

Singapore

A joint submission by members of Solidarity for Migrant Workers for the 11th Session of the Universal Periodic Review, May 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Solidarity for Migrant Workers is a coalition of NGOs (HOMEⁱ, TWC2ⁱⁱ and Migrant Voicesⁱⁱⁱ) promoting the rights of the migrant community in Singapore through research, welfare services, advocacy and the arts.
2. This report draws attention to the discrimination and human rights violations faced by non-citizens, in particular low-paid workers, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and foreign spouses.
3. Over 30% of the workforce consists of migrants, mostly in low-paid occupations. In December 2009, it was reported that there were 856,000 migrants in low or semi-skilled manual jobs. This includes 196,000 women employed as live-in domestic workers.^{iv} This large migrant workforce is demand-driven and bridges the gap between a limited pool of local labour and a high rate of employment.^v
4. Low paid migrant workers are typically employed in the construction, manufacturing, maritime and service industries, which include domestic work, healthcare, retail, entertainment and hospitality.^{vi}
5. Live-in domestic workers come mainly from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Smaller numbers come from India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal and Pakistan. Other low wage migrant workers employed in the construction, marine and service sectors are mainly from Malaysia, People's Republic of China, Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Myanmar.

II. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

6. Singapore is not a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Protection and the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families or the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children Supplementary to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
7. Singapore is a party to the following relevant conventions: the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), however it has made a number of reservations to both. The country is a member of the International Labour Organization and has ratified twenty of the conventions.^{vii}

III. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

Cooperation with Human Rights Mechanisms

8. In its Concluding Comments about Singapore, the CEDAW Committee has raised concerns about trafficked women, foreign domestic workers and spouses of Singaporean or permanent residents.^{viii} In April 2010, the UN Special Rapporteur on racism/xenophobia concluded his visit to Singapore and raised concerns about migrants and the living and working conditions of migrant workers, including domestic workers.^{ix}

Implementation of International Human Rights Obligations

Equality and non-discrimination

9. Work permit holders (**See Annex A**) face the greatest discrimination with regards to rights to family and are subject to the following restrictions:

- a. They may not bring family members with them;^x
- b. They need approval from the Ministry of Manpower before marriage to a Singapore citizen or permanent resident;^{xi}
- c. They are not allowed to become pregnant or give birth in Singapore.^{xii}

Right to life, liberty and security of the person

10. The mandatory death penalty for drug trafficking is still allowed in Singapore. In November 2008, Yong Vui Kong, a 19 year old Malaysian drug mule at the time of the offence, was sentenced to hang for drug trafficking (**See Annex C**). For several migration offences migrants may be jailed and/or caned.^{xiii} In 2009 the government was reported to have arrested 3760 undocumented migrants.^{xiv} NGOs are aware of several cases where migrants including trafficked victims have been caned for immigration and other offences (**See Annex B**). According to accounts of those who have been caned, caning is a degrading corporal punishment: it breaks the skin and leaves a permanent scar.

Administration of justice

11. Even though there are legal mechanisms for migrant workers to seek redress for claims, significant challenges exist when they do so.

12. Migrant workers abused by their employer or labour recruiter may face difficulties in having their complaints examined.^{xv} Employers may deliberately not give to workers, or fail to keep important employment records such as contracts, salary slips and time cards. As a result, workers find it difficult to substantiate claims for employment related abuses with the authorities. Employers can unilaterally cancel a work permit and repatriate the worker as soon as they learn that a complaint has been filed, or to prevent a complaint from being filed (**See Annex D**). Employers can also prevent an employee from getting a new employer by refusing to cancel the existing work permit.

13. Workers who have successfully lodged a claim may experience difficulty surviving day-to-day since it can take up to several months for a complaint or case to be resolved. In some extreme cases, it may take years before a claim is resolved (**See Annex E**). Employment for such workers is limited to those who are assisting the authorities as prosecution witnesses. Workers with salary related claims who take their complaints to the Labour Court often face a significant barrier in enforcing court orders when the errant employer does not comply with the order. Enforcement of these orders is a costly and protracted process. In civil cases migrant workers have limited access to *pro bono* legal services.^{xvi}

14. When migrant workers are arrested, they may be uninformed of their right to make a phone call or to the services of a language translator; hence, they may be disadvantaged in communication and may not get help from a lawyer, a NGO or an embassy representative. (**See Annex F**).

