

Regional Consultation Series with GCM Champion Countries in Asia and the Pacific

“COVID -19 and its Ramifications on Migrants’ Return and Sustainable Reintegration Policy”

29 November 2021, 9:00 – 12:00 (GMT+7)

Virtual

SUMMARY REPORT

I. Background

1. Millions of migrants have returned to their countries of origin throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As one of the major sending countries of migrant workers, Indonesia is not exempted from this situation. A total of two hundred and thirty-six thousand Indonesians returned during the pandemic since 2020, of which majority are Indonesian migrant workers. Similar situations have as well been encountered significantly by other countries in Asia and the Pacific Region, including all the other GCM Champion Countries that are both sending and host countries of migrant workers in the region (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, the Philippines, and Thailand).

2. This consultation is the second chapter of “The Regional Consultation Series with GCM Champion Countries in Asia and the Pacific” under the theme “Accelerating Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic” guided by the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), initiated by six (6) GCM Champion Countries in Asia and the Pacific, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand, in collaboration with the Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific.

3. The inclusion of the Objective 21 on cooperating to facilitate “safe and dignified return, re-admission and sustainable reintegration” in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) is therefore timely and its implementation by countries is much more needed than ever. However, due to challenges posed by the pandemic, this GCM objective implementation requires more efforts and advanced programs than before.

4. Against this backdrop, Indonesia, as one of the GCM Champion Countries in the Asia and the Pacific Region, initiated to hold a regional consultation on “COVID -19 and its Ramifications on Migrants’ Return and Sustainable Reintegration Policy.” Particularly, the consultation will contribute to other regional consultative processes, such as the Colombo Process (Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia) and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (particularly on the protection, return, and reintegration of smuggled migrants and victims of trafficking during the pandemic). In addition, the consultation will also contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

5. The series explored and analyzed various themes surrounding migration, and their critical intersection with the COVID-19 pandemic. It forms part of peer learning and dialogues through

the Migration Network Hub and is envisaged to contribute to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in May 2022.

II. Objectives, Organization and Attendance

6. The objectives of the Regional Consultation Series are (1) to accelerate progress in the implementation of the GCM through the discussion of key regional priorities, and (2) to develop regional inputs for IMRF.

7. The consultation aimed to support champion countries in achieving GCM Objective 21, cooperation in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration. During the consultation, champion countries exchanged and shared their good practices and innovative policies and programming, as well as challenges they encountered particularly on the return and reintegration of migrants in the COVID-19 pandemic context. Several frameworks, tools, and recommendations at the global and regional level were also presented during the consultation, feeding into the discussion among champion countries and other stakeholders.

8. Related GCM Objective:

- Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration.

9. Related SDGs:

- **Goal 3** on good health and well-being given that the inclusion of migrants and their protection throughout the migration cycle (including return and reintegration) is of importance to make sure that they are not left behind in the pandemic response.
- **Goal 5** on gender equality given the exacerbated risks faced by women and girls during the pandemic, including women migrant workers who mostly work in the low- wage sector with less protection and more challenging attempts to be locally reintegrated in local economies due to gender disparities and inequalities.
- **Goal 8** on decent work and economic growth as the consultation is expected to serve as a platform for countries to discuss challenges that may directly and indirectly impact migrant worker communities and the general society economically, as well as the importance of sustainable economic reintegration to prevent risks, such as forced and irregular re-emigration and exploitation.
- **Goal 10** on reduced inequalities as an encompassing goal that includes the facilitation of orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people.
- **Goal 17** - as the consultation will contribute towards enhanced cooperation and partnerships among champion countries, and/or feed recommendations for strengthened cooperation between countries of origin and destination to ensure a safe and dignified return, readmission, and reintegration of migrants.

10. The expected outcomes were:

- A productive discussion among champion countries and other stakeholders.
- A set of recommendation for countries to ensure the safe and dignified return, readmission, and reintegration of migrants including during the COVID-19 pandemic and future crisis that may happen is produced.

