

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

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

Bangkok, 10–12 March 2021

**Report of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration****I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

1. The following decision adopted by the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):

**Decision**

The meeting decides to submit its report, including the Chair's summary, as well as pre-session documents ESCAP/GCM/2021/1, ESCAP/GCM/2021/2, ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.1 and ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.2 to the International Migration Review Forum, scheduled to be held in 2022, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 73/195 and 73/326.

**II. Organization****A. Opening, duration and organization of the meeting**

2. The meeting was jointly organized by ESCAP and the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific<sup>1</sup> and held in Bangkok and online from 10 to 12 March 2021. The meeting was opened by the

<sup>1</sup> The following United Nations entities are members of the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific: ESCAP; International Labour Organization (ILO); International Organization for Migration (IOM); Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); World Food Programme; and World Bank.

Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration and Director General of IOM delivered a video message. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Thailand; and Ms. Shiella Estrada, Chairperson, Progressive Labour Union of Domestic Workers of the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, made statements.

## **B. Attendance**

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkey; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

4. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers to ESCAP attended: Austria and Switzerland. In addition, representatives of Sweden attended as observers.

5. Representatives of the following offices of the Secretariat attended: Development Coordination Office; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; OHCHR; Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; and UNODC.

6. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and other United Nations entities and related organizations attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ILO; IOM; secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; UNDP; UNESCO; UNFPA; UN-Habitat; UNHCR; UNICEF; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and UN-Women.

7. Representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development attended.

8. Representatives of the following other entities attended: Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; and Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

9. The list of stakeholders who registered for the meeting is available online at [www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly](http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly).

## **C. Election of Officers**

10. The meeting elected the following officers:

Chair:	Ms. Sarah Lou Y. Arriola (Philippines)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Mohammed Abdul Hye (Bangladesh)
	Mr. Dicky Komar (Indonesia)
	Mr. Nadhavathna Krishnamra (Thailand)

## D. Agenda

11. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
  1. Opening of the meeting:
    - (a) Opening statements;
    - (b) Election of officers;
    - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
  2. Review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic.
  3. Thematic discussions on progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact at all levels, with due respect to the cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles of the Global Compact:
    - (a) Ensuring that migration is voluntary, regular, safe and orderly (addressing objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18);
    - (b) Protecting migrants through rights-based border governance and border management measures (addressing objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21);
    - (c) Supporting migrants' protection, integration and contribution to development (addressing objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22);
    - (d) Strengthening evidence-based policymaking, public debate and cooperation for safe, orderly and regular migration (addressing objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23).
  4. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the meeting.

## E. Other events

12. The following side events were held in conjunction with the meeting:
  - (a) 10 March 2021, side event: "A migrant's journey: a human perspective and humanitarian implications", organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross;
  - (b) 11 March 2021, side event: "Labour mobility and human rights: examining migrant labour governance in the Middle East in the context of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration", co-organized by the Government of the Philippines with the IOM Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific and for the Middle East and North Africa;
  - (c) 11 March 2021, side event: "On the move and out of school: migrant children's struggles to access education in Asia", organized by Save the Children, the Burmese Migrant Teachers' Association, the Child Rights Coalition Asia, the Help Without Frontiers Thailand Foundation and TeacherFOCUS;
  - (d) 12 March 2021, side event: "Making migrants' vulnerability history: highlighting and addressing living and working vulnerabilities of migrant workers", organized by the Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants;

(e) 12 March 2021, side event: “Implementing alternatives to detention: lessons learned from the global pandemic”, organized by the Government of Thailand, Boniği Monitoring, the International Detention Coalition and the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth;

(f) 12 March 2021, side event: “Migrants, wages and the pandemic: where are we now on the issue of wage theft?”, organized by the Migrant Forum in Asia, the Council of Global Unions/Building and Wood Workers’ International, the Parliamentarians’ Caucus on Migration and Development in Bangladesh and the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines;

(g) 12 March 2021, side event: “Regular pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations in Asia and the Pacific”, organized by OHCHR, the United Nations Network on Migration working group on regular pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations and the Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network;

(h) 12 March 2021, side event: “Realizing the rights of children in the context of migration in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region”, organized by the Government of Thailand through the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security with support from ASEAN member States, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes Germany, IOM and UNHCR.