Right to privacy, marriage and family life

Privacy

15. The *Constitution* does not address privacy rights. Domestic workers must be accommodated at their employer's residence and legally binding minimum standards of accommodation are not clearly spelt out.^{xvii} HOME has seen many cases where workers are not provided with a private room and sleep in a common living area, along a corridor, outside on a balcony or sharing a bedroom^{xviii} (See **Annex G**). Some employers also install surveillance cameras within the household, including in the toilet and sleeping areas, to monitor the movements and behaviour of the domestic worker.

16. Some male migrant workers are accommodated on site, while others are accommodated in dormitories or shop houses, and sometimes in metal shipping containers. Dormitory operators may install closed-circuit television cameras at the entrances and in other common areas, including the toilet^{xix} (See **Annex H**).

17. A work permit will only be issued if the migrant worker passes a mandatory medical examination (including for TB, HIV, syphilis, malaria) by a registered doctor within 14 days of arrival.^{xx} Employers can obtain a copy of the report direct from the doctor without a worker's consent.^{xxi}

18. During employment, migrant workers are required to go for periodic medical examinations for pregnancy and HIV tests, among other screenings for infectious diseases. Workers who fail the tests are deported.^{xxii} These tests often disregard established best practices of consent, confidentiality, counselling and referral to treatment and support services.^{xxiii}

Marriage

19. All current and former Work Permit holders need approval from the Controller of Work Permits before they can marry a Singaporean citizen or permanent resident.^{xxiv} This applies also if the marriage takes place outside Singapore.^{xxv} Economic status is often a deciding factor^{xxvi}, which means in practice, many low-paid workers see their applications rejected (See **Annex I**).

Family life

20. Pregnancy is legitimate reason for termination of work and immediate deportation.^{xxvii} As a consequence, many workers terminate their pregnancies as they feel they have no alternative if they wish to remain employed. Although legal in Singapore, the cost of abortion and fear of authorities being notified cause some workers to access self-administered, dangerous abortion drugs^{xxviii} (See **Annex J**). A recent report found at least 100 domestic workers are sent home every year due to pregnancy; however, it is not known how many terminate their pregnancies.^{xxix}

21. Marriage between a non-Singaporean and a citizen or permanent resident does not automatically confer right of permanent residence or citizenship.^{xxx} Foreign spouses are allocated a Long Term Visit Pass, which does not allow them to work or access state medical insurance and subsidized health care. Under such circumstances the right of the child to a family is violated as the foreign spouse has to leave should the Long Term Visit Pass not be renewed.

Freedom of movement

22. Freedom of movement is not upheld for migrant workers mainly because of implications related to the security bond. Employers of all work permit holders (except Malaysians) have to pay a S\$5,000 security deposit which is forfeited if a work permit is cancelled and the worker is not repatriated. The security bond may also be forfeited when other work permit conditions have been violated (e.g. when the work permit holder is pregnant and gives birth in Singapore). The fear of losing the security bond has led to employers restricting their movements and confiscating their passports.

23. Domestic workers may suffer enforced confinement and restricted communication. The majority of the workers who come to HOME and TWC2 do not have a weekly day off and many only have one day off per month, or none at all. Some employers forbid workers to go out alone and limit opportunities for them to use the phone, speak to their families and friends, or write letters.

24. Although the *Employment of Foreign Manpower Act* and the *Passports Act* forbid an employer from holding onto a worker's identity documents, the majority of employers hold their employees' passports and work permit cards, and the Government rarely penalises such practices. Nine out of ten domestic workers who seek assistance from HOME are without identification documents because of this. TWC2 and HOME have also met many migrant workers from other occupations who are not in possession of these documents. It is common for employment agencies to instruct employers to hold these documents^{xxxii}. Employment agencies have also been known to strip search domestic workers for money, hand phones and other personal effects (**See Annex K**).