- Good practices and lessons learned shared through the consultation is documented to complement the recommendation, which later will also feed into the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).

11. About two hundred participants from Asia and the Pacific region attended the consultation. Participants came from a broad range of sectors, including UN agencies, civil society, academia, legal services, trade unions, migrants and diaspora organizations and governments.

12. This report aims to be a non-exhaustive summary of recommendations and key points raised in the meeting.

III. Opening

13. H.E. Siti Nugraha Mauludiah, the Senior Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Socio- culture, and Indonesian Overseas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia welcomed the participants. She stressed the importance of migration agenda as Indonesia's priority, particularly COVID-19, the ramifications of migrant returnees, and sustainable reintegration policy. Migration is a powerful driver for sustainable development: for migrants and their communities. It brings significant benefit in the form of skills, strengthening the labour force in placement countries, and contributes to the life quality of their households in the countries of origin through the transfer of skills and financial resources.

14. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely hampered the global migration and created unprecedented challenges for migrants and their families which has cornered them into more vulnerable situations. Many lost their jobs and are affected disproportionately in the host countries. At home, their families are also impacted by harsh economic conditions of the job losses of their migrant families due to remittances lost and movement restrictions. This leads to their potential involvement in undocumented and irregular migration channel.

15. H.E. Mauludiah underlined that there is a necessity to identify a new approach to identify safe and dignified return of migrants and prepare for their reintegration in the society during the health emergency crisis. The priority is to ensure the protection of the rights of migrants and to ensure their safety in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. Migrants must have equal access to vaccine in the host countries. Multistakeholder approach is needed to ensure the achievement of this approach.

16. There is a need to create an enabling environment for migrant returnees to contribute positively towards local development in their respective villages or cities of origin. Training activities as a policy programme tool needed to be used to increase the integration and empowerment of migrant workers in development planning and policy making.

17. There is a need to strengthen cooperation among GCM champion countries through national, regional, and global actions working in synergy. GCM champion countries need to develop concerted efforts towards effective implementation of GCM, particularly in the facilitation of safe, orderly, and dignified return, readmission, and sustainable reintegration.

18. UN Resident Coordinator has welcomed the participants and shared opening remarks on The Integration of Migration Issue within the UN system and its role in achieving the SDGs amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. She underlined that more than two

hundred thousand Indonesian migrant workers have returned home, telling stories of lockdown, and returning to their homes.

19. She stressed that improving migration governance is integral to achieving the SDG targets. Migration and sustainable affects each other vice versa. In 2019, remittance of migrant workers amounted to eleven point seven billion US dollars, equivalent to one per cent of Indonesia's GDP. However, in 2020 the number of remittances was reduced due to the global pandemic. Migrant workers generally contribute significantly to their countries' economy.

20. However, migrant workers cannot unleash their full potential if not given access to basic rights, especially health access during the pandemic. Xenophobia is a problem that haunts migrant workers. Despite the pandemic, the trend of demands and supply of migrant workers will not be affected and shall continue. Hence, it is important that safe, orderly, and regular migration be in place to ensure that the global growth occurs in sustainable fashion without people being put at risk. The seventeen SDGs must incorporate the effective implementation of the GCM.

IV. Outcomes of the Meeting

A. International and regional guidance on return and reintegration policy

i. Challenges

21. Pia Oberoi, OHCHR, shared the UN Migration Network Position Paper on Ensuring Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration. In May 2020, the UN Network on Migration expressed concern on forced return of migrants as a measure to COVID-19. The network then called for suspension of forced return during the pandemic to ensure the protection and health of migrants and communities; and uphold the human rights of all migrants regardless of their status.

22. Safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration will not be possible whenever migrants are denied their human rights in their countries of origin. This includes returns to situations of destitutions or homelessness, lack of access to rehabilitation, justice and compensation for migrant victims or of torture or other crimes, and the criminalization or revictimization of trafficking. Other cases include lack of access to education, health, housing, food, water and sanitation, decent work, etc.

ii. Opportunities

23. In May 2021, the first ever Common UN Position Paper on ensuring safe, dignified return and sustainable reintegration was developed based on a shared understanding that in all cases of return, readmission, and reintegration practices, there is compliance to international human rights law standards such as paying attention to gender sensitivity, child rights, and specific rights and needs of migrants in vulnerable situations. She clarified the definition of return as various ways that non-nationals, whether independently, with assistance, or by force, return or are returned; as well as reintegration as a process which enables individuals to secure and sustain the political, economic, social and psychosocial conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood, and dignity.

24. Rodora Babaran, Director of Human Development Directorate at the ASEAN Secretariat, shared ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration. The guidelines follow general principles which were drawn from various international standards and sources to define effective operational measures and interventions, such as rights-based, principle of fair treatment, recognition of different categories of returned workers and their needs, community-focused, evidence-based, transparency and integrity.

25. Regulatory Framework includes development and improvement of the overall legal and policy framework and institutional mechanisms, which contains return process, such as steps for effective return from the standpoint of the sending state information and databases of returned workers, and assessment of their needs.

26. Economic Reintegration stipulates on the need to provide employment and livelihood programme through public employment services, skills recognition, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and enterprise development, while Social and Cultural Reintegration outlines provision of special counselling and psychosocial support and formation of networks of peer groups and community-based support. Social Protection, on the other hand, stipulates on the need to ensure access to social protection, such as healthcare, that is aligned with national systems. The portability of social security contribution is in line with regional declaration and frameworks.

27. Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq, Senior Regional Thematic Specialist for Migrant Protection and Assistance at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has shared IOM Guidance on the Design, Implementation, and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance. IOM's Handbook and ASEAN Return and Reintegration Guidelines have similarities at all levels. IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme Phases can be divided to before departure, during travel, and upon return. Pre-departure process includes counselling on information on reintegration support, administrative assistance, such as travel documents, and logistical assistance, such as flight tickets purchase.

28. Integrated Approach to Reintegration consists of economic (creation or strengthening of income-generating activities such as job placement, training, and scholarship), social (access to housing/accommodation, documentation, social protection, education and training, health, food and clean water, justice, and rights), and psychosocial dimension (counselling, peer support, etc.) with consideration of factors and supports at all levels, including individual, community, and structural level.

29. Cycle of reintegration assistance at individual level includes assessments (containing of rapid vulnerability assessment, background check, skills assessment, and survey on reintegration sustainability), reintegration planning (counselling, feasibility grid, and referrals), follow up phase (follow up counselling sessions, reintegration plans, and monitoring activities), and closure (final counselling sessions and final monitoring survey).

iii. Recommendations

30. All migrants are to be protected by the principles of non-refoulement and the prohibition of collective expulsion. Voluntary return should be given the preference compared to forced return, and where voluntary return takes place, it must respect migrants' free, prior, and informed consent. Return is only one among several options available, states should offer a range of alternatives to return, including pathways for admission and stay.

31. Returnees should be assisted in their reintegration process through effective partnerships, such as earlier reintegration planning (prior to return). The more returnees themselves are involved as active partners, the more likely it is to succeed. Access to decent work should be a priority of concern.

32. Concerning returns of children, child's best interest is paramount. This could be achieved through an individual and participative process. Concerning monitoring and evaluation, states should ensure and facilitate independent monitoring of all return and reintegration processes and scrutinize prevention of arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment, and refoulement. There should include a short-, medium-, and long-term assessment of the impact of return on individual's life. Migrants' vulnerability should be monitored in line with national systems and reintegration process upon return.

