

Review of Implementation of GCM in Asia-Pacific and the Impact of COVID-19

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- Excellencies, distinguished delegates and fellow colleagues, it is an honor to be here with you all. **United Nations Development Programme** sees **Migration as an inherent part of sustainable development**, contributing significantly to socio-economic advancements which in many countries in the Asia-Pacific, has become an almost natural part of life;
- Through their skills, entrepreneurial spirit, ideas and networks across countries and regions, migrants make key contributions to development in both origin and destination countries; Moreover, **Remittances surpasses** FDI as the largest source of financial inflows positively affecting families and communities around the world, and half of the global remittance total was sent to countries in the Asia-Pacific;
- **And yet, migrants remain some of the most marginalized people.** In destination countries, they are often **excluded from decision-making processes** affecting their lives; they frequently have **limited access to decent work and livelihood opportunities**, to services like **health and education**, and to **social protection mechanisms**; and their rights such as freedom of movement and association are regularly constrained;
- These **factors tend to be mutually reinforcing in times of crises**, including the current **pandemic**, combining with rising xenophobia to further intensify exclusion and undermine social cohesion, often fueled in the digital space, a space we jointly need to pay a closer look.
- **Findings from the COVID-19 Socio-Economic-Impact assessment** in AP implemented last year, clearly showed that it has markedly aggravated existent development challenges, with inequality rising in countries around the world and the most marginalized communities including migrants especially affected.
- Moreover, **Migrants are over-represented in many service jobs**, often in the informal sector, that have suspended activities such as restaurants, hotels and other tourism-oriented businesses. In addition, lockdown measures have left hundreds of thousands of migrants stranded in countries of destinations, having been laid off, often without access to social protection and unable to return home due to border closures, struggling to meet their most basic needs.
- **And yet, new challenges are already unfolding:** the Asia-Pacific is disproportionately impacted by **disasters and climate emergency**, with significant and growing implications for migratory patterns. In fact, five of the ten most affected countries by climate-related events in recent decades were in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Hence, **migration is a fundamental and cross-cutting dimension of the 2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development including its central pledge of Leaving No One Behind. If we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, migration and migrants must be meaningfully included and engaged in national, and indeed sub-national, development plans to uphold their fundamental human rights and unlock their transformative potential to contribute to development in both origin and destination countries.