25. There are numerous reports from migrant workers of intimidation and forced repatriation of workers by repatriation companies hired by employers. Some use extrajudicial violence and wrongful confinement to compel a worker to leave the country even though the worker has a legitimate claim against the employer.^{xxxiii} Wrongful confinement is an offence under the *Penal Code*,^{xxxiii} but local reports indicate a lack of enforcement.^{xxxiv} (**See Annex L and Annex M**).

Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life

26. Domestic workers who are not provided a day off are unable to attend religious worship. They have also reported being forbidden by their employers from praying or fasting. Employment agencies may insist that Muslim workers cook with pork products, or stop praying, and have confiscated their religious items to make them more "employable".^{xxxv} Some Muslim construction and shipyard workers who live in dormitories provided by their employers have also reported not being allowed to pray in these premises.

27. The *Constitution* provides the right to freedom of speech, association and peaceful assembly^{xxxvi} but permits Parliament to impose restrictions it considers "necessary or expedient" in the interest of security, public order, or morality. The restrictions imposed on this freedom impact considerably on the capacity of NGOs to support migrant workers, publicly advocate for their rights and promote their wellbeing.

28. The *Public Order Act of 2009* requires permits for any "cause-related activity" such as an assembly or procession, no matter how many people are involved. A "cause related activity" is defined as a show of support for or against a position, person, group, or Government, or to publicise a cause or campaign. In May 2010 HOME applied for a licence to hold a peaceful public assembly and rally involving domestic workers, which was denied. They were instead asked by the police to hold it at a designated area known as 'Speakers' Corner'. However, permit rules impose restrictions on foreigners' participation at Speaker's Corner, thus defeating the purpose of the rally.^{xxxvii}

29. The formation of associations or societies for migrant workers to promote their rights is highly restricted due to regulations that stipulate that the governing bodies of such associations should have Singapore citizens as the majority.^{xxxviii} The *Trades Union Act* also forbids foreigners from forming their own unions.^{xxxix} Due to these barriers and the lack of financial support, there are no known 'cause-related' registered associations or unions led by migrant workers in Singapore.

Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

30. In recent years the Government has introduced measures to offer better protection for migrant workers. Some progress has been made in successfully prosecuting abusive employers and recovering wages for migrant domestic workers. However issues clearly remain: In 2009 HOME provided shelter housing for 1388 migrant domestic workers. The most common violations suffered by these workers were: well-being violations such as inadequate food or accommodation (43%); psychological abuse (30%) and non-payment of salary (14%).^{xl}In the first ten months of 2010, TWC2 has seen 685 injury cases and 676 cases involving contraventions of Employment Act provisions, such as non-payment of wages and unauthorised deductions. In 2008, the global financial crisis led to thousands of migrant workers becoming jobless, homeless and without proper meals. These workers received limited social support from the State and had to return to their countries of origin despite having paid thousands of dollars in recruitment fees to their agents (**See Annex N**).

31. Migrant domestic workers continue to be vulnerable to mistreatment, abuse, long hours of work, isolation and gross exploitation (**See Annex O and Annex P**). Domestic workers, the vast majority of whom are foreigners, are excluded from the Employment Act^{xli}, which specifies the minimum terms and conditions of employment for rest days, hours of work, overtime entitlements, annual leave and medical leave. They are also excluded from the *Work Injury Compensation Act*^{xlii}, which provides for compensation for workplace injuries and occupational illnesses. Even though domestic workers are covered by compulsory medical insurance in the event of an accident, the extent of the coverage and the benefits are less favourable than that of other low-paid manual workers covered by the *Work Injury Compensation Act*.

32. The Government maintains that because domestic workers operate in private households, the *Employment Act* would be too difficult to enforce and as such is not applicable.^{xliii} The lack of legislation combined with the isolated workplace make migrant domestic workers extremely vulnerable to poor labour conditions and abuse. For example, it is not illegal for a domestic worker to work for 365 days a year without a single day off.

