

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain



Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation with ADHRB and BIRD thank the Special Rapporteur on Migrants for his report on issues facing migrant labor in the context of the UN's 2030 Agenda, and agree on migrant labor rights should be a key focus in strategic and sustainable development goals. In this context, we would like to raise our concern that despite some ambitious economic reform plans adopted by states, like the Saudi 2030 agenda, we find that migrant workers may still remain vulnerable and subject to outdated, abusive and nationalistic labor practices.

The Saudi *kafala* work sponsorship system requires foreign workers to be legally bound and responsible to their employer sponsors. Employers regularly, illegally confiscate passports, withhold wages, and physically or sexually abuse workers. The Government of Saudi Arabia does little to protect the rights of migrant workers and fails to sufficiently investigate labor abuses.

One of the aims of the kingdom's economic reform plan, Vision 2030, is to create jobs for Saudis in a modernized economy, thereby lowering the citizen unemployment rate through progressive reforms. However, Saudi Arabia continues to face significant difficulty recruiting citizens for low-paying, labor-intensive industries, suggesting that these sectors will remain deeply reliant on migrant labor for some time to come.

Though Vision 2030 is meant to facilitate progressive economic reform, Saudi officials recently dismissed rumors that they would abolish the *kafala* system and have failed to ratify the International Labor Organization's Domestic Labor Convention. Given these sorts of 2030 agendas that derogate migrant labor reforms in favor of domestic-labor centric policies, how can civil society, labor organizations and international bodies best advocate in favor of mainstreaming migrant labor rights in these agendas?

Thank you.