### **III. Chair’s summary**

13. The deliberations during the hybrid meeting will be summarized in a Chair’s summary, which will be available within a week following the conclusion of the meeting and included as annex II to the present report.

## Annex I

### List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/GCM/2021/1	Review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic	2 and 3
ESCAP/GCM/2021/2	International migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration	2 and 3
ESCAP/GCM/2021/3	Report of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration	
<i>Conference room papers</i>		
ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.1	Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: a synthesis of voluntary Global Compact reviews in Asia and the Pacific	2 and 3
ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.2	Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: summary of stakeholder consultations for Asia and the Pacific	2 and 3
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/GCM/2021/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/GCM/2021/L.2	Draft report	4
<i>Information available online</i>		
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8/files/event-documents/Guide%20to%20Participation_Hybrid%20Meeting_rev.pdf">www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8/files/event-documents/Guide%20to%20Participation_Hybrid%20Meeting_rev.pdf</a>	Guide to participation	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly">www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly</a>	List of participants	
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly">www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly</a>	Programme	

## Annex II

### **Chair's summary of proceedings of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was held as a three-day hybrid meeting, for six hours per day on 10 and 11 March 2021 and for two hours on 12 March 2021. Bangkok-based representatives of members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and a small group of stakeholders were provided with the option of attending in person.

2. The Chair's summary covers the discussions and the proceedings of the meeting.

#### **II. Review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic**

(Agenda item 2)

3. The meeting had before it the notes by the secretariat on the review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic (ESCAP/GCM/2021/1) and on international migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (ESCAP/GCM/2021/2), as well as the conference room papers entitled "Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: a synthesis of voluntary Global Compact reviews in Asia and the Pacific" (ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.1) and "Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: summary of stakeholder consultations for Asia and the Pacific" (ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.2).

4. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission made statements: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Nepal; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkey; Turkmenistan; United States of America; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

5. The meeting welcomed the first Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, noting its timeliness and relevance to regional dialogue and cooperation on international migration, while addressing potential challenges to its implementation, including the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several member States particularly thanked the secretariat, the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific and the Government of Thailand, as the host country, for organizing the meeting.

6. The meeting recognized the significant scale of migration and the major contributions of migrants and their families to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination in Asia and the Pacific. In particular,

remittances were a major source of income, contributing to poverty reduction and improving livelihoods.

7. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the vulnerabilities of migrants and exposed them to an increased risk of infection, the lack of or inadequate access to public health services and opportunities for decent work, and inadequate protection and support services, as well as discrimination, stigmatization and xenophobia. Increased border restrictions had limited the mobility of many migrants. One representative noted that migrant women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other migrants in vulnerable situations were among the most marginalized and faced significant risks of human rights violations, abuse and exploitation. Migrants' families, especially those relying on remittances, had also been adversely affected.

8. In such challenging times, representatives highlighted the need to provide adequate support to migrants through social protection and other measures of social inclusion and engagement in society. Such efforts were essential to uphold migrants' rights, foster economic recovery and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. Representatives reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the Global Compact. Many member States reported that they had developed national plans to advance the implementation of the Global Compact. Some representatives noted the high value and nature and interdependence of the Global Compact principles, which also included respect for State sovereignty, the promotion of non-discrimination and respect for and protection and fulfilment of the human rights, including labour rights, of all migrants as important cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles.

10. The Global Compact served as a comprehensive and holistic framework for international cooperation and coordination on migration and could guide Governments in addressing migration issues, improving international migration governance, and promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. Some representatives indicated that the objectives and cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles of the Global Compact were mainstreamed and embedded in their national laws, regulations and policies on international migration.

