

**Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact
for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
6 – 8 November 2017**

SRI LANKA COUNTRY STATEMENT

Hon Chairperson
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

At the outset Chairperson, let me congratulate you on your election. With your guidance, undoubtedly, our deliberations will be conducted to a fruitful conclusion. I would also like to extend the appreciation of the Sri Lanka delegation to the ESCAP Secretariat for the meticulous organization of this preparatory meeting to bring together the views of the region in view of the upcoming meeting on the Global Compact on migration. My thanks also go to the host government of Thailand for the kind hospitality.

Chairperson,

The National Labour Migration Policy of Sri Lanka, developed in 2008, is the main policy document that governs labour migration in the country. Based on the ILO Multi-lateral Framework on Labour Migration, this Policy has been developed with the aim of recognizing the significant contribution of Sri Lankan migrant workers, with the goal of developing a long-term vision for the contribution of labour migration to the economy. Subsequently, under the direction of the above mentioned main policy, a sub policy on "Return and re-integration of Migrant Workers" has also been developed and implemented.

The National Labour Migration Policy is monitored through its National Advisory Committee and Programme Advisory Committee consists of representatives of key stakeholders of the sector to ensure institutional and policy coherence which are the key factors for successful implementation.

Chairperson,

In addition to the main policies, there are several sectoral policies related to different aspects of labour migration that aim to improve safe and orderly migration in the country.

Since the National Labour Migration Policy of Sri Lanka was developed in 2008, the government has already taken steps to review the existing policy to reflect the present context and needs of migrant workers and family members. Many changes have occurred in Sri Lanka's society, economy and legal framework, as well as in destination countries though the regional and global developments. International cooperation on labour migration is moving at a pace, and Sri Lanka is seeking to keep abreast. Hence, interventions for policy review are expected to substantiate these national, regional and global policy dialogues and migration related SDGs. In this regard, policy review is being done through broad consultations with key stakeholders in the migration sector.

Apart from the national policies, the government of Sri Lanka is currently implementing the 3rd phase of the Safe labour migration programme supported by Switzerland. This contributes to safe and orderly labour migration, better protection of migrant workers and increase contribution of migrants to development.

Further, the inter-governmental regional consultative processes such as the Colombo Process and Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), which aim to enable safe, orderly and regular labour migration, have been assisting in developing partnerships for adopting best practices learning from experiences of member countries. ADD has initiated programs to ensure protection of migrant worker, empower workers to fulfill their goals and aspirations and afford workers the opportunity to benefit equitably from the outcome of temporary labour migration.

Chairperson,

In the context of these regional initiatives, 4 programs have already been formulated.

Firstly, an alternate model for labour recruitment.

This is a web based pilot project on recruitment, through which it is hoped to provide better protection to migrant workers, end fraudulent practices, and reduce the role of recruitment intermediaries. This assists in also reducing migration costs. A pilot project has been launched with the UAE and Philippines.

The second programme is joint certification and recognition of skills. ADD countries have agreed to facilitate certification, upscaling and mutual recognition of skills. This is being facilitated through mutually agreed bilateral and multilateral agreements.

The other is the comprehensive information and orientation programs. ADD cooperation is to ensure that labour migrants have well founded awareness of their rights and responsibilities and are prepared emotionally and psychologically for the changes. Pre-employment training provides information to potential migrants. ADD has initiated mapping of national Pre Departure Orientation (PDO) training and prepared regional guides for such training.

Specific country pairing detailed modules have also been prepared for each migration corridor. In this context, UAE and Sri Lanka have been paired in hospitality.

The final programme is on the aspect of technology in the governance of labour mobility.

As we are all aware, technology helps create effective solutions to current challenges, increase transparency in the recruitment process and lower recruitment costs

Chairperson,

Sri Lanka is actively involved with projects and programmes initiated by these regional consultative processes, particularly on skills development of migrant workers and Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme in collaboration with the UAE.

Working to address the issues and current challenges through joint programmes with destination countries, Sri Lanka aims to achieve positive

outcomes for migrant workers while fostering labour migration that is beneficial to both sending and receiving countries.

To conclude, Sri Lanka supports the process towards adopting the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The delegation looks forward to contributing constructively to the discussions during this meeting, under the auspices of ESCAP, to provide comprehensive input from this region to guide the negotiations in December.

Thank you!