

Country Statement – Item 2: Review of migration policies and programmes and their impact on facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration and on supporting all dimension of sustainable development. – NEW ZEALAND

Chair, fellow delegates,

The global migration environment is rapidly evolving and providing new and complex challenges. We have moved past discussions focusing on state security into ones that address human rights and sustainable development for all.

New Zealand believes that human rights are inalienable and that all regular migrants, irrespective of their immigration status, should have a sense of belonging and the ability to participate, and feel included, recognised and legitimate.

New Zealand is therefore supportive of a rights-based approach to migration and migration policies. We agree that a Global Compact for Migration (GCM) should develop a state-led global approach to upholding the human rights and wellbeing of migrants and their families which promotes inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in societies of origin, transit and destination.

Within this context, the GCM should also consider the unique drivers and effects of migration on small island developing states, of which there are many within our region. In particular, the GCM should also recognise that SIDS may have different capacities to implement the final Compact and reflect this in its consideration of any measures such as information or reporting requirements.

Migrants make positive contributions, particularly when they are included in the economy and life of their host community. New Zealand's approach to effectively settle and integrate migrants is contained in the Government's Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy. The objective is that migrants are able to make New Zealand their home, participate fully, and contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life. The Strategy recognises that migrants need to be supported to realise their full potential economic and social contributions, including through measures supporting employment, education and training, inclusion, and health and wellbeing.

The GCM should emphasise the benefits of migration for both states and migrants through comprehensive, planned and well-managed migration policies. New Zealand has successful

experiences with orderly labour mobility programmes, such as our circular migration Recognised Seasonal Employers (RSE) scheme. The RSE scheme is seen as a 'triple-win', benefiting our economy by providing workers when there are no New Zealanders available, Pacific Island nation's economies by providing employment and remittances for development, and individual workers and their families through the work experience, skills development and income gained for their prosperity and growth.

The continued high cost of remittances however, is an ongoing area of concern, and we reiterate our commitment to the G20 and SDG commitment (10.c) of reducing remittance costs to less than 3-5 per cent. Cooperation between developed and developing countries on lowering the costs of remittances is essential to make migration for labour profitable for both workers and employers. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has successfully piloted a voucher-based remittance system to facilitate remittances between New Zealand and Tonga. New Zealand and Australia are now working with IFC to identify ways of replicating this system more widely as a remittance solution.

Target 8.8 of the SDGs highlights the need to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers. The New Zealand Government takes very seriously the protection of migrant workers, who are afforded the same employment rights and protections as all other workers in New Zealand. It is committed to protecting these rights through the effective enforcement of employment protection, and our employment and immigration laws contain strong enforcement provisions, including large fines and jail terms for employers who exploit migrant workers and the ability to ban employers who fail to meet their legal obligations from employing migrant labour.

Not all migration experiences are positive, and New Zealand recognises this. The GC-Migration should encourage all states to combat the negative aspects of migration, such as human trafficking and people smuggling. Combating human trafficking requires both policy and operational coherence and a joined-up approach within and between Governments. New Zealand maintains an Inter-Agency Working Group on human trafficking, to carry out training and awareness raising exercises; develop policies to deliver support to victims; and empower victims to take part in the criminal justice process against their traffickers.

As international migration trends affect all countries' immigration systems, it is important that the global community responds and works together to achieve the desired result. New Zealand sees significant value in countries cooperating on migration issues, particularly to keep people, communities and regions safe from transnational crime. New Zealand actively supports international coordinated action on migration and migration-related issues, by contributing to groups such as the voluntary and non-binding regional Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime which has proven to be an effective forum for policy dialogue, information-sharing and practical cooperation.

This forum, and the wider GC-Migration process, is confronting a historic challenge that is not just about anonymous flows of people, but which concerns the real lives and hopes of individual human beings and their partners and families. Migration may result from chaos and upheaval but, properly managed, can and should be a source of enrichment to us all. That is the challenge before us. Thank you.