B. Sharing of experiences (good practices, challenges, and recommendations) on return, re-admission and re-integration programs during the COVID-19 pandemic by champion countries

Representatives of the GCM Champion Countries have shared the good practices, challenges, and recommendations on how countries implement the safe and dignified returns and re-integration of migrants during COVID-19 pandemic (*participating countries addressed here are in alphabetical order*).

i. Challenges

33. Dr Nashid Rizwana Monir, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh, has shared Bangladesh's experiences on re-integration of migrant workers and their family members. Bangladesh encountered different issues created by COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic affected migrant workers while they are working abroad. Some of them have lost their jobs and many of them were forced to return to Bangladesh from the country of these nations. Many of them could not get their proper salary because they had to come back to Bangladesh. Migrant workers were unable to renew their travel documents between April to July 2020. Bangladesh has experienced more than four hundred thousand migrant workers returned to Bangladesh since February 2020.

34. Her Excellency, Chou Bun Eng, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior and the Vice Chair of the National Committee for Countertrafficking in Cambodia, has echoed and supported the ideas and initiatives shared. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the return of migrants to Cambodia from Thailand. To illustrate, two hundred and sixty thousand migrants have returned and has exacerbated the problems of undocumented migrants. The reintegration process of the returned migrants is especially critical in terms of their livelihood. For instance, they might have lost their homeland. Another focus is children and support in terms of their identity and education, which makes the reintegration process more challenging.

35. Officer for Migrant Employment, Directorate of Employment and Protection of Indonesian Migrants, Ministry of Manpower of Indonesia, shared Indonesia's perspectives. The data collected from March 2020 until 15 November 2021 shows that the total number of returned migrants is two hundred and thirty-six thousand nine hundred and eighty-six (236,986) with one hundred and eighty-four thousand one hundred and three (184,103) from Malaysia and

twenty-four thousand six hundred and five (24,605) from other countries. In terms of their occupation, seafarers recorded twenty-eight thousand and thirty-two (28,032), including merchant ships' crew and fishermen. Indonesia shared experiences in handling returning migrants during the pandemics and highlighted the importance of consular protection to ensure better protection for stranded or repatriated Indonesian migrants. Through Indonesian missions abroad, migrants are encouraged to respect and follow local health protocols and to get access vaccines. The Indonesian government also provided food and other necessary assistance for Indonesian migrants impacted by the pandemics.

36. Economic hardships resulted by COVID-19 added extra challenges and required actors to come up with new initiatives. The challenges that Indonesia has faced include repatriation of undocumented migrants, unsettled cases, unsettled debts, and reintegration programmes. Regarding the repatriation of undocumented migrants, proper documentation is also needed for reintegration process, particularly to access basic health and social services, including vaccination. Unsettled cases, on the other hand, include unpaid salary, compensation and life insurance, and repatriation often needs to take place before all remuneration and compensation have been paid to the migrants. Migrants often take loans to pay for their migration and early repatriation, due to incidents or certain critical situation that may cause migrants difficulties in paying off their debts. If migrants are unable to pay the debts, they will rather find a new job overseas than join the reintegration programmes. Therefore, migrants often find the reintegration programmes less attractive.

37. Ms. Sarah Lou Y. Arriola, the Undersecretary of the Office of the Undersecretary for Migrants' Workers Affairs, DFA, the Philippines, has shared experiences and practices on migrants' return and reintegration during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to millions of migrants as many were displaced and stranded in different parts of the world and many lost their jobs and forced to return to home. The impact of the pandemic is harsher to those who are already in vulnerable situations even before the crisis.

38. Many countries of origin, including the Philippines, faced massive repatriation distressing their nationals. Taking a major repatriation programme under the global pandemic is new to many governments. This is the first time over a million Filipino migrants abroad return to the Philippines within a short period of time, of which over four hundred and thirty thousand (430,000) repatriations were facilitated by the office.