11. Several representatives reported positive developments in the implementation of the Global Compact. Those included, but were not limited to, the development, adoption and implementation of national migration policies and action plans; the establishment of national coordination mechanisms and inter-agency working groups on migration; improved transparency, certainty and simplification of migration procedures; improved access to and governance of safe, orderly and regular migration pathways; amendments to laws and regulations on international migration in accordance with international laws and humanitarian principles; reduced costs related to migration processes and remittance transfers; skills training and professional development for migrant workers; support of United Nations entities in advancing the implementation of the Global Compact on the ground; establishment of country-level United Nations Networks on Migration and the operationalization of the Start-Up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and increased bilateral and multilateral agreements related to migration.

12. The meeting was also informed of some good practices by members and associate members in extending support to migrants and their families in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those included, but were not limited to,

supporting the voluntary repatriation of distressed citizens from abroad; the extension of stay and work permits; non-discriminatory coverage of migrants in public health services, health insurance and social protection schemes; the establishment of COVID-19-related hotlines for migrants; and increased consular assistance and protection.

13. Several representatives called attention to the challenges encountered in implementing the Global Compact, such as lack of resources and capacity-building for officials and service providers on the ground and lack of comprehensive, disaggregated data on migration and migration-related indicators. Some representatives requested the United Nations Network on Migration and other partners to provide technical assistance to support the implementation of the Global Compact on the ground, including by improving the collection and dissemination of relevant migration data for evidence-based policymaking. They also recognized the relevance and timeliness of the *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration* and expressed hope about implementing the recommendations in the report.

14. Some representatives underlined that the COVID-19 pandemic had hindered the implementation of the Global Compact, while noting that it also served as a timely call for countries in Asia and the Pacific to accelerate the implementation of the Global Compact.

15. Some representatives noted the particular vulnerabilities of women migrants and children, including those working in the informal sector, in accordance with Global Compact's cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles of gender-responsiveness and child-sensitivity. One country representative pointed out that an inclusive approach to the implementation of the Global Compact would ensure that migrants in vulnerable situations had equal access to services and protection of their rights and dignity regardless of their status.

16. Many representatives highlighted the relevance of subregional, regional and international cooperation and partnerships on international migration, recognizing that international migration was complex, multi-dimensional and transnational in nature and that migration governance was a responsibility shared by all countries. Some member States also asked for more knowledge-sharing, exchange of best practices and peer learning among countries in the region. Several representatives reiterated their commitment to expanding multilateral and bilateral cooperation on international migration across countries within and outside the region, as well as partnerships with all stakeholders, including the international community, the private sector and civil society, and following a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach for implementing the Global Compact.

17. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations, offices of the Secretariat, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes and related organizations as well as other entities made statements: Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; International Organization for Migration (IOM); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; and



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

18. The representatives of international organizations welcomed the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact, recognizing that it would provide an important input to global processes, including the International Migration Review Forum in 2022 and the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2021.

19. The representatives noted the progress and efforts made by Governments in the region in implementing the Global Compact, including better emergency preparedness plans, relief measures and the provision of social support and services extended to migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some representatives noted efforts to include migrants in priority vaccine rollouts.

20. Despite progress, the representatives highlighted that migrants continued to face an array of challenges that constrained them from receiving equal treatment and protection and that their rights and dignity continued to be at risk. In particular, many women migrants had to cope with exploitative and abusive working conditions and sexual and gender-based violence, while the future of migrant children and children of migrant parents had been compromised due to their lack of access to education, health services and child protection, which had been further exacerbated during the pandemic.

21. To address those challenges, the representatives of international organizations called upon Governments in Asia and the Pacific to ensure that the rights of all migrants were respected, irrespective of their migration status, age, gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity. A number of representatives called for an end to immigration detention, particularly for children, for the protection of migrants from death and disappearance, and for ending the prosecution of victims of human trafficking through the criminal justice system. The representatives invited Governments to invest in data collection on migration for evidence-based discourse and policymaking. They called upon Governments to step up the implementation of the Global Compact and reaffirmed their commitment and readiness to support and collaborate with Governments and other stakeholders in realizing the objectives of the Global Compact.

22. Representatives of the following stakeholder groups made joint statements: Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants; Boniği Monitoring; HOST International; Institute of Informatics and Development/Civil Society for Global Commitments on Migration; and United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth.

