

## Migrant Workers an Issue of Attention for Asean

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Southeast Asian countries contributed to as high as 18.8 millions of migrant workers worldwide in 2013, with 6.5 millions of whom working in ASEAN countries. The migrant workers issue has yet to be addressed better by the Indonesian government as well as ASEAN.

“ASEAN has not shown commitment in terms of migrant workers. The issue has yet to be included in the ASEAN regulation like white collar workers,” said Sociology lecturer from UGM, Dana Hasibuan, M.A. in a discussion on ASEAN on Friday (3/3) at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM.

The bi-weekly event hosted by Centre for ASEAN Studies UGM aims to disseminate topics related to ASEAN and bring ASEAN closer to society. This time it is themed *Migration-Development Nexus: Indonesia Migrant Workers and ASEAN Economic Society*.

Dana reviewed the research he conducted in Wonosobo and East Lombok, two areas having most of migrant workers in Indonesia. He said migrant workers issue included illegal workers and abuses they experienced, which showed the actual problems happening in development system.



Dana explained illegal workers were prone to abuse as they have no social security that can protect them from maltreatment. Development level in rural areas which is lower than in urban areas makes migrant workers, particularly female, unable to voice their political right whilst working. This situation makes them getting used to social risk and vulnerabilities.

Dana asked academics, community, and policy makers to advocate and campaign programme on migrant worker protection as they deserve to be addressed well by government and society.

“This issue touches upon development issue in Indonesia and Malaysia. With the emergence of political activities among migrant workers and support from community, I am optimistic this would bring hope to the future of migrant workers,” he said.

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