

Draft Remarks by
His Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation
of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Wednesday, 10 March 2021, 09.00-09.50 hours, ESCAP Hall
United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC)
(5 Minutes)

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and greetings to all participants joining this meeting in person and online from all over the Asia-Pacific region.

As Host Country of ESCAP, it is my honour and pleasure to welcome you to this Regional Review of the GCM. I would also like to express my appreciation to ESCAP and the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific, who have undoubtedly worked long hours to prepare for this event.

Excellencies,

The adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in late 2018 was a **historic moment**. It distilled all of our perspectives and efforts on migration over many years into one common global aspiration – safe, orderly and regular migration founded on critical, common underpinnings.

We went from seeing migration as sporadic, location-specific events to a natural global phenomena and the reality of our time. We went from viewing migrants as a burden to seeing them as essential contributors to our economies and **partners to sustainable development**.

We went from having limited tools and solutions confined largely to the national arena, to having a comprehensive framework for international cooperation and systematic management of migration. We have come a long way.

And now, the 23 objectives and 10 guiding principles of the GCM have become a common guide for countries in the determination of their migration policies.

Excellencies,

Progress has been made. But then there was COVID. Border shutdowns were the only tools in our toolkit to stem the spread of the virus. Cross border movement was halted, and that was when the challenges for migrants began in earnest. In fact, this pandemic has increased their vulnerabilities, especially the obstacles to access healthcare and social security. Worse still, misinformation and insensitive messaging in some cases have cast migrants as a threat to public health and security.

This must be rectified. As we learned from the pandemic, “no one is safe until everyone is safe”; therefore, a migrant-inclusive approach is key to finding a sustainable solution. The health of migrants must be part of public health strategies in all countries. Factors rendering migrants especially vulnerable must be addressed. Their contribution must be valued and their human rights respected. Not only will this help in the current pandemic, but it will also help countries to build back better.

Ending the pandemic and recovering from it will also require a **renewed focus** on the Global Compact. No State can overcome this global health crisis alone and no matter how overwhelmed we are by the impacts of COVID-19, we can and must continue to advance. We must use the Global Compact to its full potential in overcoming these challenges.

Excellencies,

Advancements in the implementation of the GCM will also bring us steps closer to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, support for countries to implement the GCM, together with the various accompanying initiatives, is critical to translating words into concrete actions. So I encourage countries in position to do so to consider contributing to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

To conclude, I hope this meeting will be a platform where we can candidly share our experiences and best practices, and also gaps and challenges in GCM implementation. I hope we can take stock of the achievements thus far and contribute meaningfully to the International Migration Review Forum scheduled to take place next year. I wish you all fruitful discussions and a successful meeting.

I thank you.
