

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Khaga Nath Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Thailand and Permanent Representative of Nepal to UN-ESCAP, at the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
(Bangkok, 6 November 2017)**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure and honor to attend the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration held under the auspices of ESCAP.

As the New York Declaration has rightly put it, “international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses”.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has envisaged to reduce inequality within and among countries by striving to achieve sustainable development goals, including by facilitating “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”.

The Government of Nepal has mainstreamed SDGs in its 14th Development Plan, which started from July 2016 and it has aimed at paving the way to transform Nepal from a low-income to a middle-income country by 2030.

In 2016, remittances accounted 31.2 percent of Nepal’s GDP, which shows growing importance of international migration and its role in poverty eradication and socio-economic development process.

As Nepal is institutionalizing federal system of governance and concentrating on reconstruction efforts, job opportunities are also being created in the country.

Every year, about 450,000 Nepali enter into labour market seeking job opportunities. And, more than 400,000 youths are looking for foreign employment every year. Most of them are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Therefore, we have been emphasizing on the need for safe, regular and dignified foreign employment opportunities for them in the destination countries.

Accordingly, we have formulated a foreign employment policy that aims at promoting skills among potential migrant workers, concluding bilateral labour agreements with major destination countries, and extending consular support to the migrant workers facing difficult situation abroad.

Apart from the Government, the role of civil society, media and migrant returnees is important for promoting safe, orderly and regular migration for the growing number of Nepali migrant workers.

Therefore, government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Labour and Employment and Nepali embassies abroad are working in close partnership and coordination with relevant stakeholders including the recruiting agencies, trade union associations, returnees' association, migration experts and media, among others, with a view of ensuring social inclusion and safeguarding human and labour rights of the migrant workers.

Madam Chairperson,

International cooperation is important in facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration.

The situation of migrant women workers, low skilled and semi-skilled workers is more vulnerable than others, and so they deserve more attention for protection and welfare.

Without putting in place effective measures in countries of origin, transit and destination, we cannot address the problems of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

The global compact on migration should also promote developing operation manuals for employers, and providing training and skill development opportunities to workers.

Social security measures, including the provision of minimum salary, access to health and insurance facilities, low cost, faster and safer transfer of remittances, appropriate and swift issuance of identity cards as well as unhindered access to legal and consular assistance are required to migrant workers, more so to domestic migrant workers.

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished delegates,

Regional consultative process and regional inter-state organizations can be important platforms for the promotion of safe, regular and orderly migration.

Nepal, which now holds the Chair of the Colombo Process, is committed to working collectively with all CP Members, to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration. We have been promoting the theme of “Safe, Regular and Managed Migration: a win-win for all” in line with the SDGs, particularly the SDG target 10.7.

Similarly, within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the member countries have jointly agreed to collaborate and cooperate for the safe, orderly and responsible migration.

The origin and destination countries as well as the workers themselves should be winners in all stages of migration cycle.

The GCM framework should come with strong commitment in this regard and provide actionable commitments which can be implemented at the national, regional and international levels.

Thank you.