

Panasonic, International Organization for Migration Forge Strategic Partnership to Advance Rights for Migrant Workers in Supply Chains

Tokyo, 26 February – Panasonic Holdings Corporation and The International Organization for Migration (IOM) have signed a Global Framework Agreement aimed at strengthening the rights of migrant workers in supply chains.

The agreement is critical as the most recent Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Report revealed that the Asia-Pacific region accounts for the highest number of forced labor victims globally. The report found 15 million victims in the region out of a global total of 28 million. Moreover, a staggering 86 percent of forced labor incidents are traced back to the private sector, where migrant workers are exploited at a rate three times higher than that of local workers, the report found.

“This agreement represents a pivotal step in our joint efforts to promote ethical recruitment and responsible employment and to combat forced labor,” said IOM Director General Amy Pope when she met with Panasonic executives in Tokyo. “We look forward to collaborating with Panasonic on ways to protect and reinforce the rights and well-being of migrant workers around the world,” Pope added.

Since 2018, with IOM support, Panasonic Group Companies in Malaysia have formulated policies and standard operating procedures for the ethical recruitment and employment of international migrant workers. By identifying and addressing issues through on-site operational policy and manual checks, they are working to establish effective management systems to safeguard labor and human rights for all workers in supply chains.

Shigeki Mishima, Group CHRO Panasonic Holding, says, “Our partnership with IOM demonstrates our commitment to freely-chosen employment in our operations and supply chains. It is an exciting next step in our tireless commitment to addressing the risks of forced labor and challenges migrant workers face in a collaborative and innovative manner.”

The agreement provides a framework for further collaboration to respect migrant workers in line with the U.N.’s United National Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and IOM’s Migrant Worker Guidelines for Employers. This includes providing technical advice and reviewing Panasonic’s corporate policy and procedures in Malaysia, capacity building with Panasonic’s business partners, and migrant-centered human rights due diligence assessments. It also encompasses management reviews and evaluations to assess changes in the migration and recruitment process and the employment experiences of migrant workers.

IOM recognizes that safeguarding the rights of migrant workers is a shared responsibility and a foundation of regular labor pathways. Grounded in the 'Protect, Respect, and Remedy' framework of the UNGPs, IOM collaborates with governments, businesses and civil society members to uphold migrant workers’ rights.

Through its flagship regional Migration, Business and Human Rights Programme in Asia (MBHR Asia), IOM continues working with its partners to strengthen integration of migration in the business and human rights dialogue, encourage ethical recruitment and responsible employment, and promote regular labor migration pathways as an alternative to irregular migration.

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About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization and a member of the United Nations System. For over 70 years, IOM has been working with governments, civil society, the international community and private sector to promote safe, orderly and regular migration. As of 2023, IOM is present in 171 countries and has 557 field offices worldwide.

About Panasonic Group

Founded in 1918, and today a global leader in developing innovative technologies and solutions for wide-ranging applications in the consumer electronics, housing, automotive, industry, communications, and energy sectors worldwide, the Panasonic Group switched to an operating company system on April 1, 2022 with Panasonic Holdings Corporation serving as a holding company and eight companies positioned under its umbrella. The Group reported consolidated net sales of 8,378.9 billion yen for the year ended March 31, 2023. To learn more about the Panasonic Group, please visit: <https://holdings.panasonic/global/>