

UNITED NATIONS NETWORK ON MIGRATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The Philippines is one of the foremost origin countries for migrants around the world with an estimated 5.4 million emigrants in 2019, including approximately 2.3 million migrant workers, who are more commonly known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). These OFWs are spread across over 200 countries and work in a diverse range of occupations, at varying skill levels. The majority of OFWs are concentrated in the Middle East region (47.7%), followed by the Asia & Pacific region (39.8%). Most OFWs are laborers and unskilled workers (39%), while 18.2% are in trades and related work, and 15.4% work as plant machine operators and assemblers. Remittances sent in by OFWs are a significant component of the Philippines' GDP, composing around 10% in total. The Philippines has maintained a Tier 1 ranking in the US Trafficking in Persons report, meaning it fully meets the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking and has demonstrated serious and sustained efforts towards this goal.

The Philippines is highly prone to storms, floods and earthquakes, while in the southern region of Mindanao, conflict and instability drive displacement. In 2019, the Philippines had 364,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to disasters and 182,000 IDPs due to conflict and violence. The already devastating effects of natural disasters in the country can be expected to worsen as climate change continues to affect the world. A 2019 study by Climate Central projected large parts of Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to be majorly affected by sea level rise or partially submerged due to coastal flooding.

COVID 19

The Philippines continues to be impacted by COVID-19 with devastating impacts on the national economy and internal and international migration. Filipino migrant workers deployed in 2020 plunged to their lowest in three decades blocked by coronavirus lockdowns that prevented them from seeking employment abroad. A total of 549,841 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were deployed in 2020, plummeting by 74.5% from a record-high of 2.16 million in 2019, data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) showed. Of those OFWs, many are returning from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from resulting in job losses primarily in domestic work and construction.¹

Philippines and the Global Compact on Migration

The Philippines has been a staunch advocate of the protection of the rights and promotion of the

¹ Findings from upcoming IOM study on returned OFWs to the Philippines in 2020.

welfare of migrants, through the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in December of 2018. In 2021, 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 plays a key part in the national development plan to ensure the National Implementation Plan of the GCM.

In 2020 the Philippines accepted the invitation from the UN Network on Migration to become a [GCM Champion Country](#) one of fifteen member states to do so globally. The Champions countries initiative represents a sign of confidence and solidarity of Member States with the GCM and the Network.

Philippines United Nations Network on Migration

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Philippines supports the country through the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework (SEPF) which updates the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (PFSD) and serves as the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan in the Philippines for the period 2020 to 2023. The SEPF takes a humanitarian-development-peace nexus to better address the systemic causes of conflict and vulnerability and reduce the impact of cyclical stresses by making coordinated use of humanitarian, peacebuilding and development capacities and resources.

A United Nations Network on Migration Philippines (Network) is established by the UNCT as part of the larger United Nations Network on Migration, to draw from the mandates, technical expertise and experience of relevant UN entities to ensure effective, timely, coordinated UN system-wide support to Member States in their implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact on Migration. Then Philippines Network will work within the SEPF in its goal to *leave no one behind* and focuses on ensuring the rights and wellbeing of migrants of all types. The overall objective of the Philippines Network is to strengthen the capacity and coordinate the efforts of the UNCT in relation to the Philippine government's implementation of the GCM and its Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022.

Principles and Functions

The Philippines network is a coordination body for programme areas related to migrants to complement the PFSD and its three pillars: People, Peace, and Prosperity and Planet. In line with the PFSD priorities, under the overall leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, and with the International Organization for Migration as secretariat, the key Principles and Functions of the Migration Network Working Group are:

1. Ensure effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to the Philippines actively seeking out synergies and joint programming including in the development and implementation of coherent migration policies and practices through fostering policy dialogue, providing international expertise, tools, guidelines, evidence/data to policy options that adopts a whole-of-society and whole-of government approach.

2. Uphold full respect for the human rights of migrants, particularly the most vulnerable, including by promoting migrants' access to social services in Philippines and raising awareness on the need for a comprehensive approach to migration for the benefit of all.
3. Harness the contribution of national stakeholders, UN partner agencies and non-national stakeholders in enhancing cooperation on international migration to feed into regional discussions such as ASEAN, the Bali Process on Trafficking and Smuggling, the Colombo Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and other related Regional Consultative Processes.
4. Act as the voice of the UN Network on Migration in the Philippines by advocating GCM-related core priorities and thematic priorities and capacity building mechanisms envisioned by the GCM, such as the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund/MPTF (the Start-up Fund), and the Global Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub.
5. Encourage the participation of national and non-national stakeholders in sharing good practices in the field of migration to inform key stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, trade unions, international organizations and the media, to promote safe migration and decent work for migrants.
6. Provide country-level inputs to regional meetings and preparation of the Network's reporting to the Secretary-General and the annual meetings of the Network.

Composition and Membership

Chair: UN Resident Coordinator

Coordinator and Secretariat: IOM Mission in the Philippines (in line with the designation of IOM by the UN Secretary General as Coordinator of the global UN Network on Migration)

Members: (UN agencies to be confirmed)

The Network will be chaired by the UN Resident Co-Ordinator. The Chair will:

- Convene and chair meetings to ensure the smooth functioning of the Network;
- Facilitate regular interaction between the members of the Network;
- Working with Network members to identify priorities and opportunities for action by the Network, focusing on the added value of coordinated work;
- Deliver coordinated and/or One Voice joint statements in the name of the Network on specific issues; and
- Coordinate activities with the UN Migration Network Secretariat and Members.

IOM, acting as Coordinator and Secretariat assists the Network in its operation. In particular, it assists the Chair in preparing and circulating draft agendas, liaising with members, disseminating meeting minutes and monitoring the implementation of decisions. IOM will maintain the member list and share it regularly.

Members of the Network will contribute to design and implementation of the Network's objectives and workplan, provide advice on strategic direction and share information and knowledge about their migration related work. Members will promote coherence of migration-related activities within the UN system contribute to reviewing the progress made by the Network, making recommendations for necessary actions. Engagement at the national level will, where relevant, be anchored in the SEPF.

Modus Operandi

The UN Migration Network will meet on a quarterly basis, or upon request by its members. It will have the ability to expand and contract depending on the agenda. Representative from Government and relevant stakeholders will be invited to present and inform the discussions of the Network meetings, ensuring whole-of-government, whole-of-society perspective and to facilitate information sharing including on good practices.

There will be at least one Annual Network Meeting of the full membership of the Network to include other relevant stakeholders, in order to review Network progress; explore ways to further enhance collaboration; identify emerging challenges.

Working Groups can be established on a permanent or ad-hoc basis, to focus on specific issues, depending on the needs and opportunities. The composition of Working Groups will be drawn from Network members and external partners who can contribute to the operational and technical aspects of the migration issue.

All information exchanged within the Network meetings is meant for internal use only, unless explicitly stated and agreed otherwise.