23. The stakeholder representatives noted that the rights and positive contributions of migrants were often undermined in many countries by, for example, measures curtailing the right to organize, exercise freedom of association and collective bargaining, or join or form unions, as well as the criminalization of migrants in irregular situations.

24. The stakeholder representatives also made several recommendations and called upon Governments in the region to implement a range of actions to protect and support migrants and their families, including ensuring migrants' access to basic services, legal identity, legal services and information in multiple languages; expanding safe, orderly and regular migration pathways; ending child immigration detention and limiting other immigration detention to a measure of last resort; protecting migrants against exploitation and

discrimination in all forms; ensuring compliance of labour frameworks with international standards; collecting accurate, disaggregated data as a basis for policymaking; and strengthening international and cross-border collaboration and capacity-building.

25. The stakeholder representatives emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic had amplified inequalities faced by migrants, many of whom were left without proper protection or support in countries of transit and destination.

### **III. Thematic discussions on progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact at all levels, with due respect to the cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles of the Global Compact**

(Agenda item 3)

26. The meeting had before it the notes by the secretariat on the review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic (ESCAP/GCM/2021/1) and on international migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (ESCAP/GCM/2021/2), as well as the conference room papers entitled “Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: a synthesis of voluntary Global Compact reviews in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.1) and “Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: summary of stakeholder consultations for Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP/GCM/2021/CRP.2).

27. Thematic round-table discussions on the key issues under sub-items (a)–(d) of agenda item 3 were held in the form of panel discussions covering groups of objectives of the Global Compact with interactive discussions among panellists and representatives from the floor.

#### **Ensuring that migration is voluntary, regular, safe and orderly (addressing objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18)**

(Agenda item 3 (a))

28. The meeting benefited from a panel discussion on the topic. The panel was moderated by Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization (ILO). The panel comprised Ms. Pataraporn Samantarath, Assistant Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Thailand; Ms. Pui Yu (Fish) Ip, Regional Coordinator for Asia, International Domestic Workers Federation, Hong Kong, China; Ms. Swati Mujumdar, Pro-Chancellor, Symbiosis Skills and Professional University, Pune, India, and Pro-Chancellor, Symbiosis University of Applied Sciences, Indore, India; and Ms. Irene Xavier, Consultant and Co-Founder, Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor – Friends of Women. A discussion with member States and other participants followed.

29. The panel noted that most migration in the region was due to a combination of political, economic, social and environmental factors and included many people in search of decent work and those migrating on humanitarian grounds or due to the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

30. The COVID-19 pandemic had increased vulnerabilities of migrants across the region, especially those already in precarious situations, who, among other challenges, had limited access to services, including COVID-19 testing, and were subject to discrimination, including xenophobia and related intolerance.

31. Migrant leaders also played an important role as organizers for domestic migrant workers, and they also provided support and influenced policy debates around domestic migrant worker issues. Changes in the use of specific terms to describe domestic workers, for example, were identified as contributing to positive mindsets and shifts in behaviour. Governments in the region had taken the lead in several cases, for example by replacing the term “servants” with “domestic workers”.

32. Despite progress, many challenges remained with regard to the legal status of domestic migrant workers. Greater inclusion of domestic migrant workers in labour rights, more effective use of local legislation and greater recognition of domestic migrant workers as workers was needed. That was exemplified by the lack of laws and policies in place to protect migrant domestic workers in certain countries. Recruitment processes were often not formalized, leaving migrant workers at risk of exploitation and abuse.

33. Courts were increasingly taking a more progressive stance in settling disputes involving migrant domestic workers. Moreover, regular days off for domestic migrant workers had been established by laws in some countries, and migrant workers had been allowed to self-organize, giving them a voice in society.

34. Partnerships and international cooperation, including bilateral and multilateral partnerships to protect workers, were an important aspect of moving forward, while leaving no one behind.

35. The issue of skills development and recognition was further highlighted, in particular the need to make the skills of workers more comparable in order to enable vertical and lateral mobility of migrant workers. Examples from India were shared, including skills development initiatives with a view to industry demands, collaboration between universities and local governments to identify skill gaps and better alignment between the demand and supply side in the labour markets.

36. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Indonesia; Japan; Philippines; Turkmenistan; and Viet Nam.

37. The representative of the following stakeholder group made a statement: South Asian Regional Trade Union Council.

38. Several representatives affirmed their support for the Global Compact and noted actions to support its implementation, including the ratification of United Nations and ILO conventions related to international migration; the alignment of national policies and plans with the objectives of the Global Compact; the signing of bilateral agreements; awareness raising and sharing of information; and direct support to migrant workers, such as legal protection and skills development and language classes. In addition, representatives noted that work had been done to create procedures that made migration more straightforward and transparent and to promote the reintegration of returning migrants to countries of origin.

39. A stakeholder representative stressed that COVID-19 had posed many challenges over the preceding year, such as wages being withheld, contracts not being implemented and passports being confiscated. To allow for the protection of workers in countries of destination, it was noted that migrant workers should have the right to organize.

**Protecting migrants through rights-based border governance and border management measures (addressing objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21)**  
(Agenda item 3 (b))

40. The meeting benefited from a panel discussion on the topic. The panel was moderated by Mr. Julien Garsany, Deputy Regional Representative, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The panel comprised a youth participant of an ethnic minority in Thailand; Ms. Aliya Yunusova, Commissioner on Children's Rights, Uzbekistan; Mr. Rolliansyah Soemirat, Director for International Security and Disarmament, Directorate General of Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia; Ms. Moomina Waheed, Human Rights Commission of the Maldives; and Ms. Carolina Gottardo, Executive Director, International Detention Coalition. A discussion with member States and other participants followed.

41. The panel underscored the importance of equal access to quality education and health care for all children and youth, including those on the move. Universal health care was a basic right for every child. Moreover, all children should be granted legal status in the country in which they lived, while also having access to child protection. Children, especially those on the move, often faced discrimination and detention, and that needed to be addressed through more effective policies for safe migration. In addition, children and youth should be given more opportunities to be part of decision-making processes that affected them.

42. The COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated vulnerabilities of migrants and communities, including difficulties in accessing health and social protection. In resolving such challenges, no government could effectively govern migration alone, as migration policy required international cooperation in compliance with international law. With regard to children on the move, the best interests of the child needed to always be at the centre of all migration policies and practices, to ensure they had access to national systems, including protection, education, health, justice and social safety nets. Concerning the reintegration of children from conflict zones, early planning and the need for additional investment for supportive measures, such as psychosocial support, were stressed. Some good practices were shared, including initiatives in reducing statelessness.

43. The Global Compact was acknowledged as the global framework to facilitate and ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, and examples were noted with regard to strengthening internal coordination among relevant stakeholders, the facilitation of outreach programmes and the development of action plans to implement the Global Compact. The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime was highlighted as an effective mechanism to strengthen regional efforts and promote shared responsibility among countries to act on concrete measures that responded to the irregular movement of people. National-level action had to be mirrored at local levels.

44. The panel shared information about initiatives in some countries to promote the rights of migrant workers, for example through the registration of migrant workers, the clarification of the rights and responsibilities of

employers, the guarantee of a standard of living for migrant workers and the provision of accommodation guidelines with regard to migrant workers. One panel member remarked on progress in using biometrics for regularization programmes for migrant workers, while respecting privacy and being sensitive to data protection concerns, though challenges still remained in terms of expanding coverage.

45. The high human and economic costs of immigration detention were noted, and the need to implement alternatives to detention, in alignment with Global Compact objective 13, was stressed. The need to end the immigration detention of children and families was highlighted, including through timebound, scaled-up, pilot programmes that guaranteed the preservation of the family unit, integrating the release of children from immigration detention with the provision of services and integrating released children into national child protection systems. Examples from Asia and the Pacific were shared, including a memorandum of understanding signed by various government entities in Thailand to end immigration detention of children and the development of an accompanying interministerial framework for implementation; a policy by the Government of Indonesia that children could no longer be detained in immigration detention; and the release of people in immigration detention during the COVID-19 pandemic by the Government of Japan.

46. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Philippines; Thailand; Turkmenistan; and Viet Nam.

47. The representative of the following stakeholder group made a statement: Equal Asia Foundation.

48. Several country representatives shared experiences in protecting the rights of migrants and stateless persons, including programmes to register all children born in the State and provide relevant documentation; provide ongoing consular support services to assist in the voluntary repatriation of citizens and offer help to undocumented citizens in times of distress; actively promote alternatives to the detention of migrants; and work through regional networks on migration to enhance cooperation, including with regard to information-sharing and law enforcement coordination. Information about promising initiatives was shared, such as that of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking of the Philippines that coordinated all such efforts; the common guidelines on alternatives to detention in Thailand, the Government's Immigration Act and Child Protection Act and its multi-disciplinary approach to addressing alternatives to detention; the registration of all children born in Turkmenistan and the provision of documents for stateless persons and pathways to become citizens; the collaboration of the Government of Viet Nam with neighbouring countries to address citizenship issues; and the use of information and technology in Turkmenistan to discover cases of human trafficking and fight various crime groups in cyberspace.

49. A stakeholder representative stressed the need to close gaps in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender inclusion in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to adopt an intersectional approach inclusive of all in addressing social justice issues.

**Supporting migrants' protection, integration and contribution to development (addressing objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22)**

(Agenda item 3 (c))

50. The meeting benefited from a panel discussion on the topic. The panel was moderated by Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Regional Director, UN-Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, with closing remarks given by Dr. Maria Nnette Motus, Regional Director, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The panel comprised Ms. Loretta Brunio, Migrant Domestic Worker, Pinoy Worldwide Initiative for Investment Savings and Entrepreneurship, Hong Kong, China; Mr. Tumur Amarsanaa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to ESCAP; Mr. Carlos Bernardo O. Abad Santos, Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, National Economic and Development Authority, Philippines; Ms. Noraini Roslan, Mayor, Subang Jaya, Malaysia; Mr. Robin Gravesteijn, Lead, Data and Research on Remittance and Migration, United Nations Capital Development Fund; and Ms. Joanna Yu, Programme Assistant, Migrant Forum Asia. A discussion with member States and other participants followed.

51. The panel discussed the main challenges that migrants faced with regards to protection, integration into society and their contribution to development, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Migrants, including women, faced ongoing challenges such as barriers to accessing basic services, particularly health services, lack of safe spaces to retreat and long working hours without rest days as well as lack of information about where to address complaints. While integration of migrants was a major challenge, reintegration was often similarly challenging.

52. The COVID-19 pandemic had adversely affected development in the region. The pandemic had widened gaps in achieving the objectives of the Global Compact. There were numerous reports of stranded migrants who were left without adequate information.

53. The panel also shared actions Governments had taken to protect migrants and support their safe, dignified and voluntary return and sustainable reintegration. This included technical cooperation and capacity-building for improved border management and counter-trafficking as well as support to victims of trafficking and migrants stranded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

54. The panel also highlighted migrants' contributions to development, such as the importance of remittances to individual households as well as at macroeconomic levels. However, panellists also noted that remittances had dropped as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The contribution of women migrants to remittances was also emphasized, particularly because women often made greater sacrifices to be able to migrate and support families back home.

55. The panel stressed the importance of financial inclusion of migrants as well as the digitization of remittances to enhance migrants' ability to contribute to development. Examples of how financial inclusion of migrants could be enhanced through capacity-building, a national identification system, digitization, and enhanced investment opportunities were shared. Digitization of remittances could not only facilitate sending of remittances, including during shutdowns, and save remittance costs, for women migrant workers it could also enhance their personal safety.

56. The panel also shared examples of a whole-of-government approach to implementing the Global Compact which included cities and municipal authorities. Local governments had taken concrete actions to provide access to services for all, including migrants, and promoted social cohesion and community empowerment, which also included initiatives to highlight the positive contribution of migrants.

