pattani, 3,837 in Yala, and 3,621 in Satun. This largest floods in 25 years shall take an immense toll on the city of Hat Yai and the Southern Border Provinces in terms of their economy, tourism, agriculture, and business sector. 715 factories have to close so far, while more than 37,000 rais of agricultural land, goods transportation and road access have been affected causing damage as high as 1,000–1,500 million baht a day.

Initially, it was found that apart from the need of emergency assistance to ensure safety and availability of basic necessities from the rescue efforts, these migrant workers are also concerned about their personal documents which might have been lost or damaged during the disaster. These include their passports and work permits which are necessary to establish their working status, health insurance cards needed for access to medical services, and other documents when contacting the government.

The Migrant Working Group (MWG) therefore would like to bring to your attention the following recommendations and urge that they be promptly implemented in light of the management of migrant workers who are being affected.

Urgent recommendation

1. Recruit volunteers from the migrant workers who can work in tandem with the rescue agencies to provide assistance to the workers using the languages understood by the migrant workers.
2. Declare a urgent policy to offer assistance to the migrant workers who are unable to get to their workplaces and ensure their absence shall not count as days-off and shall not affect their leave according to the law. This will give a moral boost to the workers who are being affected enabling them to respond to the crisis while not having to worry about the impact on their absence from work, which might have a bearing on their eligibility to bonuses according to their employers' policy (if any).
3. A number of migrant workers are day laborers meaning they are only paid on the actual days at work. Since during this crisis, they have to be absent from work and are therefore not paid. To address the impact on migrant workers and as far as the paying of contributions to the Social Security Fund is concerned, the Ministry of Labour should among others consider exempting the paying of contributions for both the employers and the employees for at least three months from November 2025 onward.
4. The Social Security Office should ramp up its effort to raise the awareness among the employees about the possibility to tap into the available workers' funds which can help them respond to the crisis quickly. Such campaign efforts should be launched in the languages understood by the migrant workers, at least in Myanmar and Cambodian, particularly their access to unemployment benefits, etc.
5. The rehabilitation after the crisis shall take quite some time, particularly their housing, and the workers may not be able to resume their normal work in a short period of time. To ensure prompt rehabilitation, the Ministry of Labour should consider issuing welfare policies via the Worker Welfare Fund to ensure all workers can access it without discrimination while any criteria should be streamlined to ensure prompt and convenient access to such fund among the migrant workers.
6. The Ministry of Labour should consider setting aside funds from the Foreign Workers' Management Fund to assist and protect migrant workers during the crisis and an effort should be made to promptly raise the awareness among the migrant workers regarding their access to the fund.
7. The Ministry of Labour's Department of Employment (DoE) and Provincial Office of Employment must establish a coordinating center to issue documents in lieu of the work permits for the migrant workers who have been affected by the flooding, Meanwhile, the workers should be allowed to remain in Thailand temporarily and should receive a temporary document which they can use in lieu of their work permits and passports and necessary visa stamps in response to the loss of passports. The right to remain in Thailand should be afforded based on the migrant workers' existing permit, or at least one year given the difficulty in terms of the applying for passports in their countries of origin.

8. The Ministry of Labour should consider issue an urgent policy to extend the right to remain in the country temporarily among the migrant workers from Myanmar who are in the process of renewing their work permits and acquiring visa stamps pursuant to the cabinet resolution on 8 July 2025 which requires that their renewal of work permits has to be done within 13 December 2025. As of now, they are still not able to file their work permit renewal application via the E-workpermit system. Therefore, they should be allowed to temporarily stay and work in the Kingdom for at least three more months between 13 December 2025 until 13 March 2026.

With respect in human rights and human dignity

Migrant Working Group (MWG)

For more information, please contact: Phone 089-788-7138, E-mail: contact@mwgthailand.org