39. Ms. Kanita Sapphaisal, Counsellor, Social Division Department of International Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Thailand, has shared the experiences of Thailand. The Thai government has facilitated the repatriation of four hundred and fifty thousand (450,000) Thai nationals from all over the world since the beginning of COVID 19 pandemic, which is the biggest scale of repatriation that Thailand has ever experienced. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted governments around the world to undertake swift but difficult decisions to close their borders, put restriction on people's movement and assembly, and suspensions and temporary shutdowns in various sectors, particularly tourism and services, to contain the disease and protect public health.

40. Migrant workers were among the worst affected population. Due to a sudden termination of employment reduced working hours, they have received reduced or delayed payment. Some of them can hardly or no longer be able to pay for their necessities, such as accommodation or food, and some are falling into illegal status as their visas or state permits expire. Most of them

who lost their job or income wished to return home to be with their families, or because they can no longer afford a living abroad or cannot stay there legally. However, there were only limited and expensive flights in early 2020. Some migrant workers must wait up to three months after the registration to be able to get a seat on the repatriation flight.

41. Compensation for loss of jobs available for migrant workers who have bought protection packages, which are available for purchase prior to their departure from Thailand, costing less than twenty US dollars for five years coverage. The compensation is paid as a monthly allowance of around one hundred and fifty US dollars per month. Although the cost of protection package is low, many migrants did not buy it because it was not compulsory, nor is it available for undocumented migrant workers. Therefore, many workers did not receive any consultation and were in a difficult situation. Most employers helped by allowing them to continue to stay in companies' accommodation, which is a accepted practice in the Middle East, however workers lacked the finances to buy food and other essential items.

ii. Opportunities

42. COVID-19 test, Quarantine and Vaccination by the Bangladesh Government has addressed the issues and challenges presented by the pandemic. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is the leading ministry dealing with migration governance. They have also established a PCR machine for COVID-19 testing at the airport for migrant workers and a mechanism to reimburse the quarantine costs.

43. The government has taken several financial schemes so that migrants can be reintegrated in their community. After coming back to Bangladesh, for example, they have provided Bangladesh Taka (BDT) two hundred crore allocation both under the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment to the COVID-19 affected migrant workers and their family members as collateral free soft loan at four per cent interest rate reimbursing through Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB). The government of Bangladesh has also provided BDT five hundred crore for returnee migrant workers at an interest rate of nine per cent for male and seven per cent for female reimbursing through PKB. Finally, they have facilitated cash transfer of five thousand BDT to each of the returned migrant workers on arrival as immediate assistance at the airport. The Bangladesh government has provided twenty thousand BDT cash payment to each of the returned female migrant workers as an initiative of celebrating Mujib year and three hundred thousand BDT cash support to the family members of each of the deceased migrant worker. They are also assisting their family members to bring their deceased bodies for their burial and providing other assistance.

44. In addition to financial support and quarantine and vaccination support, Bangladesh has initiated several long-term projects and programs for returning migrant workers and their family members. For example, Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) focuses on reintegration of returned migrant workers. The total budget is BDT four hundred and twenty-seven thousand point three zero three five (427.3035) crore, and this project focuses on social and economic reintegration of two hundred thousand migrant workers who returned due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific objectives of this project are to provide orientation and counseling and to provide practical advice on discussions with each of those two hundred thousand migrant workers and providing them with a mission of ceremonial certificates and supporting returning.

45. Bangladesh has also shared legal and policy framework for migrant workers. This included the 8th Five Year Plan, Revised Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2021, Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) 2018 and proposed WEWB Rules 2021. They are in act to incorporate provisions for the reintegration of returning migrant workers and their family members. Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (EWOEP 2016) includes rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for migrant workers.

46. The government of Cambodia responded to the returning migrants and COVID-19, the government launched a joint programme with the UN and other partners regarding returning migrants to ensure their safety in crossing borders and health.

