

Statement of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines on Agenda no.3 (c) Trafficking etc.

Delivered by Commissioner Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana, Commissioner, Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, Nov. 7, 2017, UN, Bangkok

With regard to the Global Compact for Migration,

The CHR of the Philippines commends the active participation of governments, civil society organizations and NHRIs throughout the process of the GCM in 2017 and we acknowledge each and every one's meaningful contributions. We encourage the same to continue to forward a human-rights based, inclusive framework throughout the development and adoption of the Global Compact in 2018.

Trafficking in persons is not only a crime but is a violation of human rights and is an offense to the dignity and integrity of the human being. A human rights based approach to countering trafficking in persons must therefore address not only the prosecution of perpetrators engaging in trafficking but also the needs of the victims.

The causes for trafficking are complex and interlinked, the answers therefore must address both the obligations of states and the responsibilities of the private actors. Power imbalances resulting from lack of legal status, lack of information and lack of resources make migrants vulnerable to smugglers and traffickers. Ensuring equal protection for all migrants irrespective of their status is therefore essential.

Hence, we strongly urge State Parties to ensure full independence and adequate resourcing of NHRIs in recognition and support of their mandate and their valuable contribution for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrants and their families. The GCM should take into account the role that NHRIs play with regard to monitoring the implementation of international human rights instruments at the national level and should therefore include NHRIs in the Global Compact as an accountability mechanism.

In conclusion,

Migration and human rights will continue to be a priority issue of States until there are sufficient and sustainable safeguards in place for its protection. As NHRIs we shall do our part in protecting and promoting the rights of migrants as well as helping States in the implementation of their obligations by strictly monitoring the state's compliance to international human rights and labor rights instruments.

We reaffirm our commitment to work as independent bodies that serve as watchdogs against human rights abuses in accordance with our mandates under the Paris Principles. Further, we emphasize the need for strengthened partnerships and constant dialogue and consultations with governments, civil society organizations and migrants' groups to ensure that efforts will be inclusive and responsive to migrants, their families and the human rights of all.

Thank you.