57. The panel further shared examples of mechanisms to empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion. This included pre-departure, post-arrival and pre-employment training as well as orientation programmes upon return. Providing spaces for migrants to exercise their rights, such as the right to form and join trade unions, as well as the portability of social security was crucial. The importance of providing access to basic services for migrants and access to education for children of migrants was also stressed. Skill development and skill recognition were important to both migrants as well as employers.

58. The panel emphasized the importance of partnerships between governments at the national and local levels, United Nations organizations, trade unions, employers, civil society and others to support migrants' protection, integration and contribution to development.

59. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan; Thailand; Turkey; Turkmenistan; and Viet Nam.

60. A representative of the following stakeholder group made a statement: United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific.

61. Representatives reiterated their commitment to implementing the Global Compact and shared information about government actions to support migrants and their children in accessing basic services as well as to provide protection, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of designing a labour migration policy in line with the objectives of the Global Compact was highlighted.

62. Representatives of countries of origin of migrants shared examples of protection for migrants, such as improving consular representation with enhanced services for migrants or enhancing the portability of social security.

63. Representatives of countries of destination shared examples of facilitating civil registration and birth registration as well as providing education to migrant children, including stateless children, enhancing access to health services for migrants, including through digitization and easy-to-understand information, and facilitating visa arrangements and establishing immigration services centres.

64. Local government representatives shared examples of their contributions to support the integration of migrants and to empower them. Several cities had provided migrants with the right to vote at the local level, others provided vocational training and language courses to migrants. Local governments also required better data to be able to make informed decisions and design effective policies. The need to empower local governments in implementing the Global Compact was stressed.

65. The moderator emphasized that while migrants were heavily affected by the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, they were also part of the solution and had to be included in the creation and implementation of policy responses.

**Strengthening evidence-based policymaking, public debate and cooperation for safe, orderly and regular migration (addressing objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23)**

(Agenda item 3 (d))

66. The meeting benefited from a panel discussion on the topic. The panel was moderated by Ms. Cynthia Veliko, Regional Representative, OHCHR Regional Office for South-East Asia. The panel comprised Mr. Syed Rashedul Hossen, Economic Counsellor and Alternate Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to ESCAP; Ms. Fathimath Himya, Secretary-General, Red Crescent, Maldives; Ms. Siriwan Romchatthong, Secretary-General, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Confederation of Employers; Ms. Jennifer Vallentine, Asia Manager, Mixed Migration Centre; and Mr. Takgon Lee, Attorney, Dongcheon Foundation Republic of Korea.

67. The panel reviewed challenges in the implementation of the Global Compact in connection with accurate and timely information at all stages of the migration process, eliminating discrimination and shaping public perceptions of migrants and strengthening international cooperation and global partnerships for safe migration. The panel shared progress made so far, key challenges and gaps, good practices and lessons learned and pointers for the way forward.

68. The panel outlined actions that should be taken to uphold the human rights of all migrants and ensure international cooperation for better migration governance. Examples of pre-departure orientation and training of migrants were shared as well as reintegration policies that supported returning nationals through reorientation, skill training and financing, including facilitating digital remittances. The need for a predictable and transparent legal framework for migration was highlighted as crucial for all partners, including employers.

69. The panel emphasized the need to uphold basic minimum standards of human dignity and human rights that should be afforded to all migrants, irrespective of their status. Migrants should be protected from going missing or being separated from their families; all migrants, irrespective of their status should have effective access to essential services and humanitarian assistance; and the rights and needs of the most vulnerable, especially children, should be prioritized. Examples of humanitarian actions to support migrants in times of crisis were also shared, such as providing access to health care regardless of migration status, support centres, and coordinated food distribution during the COVID-19 crisis.

70. The panel pointed out that the vulnerabilities of migrants should be addressed by States through the fulfilment of their commitments in the Global Compact and implementation of policies and responses that centred the human rights of migrants. While migration laws and policies that did not respect migrants' rights could put people in vulnerable situations, vulnerability, such as extreme poverty, violence or the adverse impacts of climate change, could also drive migration, leading to multiple drivers intersecting and compounding each other. Migrants often faced multiple and intersecting discriminations based on sex, age, ethnicity, religion, migration status and sexual orientation, as well as other factors.