47. The Indonesian government has helped the facilitation of the repatriation, ensured fulfilling the labors' rights of the migrants and provided capacity building of returning migrants. The protection of Indonesian Migrants Law 18 of 2017 specifies protecting the interest of Indonesian migrant workers and their families in the fulfillment of their rights before, during, and after employment from legal, economic, and social aspects. To address the issue of repatriation of undocumented migrants, Indonesia has issued travel documents for undocumented migrants, especially unaccompanied children. Also, it has ensured that all returned migrants have received their salary and financial benefit from employers.

48. The Economic Reintegration of Migrant Workers under the DESMIGRATIF Program (*Productive Migrant Villages*) was showcased by Indonesia, which is to provide migration related information, as well as to build the capacity and protecting Indonesian migrant workers originating from rural areas. DESMIGRATIF cooperation focuses on savings loan, loans and business development support, financing for worker deployment, multi-business, migrant workers' financing, and remittances.

Additionally, reflecting a-whole-of-society-approach, the program has been expanded in its list of services. It is designed as a front line in providing information on migration, to prospective migrants and their families. In addition to offering migration-related information, the program now includes trainings in entrepreneurship for former migrants and their families.

Currently there are four hundred and fifty-one villages included in the program and will be further expanded in the future. This kind of effort serves as a best practice for GCM champions and other countries to replicate to empower the contribution of migrants to economic development and to reduce the push factors of irregular migration.

49. The consultation's theme highlights the key elements of the Philippines government's efforts, which are five Rs – Relief, Repatriation, Recovery, Return and Reintegration. In order to respond to the massive repatriation, the Philippines government implemented a flexible inbound passenger tab for commercial airlines arriving in the Philippines, which enabled them to develop the capacity for quarantine support. All returning Filipinos are required to undergo testing and mandatory hotel quarantine, and if they tested negative for COVID-19, the Philippines government arranged and paid for domestic flights.

50. Prior coordination was made with the local governments to alert them of the returning migrants' arrival at their country of destination and reintegration to the local communities. The key to success in the repatriation was that the Philippines' borders remained open for those wishing to return to their homelands and they have emphasized the wellbeing of migrants in

the Philippines. The initiatives under the reintegration phase include loan programmes that provide working capital for start-ups and scholarship programmes for upskilling. The Philippines has been ensuring an efficient rollout of its vaccination programme, which has been essential for mobility.

51. The Philippines government has put massive reintegration efforts and stressed the critical role of global economic recovery by easing border controls during the pandemic. The Philippines has acknowledged the importance of seafarers and shipments of goods. The Philippines is one of the few countries in the world that instituted a relay policy for seafarers and allowed change. The Philippines has established decades worth of governmental institutions and metrics for migrant protection by Department of Health as a migrant health unit that coordinates all medical repatriation visits. The office assisted the shipment of remains and cremated remains of all overseas Filipinos, especially those who passed away due to COVID-19. Global network embassies and consulates extends legal assistance to workers who were forced to return home without receiving their wages and benefits.

52. The cooperation among countries during the pandemic has also been showcased by the Philippines. Another notable partnership with the Philippine government is the joint program on 'Bridging Recruitment to Reintegration in Migration Governance' (BRIDGE) funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), which implements two objectives, one of which is by connecting recruitment through internet integration in targeted local areas. The GCM has been very useful for the Philippines during the pandemic in assuring humane migration.

53. In the light of reduced flights, the Thai government purchased plane tickets and pre-departure COVID-19 tests are paid by workers themselves or their employers, depending on the term of employment contract. Thus, there was a sense of burdens and cost sharing.

