

UNICEF REMARKS

EVENT: Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Agenda Item 2

DATE: Wednesday, 10 March 2021

TIME: 14:00-17:00 Bangkok

VENUE: Virtual via KUDO connection sent in advance

Madame Chair,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

It is an honour for UNICEF to participate and contribute to this first regional review of the Global Compact for Migration in the Asia Pacific region.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of States to implement the GCM in this region since its adoption two years ago. There are promising practices by States to mitigate the risks children face in the context of migration.

However, despite ongoing efforts, millions of child migrants and children of migrants in this region continue to face child protection risks and restricted access to basic services. In particular,

children who are stateless may be pushed into a lifetime of marginalisation and vulnerability. And despite encouraging efforts in several countries, far too many children continue to face the risks of immigration detention.

The global COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted access to already limited services, has further exacerbated existing vulnerabilities for migrants.

Excellencies,

When the right policies are in place and implemented, risks for children can be reduced and challenges overcome.

To this end, progress in implementing the GCM must be accelerated in the following areas:

- The removal of legal, administrative and practical barriers, and the implementation of measures to provide access to national education, health and child protection systems for all children, including those affected by migration.
- The harmful practice of immigration detention of all children in law and practice must end. Immigration detention is never in the child's best interests.

- Cross-border cooperation to protect children needs to be further strengthened.
- And most immediately, COVID-19 responses must fully take into account the needs and rights of migrant children and families.

UNICEF is committed to continuing its efforts to support Member States to make these commitments a reality.

Excellencies,

Creating platforms for and listening to the voices of children affected by migration is essential if we are to collectively and effectively meet their needs. It is therefore very welcome that young people, including young migrants, across the region are actively participating in this review. UNICEF looks forward to supporting Member States in further engaging with young people in designing and implementing migration policies and in reviewing action and their impact on the ground.

The GCM represents a tremendous opportunity to address the risks for children and remove obstacles to help children migrate safely. By implementing the GCM we can, ultimately, truly

transform migration from a challenge to an opportunity for everyone.

Thank you.