

**Draft Statement**  
**by**  
**H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi**  
**Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs**  
**Head of the Delegation of Thailand**  
**at the**  
**General Debate of the Asia Pacific Regional Review of**  
**Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and**  
**Regular Migration**  
**on**  
**Agenda Item 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.**

**10 March 2021**  
**ESCAP, Bangkok**

-----

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your assumption of chairmanship of this important regional review process. I would also like to commend the Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific for organizing this meeting, despite the challenges, in the midst of a pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

This regional review comes at a **critical time**. It is taking place after one full year of global efforts to fight the coronavirus pandemic. When we adopted the Global Compact on Migration in 2018, we had no idea what the world was about to be confronted with. We had no idea how the COVID-19 pandemic would so **fundamentally impact migration**.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it has taught us how interconnected and vulnerable we are, and how much we **depend on each other** for our health and well-being. In this context, we cannot stress enough the **importance of international and regional cooperation and sharing what we have learned**.

Thailand is of the view that the GCM continues to represent a **solid framework** for promoting safe, orderly and regular migration as well as for responding to the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on migrants. Moreover, it is based on the correct assumption that migrants must be seen as a part of the solution and, in the long run, as a **crucial partner for sustainable development**.

Mr. Chairman,

**Thailand** has made important progress in our first years of GCM implementation. We have set up a **national inter-agency working group** and adopted a **national GCM implementation plan for 2020-2022**. The plan is a ‘living document’ aimed at promoting safe, orderly and regular migration through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. **Concrete projects are being pursued** in support of GCM objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

The advent of COVID-19 did not diminish our efforts on the GCM. Instead, it mobilized us to work even faster on many issues. In the immediate term, we **extended stay and work permits** for migrants to minimize the adverse impacts of the pandemic on their livelihoods. We were also forced to speed up and clarify the integration of **disease prevention and care for migrants** as an integral part of our public health strategies. The Ministry of Public Health has worked proactively to ensure the **inclusiveness of health services**, including through the introduction of a **Health Insurance**

**Scheme** for migrants in the informal sectors, the deployment of **migrant health volunteers** and **interpreters** in provinces with a concentration of migrant workers and the establishment of a **COVID-19 migrants hotline**, with good cooperation from various partners.

We have also made progress on our efforts to provide **alternatives to child immigration detention or ATD**. In Thailand's context, the persistence of **networks of people smuggling** is a real concern; and implementing ATD will continue to require strong and seamless **inter-agency coordination**. In very practical terms, it also requires **resources** and **capacity building** for officers on the ground. We are pleased to share and learn from others on this topic and are co-hosting a side event with UNICEF and the International Detention Coalition (IDC) on Friday, which we would like to invite you to attend.

Mr. Chairman,

The findings of this regional review as well as the Asia Pacific Migration Report 2020 are critical for our work ahead. Thailand looks forward to engaging actively with other Member States and stakeholders, and looks forward to progressive outcomes at this meeting.

I thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*

Time Limit: 4 minutes  
Word Count: 545