

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT
Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
10 March 2021, Bangkok, Thailand

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Thank you, Mr. Vice President. A pleasant morning to all delegates attending this Regional Review of the Global Compact on Migration.

The Philippines, as a staunch advocate of the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare of migrants, appreciates this opportunity to share its experiences and positive impacts of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in December of 2018. We thank the UN Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific and the Regional UN Migration Network for organizing this meeting to review the implementation of the GCM.

The Philippines is one of the countries that was actively engaged in the consultation and negotiations leading to the adoption of the GCM. Being a migrant-sending country with over 10 million overseas Filipinos, the Philippines has developed a migration governance framework and established institutions to serve Filipino migrants and their communities abroad. Our four-decades worth of lessons learned from actual practice and experience on migration served us well in the negotiation and implementation of the GCM. Our demonstrated commitment enabled the Philippines to serve as one of the GCM Champion countries from the Asia-Pacific region.

We argued during the negotiations that the objectives of the Global Compact are practical and doable, and so we do our part as a Member State to make this important document a reality after its adoption.

Allow me to share with you some milestones on the implementation of the GCM in the Philippines:

First, this year, a new Chapter on international migration and development was added in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. This new Chapter is primarily based on the GCM, crafted through an inclusive process in a whole-of-government / and whole of society approach, and aims to ensure safety and protection of both Filipino migrants overseas and foreign nationals in the Philippines as they contribute

to sustainable development. This new Chapter in our national development plan is a key part of our National Implementation Plan of the GCM.

Second, the Philippine government partnered with the IOM Philippines and other UN agencies in the launching of the BRIDGE program in December 2020. BRIDGE aims to connect recruitment and return and reintegration in the Philippines, thus implementing GCM Objective 6 on ethical recruitment and Objective 21 on return and reintegration.

The BRIDGE program was one of the recipients from the Multi-Purpose Trust Fund, the start-up funding mechanism of the UN Migration Network to support countries in its implementation of the Global Compact. It was selected from among 76 proposals from 56 countries and regarded as one of the best proposals for the implementation of the GCM.

Third, the Philippines fully supports the UN Migration Network Multi-Purpose Trust Fund. The Philippines sits as a member of the Steering Group of the Fund. Despite its limited resources, the Philippines will contribute this year a modest amount to the Fund.

Fourth, using the GCM Objective 23 as platform for cooperation and partnership, the Philippines collaborated with the Kingdom of Bahrain in the successful prosecution in Bahrain of a case of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. What makes this case unique is the fact that the complainants, which we call trafficking victims, were already repatriated to the Philippines when the case was filed in the Bahraini court and was done without a mutual legal assistance treaty between the Philippines and Bahrain.

And fifth, during the pandemic, the Philippines has embarked on a massive repatriation of distressed migrant Filipinos. To date, the Philippine government / has facilitated the repatriation of 920,076 Filipinos, comprising of 437,268 land-based workers, 308,917 sea-based workers, and 170,978 non-migrant workers. The Department of Foreign Affairs alone has repatriated 381,663 Filipino migrants back to the Philippines. For those who could not be repatriated, financial assistance was provided to them.

Excellencies, the Philippines values GCM as a primary framework in addressing gaps on its migration governance. The GCM also reinforces the Philippines' blueprint in improving the welfare of migrants in all stages of migration. The GCM has been very useful during this COVID-19 pandemic when international cooperation proved to be very important in ensuring humane and decent treatment of migrants.

Excellencies, our collective commitment to implement the GCM principles and objectives is a reminder for all of us to be inclusive in responding to the pandemic, to

leave no migrant behind especially in the COVID-19 vaccination plans. As the UN Secretary-General said: No one is safe until everyone is safe.

In closing, the Philippines strongly encourages all ESCAP Member States and stakeholders to continue taking steps towards the progressive realization of the GCM objectives, keeping in mind that our respective GCM national, and later global action plans, should always be for the benefit of migrants and should contribute to sustainable development.

I take this opportunity to invite all of you to a Side Event on Labor Mobility which will be held tomorrow from 1230H to 1330H which the Philippines organized with IOM Regional Office for Asia Pacific and Middle East and Africa.

Thank you.