Mahidol University
Institute for Population and Social Research

Mahidol Migration Center (MMC)
Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR)
Mahidol University

**PRESS RELEASE**

Wednesday, 25 November 2026

TIME: 13:00-15:30 PM, BANGKOK TIME

# Mahidol Migration Center-Joint Research Unit Highlights Challenges and Recommendations for Thai Workers Abroad

*NEW policy brief shows recruitment costs, labour exploitation, and protection gaps affecting over 226,000 Thai workers overseas. Thailand needs to improve labour migration systems.*

BANGKOK, Thailand – [25 November 2026] – The Mahidol Migration Center–Joint Research Unit (MMC-JRU) at Mahidol University's Institute for Population and Social Research will launch its policy brief, "Reforming Workers Protection for Thai Workers Abroad," on Wednesday, 25 November 2026, at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand (FCCT), Bangkok. The event will bring together journalists, workers' representatives, researchers and practitioners working on migrant workers' rights to examine the challenges facing Thai workers overseas and discuss recommendations for stronger protection.

According to Thailand's Department of Employment (2026), 226,605 Thai nationals were working overseas as of March 2026. The brief points out challenges related to migration costs, recruitment-related debt, unclear employment contracts, risks of exploitation, unsafe working conditions and barriers to legal assistance and compensation. These challenges were discussed during the policy dialogue "การปฏิรูปสิทธิในการทำงาน: แรงงานไทยในต่างประเทศ" (Reforming the Right to Work for Thai Workers Abroad), organized by MMC-JRU on Thursday, 17 September 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Best Western Hotel, Chatuchak, Bangkok.

The recommendations include establishing a multi-stakeholder working group involving relevant Thai ministries, the International Labour Organization (ILO), trade unions, civil society organizations and academic experts to coordinate policy, share information and strengthen recruitment systems and worker protection. The brief also proposes improving Government-to-Government (G-to-G) recruitment procedures and Government-to-Business (G-to-B) arrangements with employers that maintain strong labour standards. Other recommendations include reducing reliance on recruitment agencies and unlicensed brokers and considering a "Zero Placement Fee" policy to ease workers' financial burdens.

*"Thailand needs to improve its labour recruitment system by making Government-to-Government (G-to-G) arrangements more efficient and strengthening Government-to-Business (G-to-B) cooperation. This would help reduce reliance on unlicensed recruitment agencies and brokers,"* said Dr. Sudarat Musikawong, Principal Investigator of the MMC-JRU.

To register for the launch, visit https://forms.gle/z2LF1YNGKfKBmdY37 .

For any inquiry regarding the event, contact [ Ms.Yamin | yamintheintps1997@gmail.com ]

**Moderators:**

**Dr. Sudarat Musikawong**

Dr. Sudarat Musikawong is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, and Principal Investigator of the Mahidol Migration Center–Joint Research Unit (MMC-JRU).

**Ms. Reena Tadee**

Ms. Reena Tadee is a Researcher(Senior Professional Level) at the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.

**Panel Respondents**

**Dr. Supang Chantavanich**

Dr. Supang Chantavanich is a Professor Emeritus, Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Political Science and Former Director, Institute of Asian Studies and the Asian Research Center for Migration,Chulalongkorn University.

**Ms. Maliwan Athanu**

Ms. Maliwan Athanu is Secretary of the Migrant Workers Union of Thailand (MWUT) and a former berry picker in Finland. She advocates for fair recruitment, decent working conditions and access to compensation for Thai migrant workers.

**Ms. Junya "Lek" Yimprasert**

Ms. Junya "Lek" Yimprasert is a human rights activist, political analyst and co-founder of the Thai Labour Campaign. She chairs ACT4DEM ry in Finland and serves as International Coordinator of the Migrant Workers Union of Thailand (MWUT). She is the author of *Bloodberries: Hidden Slavery in the World's Happiest Nations*.

**Adv. Orit Ronen**

Adv. Orit Ronen is a Manager of the Migrant Workers in Agriculture, Construction, Industry and Services Department at Kav LaOved, an Israel-based workers' rights organization. Her work includes protecting migrant workers' rights and promoting workplace safety. She has also co-authored research examining the effects of the climate crisis on workers' health and safety and the need for stronger regulation.

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**Mr. Sathienpong Laohasiri**

Mr. Sathienpong Laohasiri is a labour specialist, professional level from the Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour,Thailand.

| Time | Schedule |
|---|---|
| 1:00–1:15 PM | **Registration** |
| 1:15–1:25 PM | **Opening Remarks and Introduction to the Policy Brief Launch**<br>• Dr.Sudarat Musikawong |
| 1:25–1:45 PM | **Policy Brief launch: Reforming Workers Protection for Thai Workers Abroad**<br>• Dr.Sudarat Musikawong<br>• Ms.Reena Tadee |
| 1:45–2:45 PM | **Panel Discussion: Experiences and Challenges of Thai Workers Abroad**<br>**Respondents:**<br>• Dr.Supang Chantavanich<br>• Ms.Maliwan Athanu<br>• Ms.Junya Lek Yimprasert<br>• Adv. Orit Ronen<br>• Mr. Sathienpong Laohasiri |
| 2:45–3:15 PM | **Open Discussion and Q&A** |
| 3:15–3:30 PM | **Closing Remarks**<br>• Dr.Sudarat Musikawong |