33. Even though non domestic migrant workers are covered by the Employment Act, it is also not uncommon for construction, marine and service sector workers to labour 12-16 hours a day, seven days a week, breaching the law on maximum hours of work.

34. Employment agencies could play a crucial role in informing workers about their rights. However many agencies ignore or exacerbate workers' problems. Agencies are typically more concerned with the repayment of loans or placement fees by the workers than the difficulties faced by them in the course of employment. Cases handled by HOME and TWC2 have found that agencies advise employers to deny workers a day off and to confiscate their passports.

35. Migrant workers take large loans in order to pay unreasonably high agency fees; they may then feel unable to leave situations of abuse or maltreatment as they need to work off the loan. Even though the workers pay these fees in their countries of origin, we have encountered several cases where the fees were paid to licensed employment agencies in Singapore. The *Employment Agencies Act* stipulates that the one-off payment of agency fees shall not account for more than 10% of the migrant worker's first month's wage^{xliv}, in reality they range from S\$3000 to S\$8000, which constitutes at least ten months of the worker's potential earnings^{xlv} (**See Annex Q**). Similarly, migrant domestic workers pay between S\$2000-S\$2400, which is six to eight months' worth of their salaries as placement fees to agents. These fees may be increased by at least two months, should the domestic worker request a change of employer.

36. Existing regulations and practices limit job mobility and may lead to conditions of forced labour and exploitation:

- a. Migrant workers in the domestic and construction sectors require permission from their current employer to change employers. Employers have the power to repatriate, or hold on to a worker at any time during the contract. In many situations, employers deny a worker the right to leave and change jobs.^{xlvi} Workers from the marine, manufacturing and service sectors are not allowed by law to switch employers at all. The government only makes exceptions for extreme situations, assessed on a case by case basis.
- b. If the employer terminates the worker's employment and the work permit is cancelled, s/he has little choice but to be repatriated. Workers may not be informed of the termination of their work permits until just before they are sent home.

37. Singapore's work permit regulations, which forbid workers from engaging in what it deems 'immoral and undesirable' activities, provide greater opportunities for unethical employers to threaten and exploit workers. Current regulations also warn migrant workers against 'breaking up Singaporean families'. These discriminatory regulations allow employers to submit negative feedback about a worker's behaviour to the authorities with the aim of having future employment bans placed on them. The process by which this happens is neither transparent nor fair, and the threat of being blacklisted frequently deters workers who may have legitimate complaints from leaving abusive employment situations and/or seeking assistance from the authorities.

38. Migrant workers' work safety is another area of concern. The number of deaths and accidents at workplaces remains high, according to research and news reports.^{xlvii} The two main areas of safety risk for migrant workers in construction sites are working at heights and crane safety.^{xlviii}

39. The Government has taken some steps to regulate the transportation of migrant workers, but most are conveyed to their work sites in the open deck of lorries, without proper seats or seat belts.^{xlix} Fatal accidents have been widely reported. It was also reported that four workers a week in 2008 were being harmed in transport on their way to work.¹

40. Fishermen who work on vessels that have docked in Singapore face significant difficulties seeking redress when they are exploited. HOME has seen up to 26 such workers who were not paid their salaries, disallowed from terminating their contracts and from disembarking from their vessels, and working without proper safety equipment and gear. They have very little protection since they are excluded from Singapore's labour laws (**See Annex R**).

Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

Health & Social Security

41. The psycho-social health of migrant domestic workers suffer due to adjustment problems, work pressure, financial debt and poor working conditions. Without minimum standards for wages, working hours, or holidays the well-being and health of migrant domestic workers is easily jeopardized.

42. Migrant workers are not provided any social security plans. In the event that they are unable to fulfil their contracts for health or other labour issues, they may go home penniless.

43. For domestic workers, the two main causes of death are poor safety and suicide.^{li} They suffer abuse from their employers such as physical abuse, food deprivation, sexual abuse and harassment, verbal abuse and threats.^{lii}

44. The Government no longer subsidizes medical care for migrants. Even though the employer is required by law to pay for all medical expenses and to purchase hospitalisation insurance, workers may find it difficult to access basic health services because of inconsistent enforcement of existing laws. As a result some migrant workers have to go without medical treatment for long periods of time or are deported without access to medical treatment.