71. The panel also stressed the contribution of employers in providing protection to migrant workers and skills mobility. There were good examples of employers' associations and the private sector playing an important role in promoting sustainable and responsible business practices, including fair recruitment.

72. The importance of coherent and positive messaging on the contribution of migrants to protect them from abuse and discrimination was also pointed out. Migrants at times were victims of negative stereotypes and used as scapegoats. Cooperation between national human rights institutions and civil society to monitor the media, including social media, was important to shape the public perception of migrants.

73. The panel also shared examples of international cooperation for better migration governance, such as an interministerial coordination mechanism or formal agreements between countries of origin and destination. Partnerships were also built with civil society organizations, the private sector and social partners, trade unions and employers' associations. Embedding the objectives of the Global Compact into development plans and implementing the Global Compact along with the 2030 Agenda was also stressed as crucial.

74. In emphasizing the importance of migration data for evidence-based policies, including data highlighting the vulnerabilities of migrants, the panel called for improved data on migrants and enhanced investments into data collection and qualitative research. The panel stated that migration policy and public discourse around international migration across the region should make use of research and its recommendations for informed policymaking.

75. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Indonesia; and Thailand.

76. Representatives of the following stakeholder groups made a statement: Center for Migrant Advocacy, Philippines; and Public Services Labour Independent Confederation.

77. Representatives of member States and stakeholders reiterated the importance of international cooperation and partnerships as key to achieving safe, orderly and regular migration.

78. Several representatives of member States and stakeholders stated that there was a persistent need for more timely, accurate and integrated data. A stakeholder representative expressed the view that the lack of data on migration was one of the factors behind limited policy evaluation. It was also highlighted that there was an urgent need to enhance national capacity on migration data, especially to integrate migration and the corresponding Sustainable Development Goal indicators into policies and programmes. Dissemination of relevant information should start at the community level with local governments and community-based migrant organizations. Stakeholder representatives stressed that social dialogue should be strengthened to ensure that all stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the Global Compact including the migrant workers themselves.

79. A stakeholder representative emphasized that the role of migrant workers at the front lines of response during the COVID-19 pandemic had to be highlighted. The role of comprehensive data collection and dissemination to highlight the contribution of migrants was emphasized. A call was made for comprehensive partnerships in countries of origin and destination between Governments, migrant organizations, lawyers and civil society to provide

comprehensive information to migrants, including through the use of digital technologies.

#### **IV. Summary of statements from stakeholders**

80. Several statements from stakeholders were presented, based on stakeholder consultations held on 28 October 2020, 19 November 2020, 16 December 2020, 3 February 2021, and 2 and 4 March 2021.

81. Stakeholders emphasized that embracing, rather than resisting, the reality of migration benefited societies immeasurably, as did guaranteeing the rights of migrants, regardless of their status, and facilitating their equal participation in society, including through migrant workers being organized and given a voice.

82. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerability of migrants and amplified inequalities and structural obstacles to their full protection, including participation in society. They had been at an increased risk of being affected by poverty, stigmatization and violence. Migrants should be placed at the centre of policymaking and decision-making on migration governance at all levels. The COVID-19 pandemic had also demonstrated that nobody was safe until everyone was safe.

83. Significant gaps in the protection of migrants and their families across the region were noted, with children and women, especially domestic workers who had very few rights under the law, being particularly vulnerable to human rights violations or abuses.

84. Stakeholders called upon States to prioritize the creation of decent jobs, particularly in countries of origin, address other key drivers of migration and adhere to obligations under international law to ensure domestic legislation and procedures contained adequate safeguards to uphold the rights, safety and dignity of migrants, especially during crises.

85. Noting the leadership of Asia and the Pacific in implementing a whole-of-society and whole-of government approach to the implementation of the Global Compact, stakeholders further called on States to ensure evidence-based monitoring of its implementation. Moreover, they looked forward to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022, trusting that a whole-of-society approach, including the participation of trade unions, civil society organizations, migrants and migrant-led organizations, national human rights institutions, and local authorities, and others would continue to be prioritized with regard to future stakeholder engagement.