54. Many host governments, including Bahrain and Thailand, temporarily extended stay permit of migrant workers and foreign visitors. In Bahrain, immigration system was gradually introduced to provide services normally available only through immigration office, such as visa renewal. This is one of the good examples of the governments' efforts to reduce vulnerability of migrants in the pandemic situation. To fill the gap, the embassy distributed thousands of survival package consisting of food basic amenities to all workers for their health, regardless of their status.

iii. Recommendations

55. The reintegration of the migrant workers does not only refer to economically and financial reintegration, but it also means that they must be legally reintegrated into their family, community, and all aspects of the state. This is not the responsibility of countries of origin alone. Countries of destination should come forward to facilitate the ideas to reintegrate migrant workers and hence their regional associations and corporations could also play a major role. For companies placing workers overseas and return them back to countries of origin can also share their best practices and can also help each other so that we can address related issues of return workers during the COVID-19 and for the future.

56. For safe and orderly migration, we also need to focus on the beginning of the migration, rather than just focusing on return, since the return is dependent on the pre-migration process.

Thus, we need to have a solution under the responsibility between origin and destination countries to solve the problem once the migrants return to the home country.

57. Regarding the unsettled cases challenge, government needs to ensure all financial or contractual rights have been given prior to closing the case. In order to encourage migrants' participation in the reintegration programmes, more incentives are needed so that former migrants can finish the programmes without worrying about their basic needs at home.

58. In terms of reintegration, capacity building for local governments is needed to formulate reintegration programmes that meet the needs and attract migrant workers' interests. As for the repatriation, migrant workers' access to vaccination in host countries need to also be ensured as to limit imported COVID-19 transmission cases.

59. Streamlining existing migration policies and strengthening these programmes can enable countries to adapt and improve migration governance during the pandemic. We must ensure that domestic legislation and procedures contain adequate safeguards of the rights, safety, and dignity of migrants, especially during crises. The global health crisis made us all realize that migrants are deeply connected with their employment, health and welfare and the country's economic growth. The Philippines encouraged governments' domestic political will to implement the GCM, keeping in mind that the respective action plans should always be for the benefit of migrants and should contribute to sustainable development.

60. The importance of consular service was emphasized, especially on information and repatriation of migrant workers between origin and destination countries, which allow them to better design the immediate response to support quicker provision of assistance. Second, home and host countries could complement each other on the provision of social protection of migrant workers. Lastly, social media is an effective tool for outreach to nationals, including migrant workers, and to provide them up-to-date information, including repatriation status. However, it should be supplemented by other channels such as the embassy establishing contact persons in the area and/or maintaining contact with employers.

AGENDA

Time	Topic/Speaker
09.00 – 09.05	Opening by overall moderator
09.05 – 09.10	Opening remarks by the Senior Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Socio- culture, and Indonesian Overseas Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia
09.10 – 09.15	Remarks by UN Resident Coordinator on The Integration of Migration Issue within the UN system and its role in achieving the SDGs amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic Photo session
09.15 – 09.35	Session 1 - “International and regional guidance on return and reintegration policy” Moderated by: Advisor to the Director General of Multilateral Cooperation, MOFA Indonesia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Migration Network Position Paper on Ensuring Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration (OHCHR) • ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration (ASEAN Secretariat) • IOM Guidance on the Design, Implementation, and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance (IOM Regional Office)
09.35 – 09.55	Moderated discussion by panelists, stakeholders, and any other from the floor
09.55 – 10.10	Coffee Break
10.10 – 10.20	Video on Return and Reintegration
10.20 – 11.20	<p>Session 2 - Sharing of experiences (good practices, challenges, and recommendations) on return, re-admission and re-integration programs during the COVID-19 pandemic by champion countries (10mnt each)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bangladesh 2. Cambodia 3. Indonesia 4. Nepal 5. Philippines 6. Thailand <p>Moderated by: Director for Protection of Overseas Indonesian Citizen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia</p>
11.20 – 11.50	Moderated discussion by panelists, stakeholders, and any other from the floor to propose recommendations
11.50 – 12.00	<p>Conclusion and way forward:</p> <p>Director of Cooperation of the Ministry of Manpower, Republic of Indonesia</p> <p>Representative of the Asia Pacific UN Network on Migration</p>