45. Migrant construction and shipyard workers suffer poor health due to unsafe work sites, abject living conditions and poor quality meals provided by employers.

Adequate Standards of Living

46. It is not uncommon for foreign workers to live in sub-standard accommodation. Many of them have been found to sleep in cramped, unhygienic, and poorly ventilated living quarters (**See Annex S**). In 2008, the government said that 80,000 to 100,000 migrant workers did not have proper accommodation, or were living in illegal quarters.^{liii}

47. Employers should provide migrant domestic workers with adequate food. However, HOME and TWC2 have seen cases where they are denied food or given left-overs because of employers' neglect or as punishment for mistakes made at work.

Right to education and to participate in the cultural life of the community

48. The lack of a day off for domestic workers and the long hours of work of other migrant workers restrict participation in cultural life and ability to access education.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Trafficked persons

49. The United States Department of State report *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010: Singapore* places Singapore on the Tier Two watch list for risk of human trafficking, which means the government is not doing enough to address the issue.^{liv} Singapore's laws do not address human trafficking adequately and under existing regulations trafficked people may be treated as offenders for violation of immigration laws rather than victims.^{lv} HOME has been in contact with women working in the sex industry and men working in the fishing and boating industry who are victims of forced labour and trafficking. They receive limited protection from the Singaporean authorities. HOME has also seen victims of trafficking who do not wish to file official complaints to the authorities, because of the lack of any form of support from the authorities (**See Annex T**).

Asylum seekers and refugees

50. Singapore has not ratified the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol. There are no domestic laws providing for the granting of refugee status. HOME has come into contact with a number of persons of concern who would meet the refugee criteria but these individuals are considered irregular migrants by the Government if they overstay their visas. They also have limited access to any specific procedure for redress.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish an independent National Human Rights Commission, as in other ASEAN states, to investigate, monitor and report human rights violation in the country, and with the mandate to educate and inform in the field of human rights.

2. Ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol.

3. Enact an anti-human trafficking law, as in other ASEAN States that identifies victims of trafficking according to terms consistent with the Palermo Protocols, provides protection to them, further enables prosecution of human traffickers, and provides police with training and education related to trafficking.

4. Support the proposed legally binding ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers supplemented by Recommendations at the International Labour Conference in 2011 with a view to ratifying the Convention upon its enactment.

RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY

5. Review the mandatory death penalty for drug trafficking in Singapore and mandatory caning for immigration offenders. Such offenders could well be migrant 'drug mules' or trafficked victims.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

6. Ensure that migrant workers who wish to pursue a claim against their employer or agency have access and adequate support to decent food and lodging, legal aid and translation services to pursue judicial procedures.

7. Repeal the work permit regulation that gives the employer the unilateral right to cancel the work permit of a worker or to refuse to cancel a work permit.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

8. Ensure that all migrants have their right of marriage to a Singaporean citizen or a permanent resident respected.

9. Repeal the law that requires a work permit holder to be deported on grounds of pregnancy, or when s/he has is diagnosed with infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

10. Enact laws to safeguard the privacy of all individuals, including migrants and especially migrant domestic workers working in a private household.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

11. Fully implement and enforce the regulations that prohibit employers from holding on to the passports and work permits of migrant workers.

12. Prosecute repatriation companies and employment agencies for wrongful confinement and forced repatriation of migrant workers.

13. Ensure that freedom of expression and association, and equality in participation in all aspects of civic and political life are respected for migrants and for the NGOs defending their rights.

14. Ensure migrant workers have the freedom to practise their religion without fear of termination of employment or reprisals.

