

# Asia Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration 2021

Joint Stakeholder Statement on Supporting the integration of migrants and their contribution to development (addressing GCM objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22)

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This statement is informed by regional stakeholder consultations hosted by ESCAP on 16th December 2020 and 2nd and 4th March 2021. Further information from stakeholders is therefore available in the related summary report.
2. GCM objectives 14,15,16,19,20 and 22 promote the empowerment and inclusion of all migrants with an emphasis on access to basic services and harnessing the development opportunities that arise through well managed migration. Our experience, however, is that many migrants continue to live on the margins of society and are excluded based on their migration status. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified structural obstacles for full protection, inclusion and participation of migrants. Specific and intersectional solutions are needed, especially for the most vulnerable groups, including women, children, sexually diverse, trafficked and irregular migrants.

## MIGRANT CONTRIBUTION (16,19)

3. Migrants make significant contributions financially and socially to destination countries yet the dominant narrative around migration in our region continues to focus on border protection and security risks associated with migration. Whilst these are important issues, a focus on these alone serves to undermine the positive economic, cultural, political and social development outcomes from migration and significantly contributes to racism and discrimination in destination countries. **We recommend that States and associated authorities develop a more data-driven and inclusive narrative that encourages greater recognition of the positive contributions made by migrants.**

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION (15,16,22)

4. The specific needs of women, children and sexually diverse migrants must be taken into consideration. Slavery and exploitation are still a major risk in our region and the lack of safety nets and legal assistance compound this risk along with policies based on exclusion. **It is recommended that States and stakeholders work closely together to**

**create greater protections for migrants with specific vulnerabilities and to eliminate oppressive and exploitative treatment of migrants.**

5. Curtailment of the right to organise or exercise freedom of association and collective bargaining for migrants remains in many countries in our region and includes the prohibition of migrants from joining or forming unions of their own choosing. **It is recommended that States adopt and implement legal frameworks that ensure compliance with ILO Core Conventions for migrant workers and their families.**

## CONSULAR ASSISTANCE (14)

6. COVID has accentuated the critical role of consular assistance and the need for greater reach and optimized accessibility to timely and accurate information including better use of social media. **Consular assistance and protection of migrants needs to ensure the competency of staff and strengthen cooperation and communication within and across borders.**

## EDUCATION (16,18)

7. Formal education of migrants has a positive impact on both sending and receiving economies. Language, vocational and children's education promote social cohesion, self agency and vocational outcomes. **It is recommended that States frame education for migrants within a development and workforce capability lens and recognise the benefits for sustainable migration.**

## CONCLUSION (15)

8. In summary, effective integration and social cohesion are important to ensuring well functioning societies that are free from violence, extremism, exploitation and conflict. **States must therefore prioritise initiatives that promote inclusion and unity through a positive peace building framework which includes access to basic services and legal protections for all members of society and without limitations on nationality and legal status.**