

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 8, 2014

**The George Cedric Metcalf  
Charitable Foundation**  
38 Madison Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S1  
TEL 416 926 0366  
FAX 416 926 0370  
[www.metcalffoundation.com](http://www.metcalffoundation.com)

### MIGRANT WORKERS EXPLOITED BY ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT FEES

TORONTO – A new report from the Metcalf Foundation exposes how migrant workers are paying thousands of dollars in recruiting fees – equal to as much as two to three years’ wages in their home currency – to work in minimum wage jobs in Ontario.

Even though a 2009 Ontario law prohibits recruitment fees for live-in caregivers, 2/3 of them have paid fees since the law took effect. Nearly 1 in 5 arrives to find the job they were promised does not exist, yet they remain indebted to informal money lenders. Meanwhile migrant workers in other “lower skilled” jobs and in agriculture are completely unprotected by the law and are targeted by similar predatory practices.

***Profiting from the Precarious: How Recruitment Practices Exploit Migrant Workers*** explores the experiences of low-wage migrant workers in private recruitment. The report analyses how widespread abusive recruitment practices undermine workers’ rights long after they arrive in Ontario and demonstrates how Ontario’s complaint-based law fails to provide effective protection.

“The gap between the promise of the law and the reality of ongoing exploitation is vast,” said Fay Faraday the report’s author, a respected constitutional, labour, and human rights lawyer.

While individual workers typically pay fees of \$4,000 to \$10,000 – and in some cases even more – data from the Ministry of Labour acquired through a Freedom of Information request reveals that from 2010-2013 a total of only \$12,100 in illegal fees was recovered under Ontario’s *Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act*.

“A key weakness in Ontario’s approach is that the law places responsibility for policing compliance on the most vulnerable actor in the system,” said Faraday. “Proactive legislation, like that pioneered in Manitoba and enhanced in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, is more consistent with existing international guidelines, and in practice gives workers more meaningful protection.”

**Profiting from the Precarious** examines international and domestic best practice models based on mandatory recruiter licensing, mandatory security deposits, disclosure of a recruiter’s full supply chain in Canada and abroad, employer registration and robust

# METCALF FOUNDATION

proactive enforcement by the provincial employment standards branch. It examines changes that would improve protection for the most vulnerable of migrant workers.

Sandy Houston, President & CEO of the Metcalf Foundation, calls on the Ontario government to take another look at how to best protect the growing number of exploited migrant workers.

“We have seen the evidence that strong provincial legislation can change recruitment practices on the ground,” said Houston. “Ontario currently has two bills coming up that touch on recruitment fees, making this an ideal time to open up the discussion on this important subject.”

To download the report, visit: [www.metcalffoundation.com](http://www.metcalffoundation.com).

- 30 -

Contacts:

Adriana Beemans, Metcalf Foundation (647) 969-0297 [abeemans@metcalffoundation.com](mailto:abeemans@metcalffoundation.com)

Anne-Marie Flanagan, Flanagan & Associates (416) 735-3690 [amflan@sympatico.ca](mailto:amflan@sympatico.ca)

**The George Cedric Metcalf  
Charitable Foundation**  
38 Madison Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S1  
TEL 416 926 0366  
FAX 416 926 0370  
[www.metcalffoundation.com](http://www.metcalffoundation.com)