Talking Points for Ms. Sarah Lou Y. Arriola
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Chair of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and regular Migration

Bangkok, 10-12 March 2021, 77th ESCAP Commission Session

Agenda item 4d. Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission – Committee on Social Development

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Review of the GCM, held from 10 to 12 March 2021, I have the honour to highlight key messages and recommendations of the meeting, as contained in document ESCAP/77/27.

At the meeting, countries in Asia and the Pacific reiterated their commitment toward the implementation of the GCM and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants recognized the significant scale, complexity and impact of migration in the region and beyond. They highlighted migrants’ major contributions to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Asia and the Pacific has made much progress in advancing GCM implementation. For example, countries have developed and implemented national migration policies and action plans; improved transparency, certainty and simplification of migration procedures; and conducted skills training of migrant workers. Some countries have successfully advanced GCM implementation by a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach.

However, much remains to be done.

Distinguished delegates,

First, in some countries of the region, safe and regular pathways for migration are still missing, and migrant workers in the informal sector, including domestic workers, face many challenges. Decent work, fair and ethical recruitment and greater skills development as well as recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies should be prioritized.

Second, implementing migration policies requires international cooperation and compliance with international law. The rights of migrants and their families, regardless of status, have to be protected, civil and birth registrations have to be facilitated and alternatives to detention implemented.

Third, migrants should have equal access to basic services, and migration policies should be gender-responsive and child-sensitive. Migration costs should be reduced further, and pre-departure, post-arrival and reintegration training could contribute to greater inclusion of migrants and social cohesion.
Fourth, accurate, timely and disaggregated data and information on migration was important to strengthen evidence-based policymaking, public debate and cooperation. National capacity on migration data should be built, in particular by aligning the SDGs and GCM objectives.

Lastly, COVID-19 has severely affected migrants and their families. Migrants, however, are part of recovery and building back better efforts, and nobody is safe until everyone is safe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the context of this year’s Commission theme, the call by member States, stakeholders and international organizations at the Regional Review to step up international and regional coordination and cooperation on international migration is especially relevant. Partnerships between Governments at national and local levels, United Nations organizations, including the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific, and stakeholders will support the protection of migrants and their integration and contribution to development now and in the future.

The meeting report, including the Chair’s summary as well as the pre-session documents will be submitted to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022. I look forward to working with member States, ESCAP and the Regional United Nations Network on Migration in ensuring that the outcome of the meeting is featured at the IMRF.

Please allow me to thank you for the trust bestowed upon me to serve as Chair of the GCM Asia-Pacific Review and to submit its report for your consideration today.

Thank you.