RIGHT TO WORK AND JUST AND FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS OF WORK

15. Review the legal protection offered to migrant domestic workers and include them under the Employment Act or separate legislation which provides full and equal protection with other low wage workers so that basic workers' rights such as a weekly day off, notice of termination of contract, annual leave, medical leave, maternity leave, and over-time pay are accorded to them. Domestic workers should also be protected under the Work Injury Compensation Act so that they are entitled to full and equal protection like other low paid workers.
16. Actively pursue negotiations for multilateral agreements with major labour sending states to Singapore. Agree upon limits to recruitment fees and standards covering employment to prevent contract substitution and exploitative practices.
17. Undertake a review on the mechanisms for redress for fishermen and take measures to ensure that fishermen have access to help when the fishing vessels dock in Singaporean waters.
18. Take further measures to enhance workplace safety so that worksite deaths and accidents are significantly reduced.
19. Ban the practice of transporting workers on the open decks of lorries and goods vehicles.
20. Abolish the practice of employment bans (blacklisting) on workers unless they are convicted in court for a criminal offence.
21. Enact a minimum wage law to ensure that workers, especially migrants, are fairly remunerated.
22. Repeal the discriminatory law that prohibits workers from engaging in 'illegal, immoral and undesirable activities' and 'breaking up Singaporean families'.

RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

23. Establish and implement minimum standards of accommodation for domestic workers and rigorously implement the existing regulations regarding the accommodation of all migrant workers to ensure adequate and decent living conditions.
24. Provide access to basic medical care and necessary social support and counselling to migrant workers diagnosed with a disease, especially those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Treatment should be provided on a right to health basis, and laws and regulations that call for immediate and automatic deportation of a migrant worker on health grounds should be reviewed.
25. Ensure migrant workers have easy access to comprehensive and affordable health services at costs not higher than local workers.
26. Ensure the spouses and children of migrants who are married to Singaporeans have access to affordable health care, financial assistance and education.

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Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Singapore, <http://tb.ohchr.org/default.aspx?country=sg>

ANNEX A

Type of Work Pass

Eligibility

Employment Pass

Fixed monthly salary of more than S\$2,500. Possess acceptable degrees, professional qualifications or specialist skills. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) evaluates each application and qualification on its merits.

S Pass

For mid-level skilled foreigners who earn a fixed monthly salary of at least S\$1,800. S Pass applicants will be assessed on a points system, taking into account multiple criteria including salary, education qualifications, skills, job type and work experience.

R Pass (Work permit holders)

For low-skilled or semi-skilled foreigners who earn a monthly salary of less than S\$1,800. These foreigners are typically employed in construction, manufacturing, shipbuilding and ship-repair industries and the service sector, which includes domestic work as well as the healthcare, retail and hotel industries. Companies employing work permit holders are subjected to sector specific requirements based on nationality. For example, the service sector can only recruit workers

from the following countries: Malaysia; Hong Kong; Macau; South Korea; Taiwan; and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

ANNEX B

Conned by job agents; caned for overstaying

China worker who goes home broke recounts ordeal of coming to Singapore hoping to land a higher paying job

Melissa Sim

Sunday, May 4, 2008

The Straits Times

CHINA worker Han Xin Hui, 41, arrived in Singapore in October 2006 in a new suit, new leather shoes, and a suitcase full of work clothes.

But on Tuesday, he left wearing a ragged T-shirt and bermudas, hiding scars from four strokes of the cane he got while in prison here - a permanent reminder of his time in Singapore.

His budget flight to Guangzhou, followed by a train ride to his home in Hebei, brought his 18-month stay here to an end.

He told The Straits Times in Mandarin that he had been conned by labour agents, both in China and Singapore, who had promised him a job, but never delivered.

He said: 'I'll never think of Singapore again, I have such a bad impression.'

Some foreign workers from China, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are the targets of rogue agents who collect thousands of dollars from the workers in return for jobs in Singapore.

Ministry to share info

THE Manpower Ministry (MOM) said it will share information on foreign worker scams with embassies, so diplomatic officials can warn their nationals at home against unscrupulous employment agencies.

But when they arrive, not only is there no work for them, but local agents also take their cash and even their passports.

While no official data is available on the number of workers who get duped by agents, Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (Home), a welfare organisation which helps foreign workers, said that for the past year, they have seen at least one case every three months.

Mr Han's is the most recent case that Home helped resolve