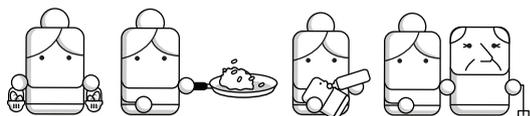
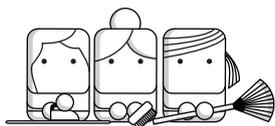
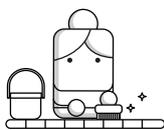


# 10 FACTS ABOUT Domestic Workers in Asia Pacific

**1** Domestic workers are employed in others' private homes for pay. They provide services such as cleaning, laundry, shopping, cooking and caring for children and the elderly.



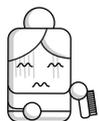
**2** Employment as a domestic worker is one of the main opportunities for women who migrate within Asia Pacific; millions of domestic workers in the region are from the Philippines and Indonesia.<sup>1</sup>



**3** Globally, one in every 13 female wage earners is employed in domestic work. Of the estimated 52 million domestic workers worldwide, 41 per cent are in Asia Pacific.<sup>2</sup>



**4** An estimated 1.9 million of the domestic workers in Asia Pacific are being exploited. Victims are hard to identify because this is taking place behind closed doors.<sup>3</sup>



**5** Live-in domestic workers who have experienced exploitation have reported low pay or no pay at all, excessive working hours (such as being on call for 24 hours a day), no weekly day off, living in poor and unsafe conditions, inflated agency fees, debt-bondage, forced labour and forced confinement.<sup>4</sup>



Severe forms of exploitation include deprivation of food and water, sexual abuse, rape, denial of health care services, being surveilled by cameras, having to ask to use the bathroom, and physical and psychological abuse.

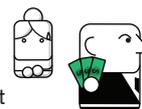
**6** Female migrant domestic workers face a triple vulnerability to exploitation: being a woman, a migrant and a domestic worker.<sup>5</sup> Lack of rights, the extreme dependency on an employer and the isolated and unprotected nature of domestic work add to their vulnerability.<sup>6</sup>



**7** Migrant domestic workers, especially those who are live-in, often go into debt to their employer or recruitment agency to cover the cost of travel and/or the recruitment fees. They are expected to work off this debt, which can often take up to a year or longer.<sup>7</sup> During this period, most or all of their salary is kept by their employers or goes directly to the agency. This debt and lack of money makes domestic workers more vulnerable to exploitation.



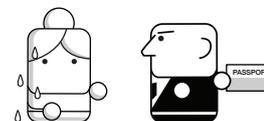
**8** Illegal annual profits generated from forced labour in domestic work in Asia Pacific amounts to over US\$6.3 billion. This means that around US\$3,300 (about 60 per cent of their wages) is being withheld from each exploited domestic worker every year.<sup>8</sup>



**9** Many countries do not include domestic workers in their labour laws or formal labour agreements with other countries; this excludes domestic workers from many rights that apply to other labourers, such as social protection, fair wages and decent working hours. Additionally, many nations tie visas for domestic workers (as for other migrant workers) to their employers. These visas often require formal permission by an employer to leave the place of employment.



**10** Many employers confiscate their domestic workers' passports and immigration documents.



This may seem like a reasonable way to keep important documents safe and ensure that domestic workers do not run away but in fact keeping your own documents is each person's right and contributes to a positive relationship of trust and open communication.

<sup>1</sup> ILO: Domestic Workers Across the World (2013)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_200937/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_200937/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>3</sup> ILO: Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour (2014)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/461-480/tandi471.html>

<sup>5</sup> IOM Thailand Migration Report (2014)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_200937/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_200937/lang-en/index.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://thediplomat.com/2015/03/indonesias-migrant-workers-dreams-and-tears/>

<sup>8</sup> ILO: Profits and Poverty: The Economics of Forced Labour (2014)

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