

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

“Border Management and Labour Migration in the COVID-19 Recovery Phase”

11 April 2022, 9:00 – 12:00 Phnom Penh & Bangkok Time (GMT+7)
Virtual

SUMMARY REPORT

I. Background

1. During the past two decades, migration has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth and development in both countries of origin and destination. Recent COVID-19 related travel restrictions and border closures implemented by Cambodia and other countries in the region have significantly impacted the ability of nationals of all countries to cross borders. Border closures have also resulted in more attempts by migrants, both nationals and third country nationals, to circumvent border controls and quarantine measures along porous land borders such as the border between Cambodia and Thailand.
2. As part of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) Champion Series in Asia and the Pacific, the Government of Cambodia together with the United Nations (UN) Regional Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific held the third regional consultation focusing on “Border management and labour migration in the COVID-19 recovery phase”. Guided by the GCM, including its guiding principles, the UN Charter and international law as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this series aims to accelerate and call to action safe, orderly, and regular migration. These consultations came at a timely moment in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its adverse socioeconomic impacts and exacerbated vulnerabilities amongst international migrants and their families left behind.
3. The information gathered through this consultation aimed to contribute to exchanges at regional consultative processes, such as the Colombo Process (Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia), the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML). In addition, the consultation also contributes to the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.
4. The series explored and analyzed various themes surrounding migration, and their critical intersection with the COVID-19 pandemic. The identification of progress, challenges, opportunities, and recommendations is captured through this outcome report. It forms part of the peer learning and dialogues through the Migration Network Hub and contributed to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) which was held in May 2022.

II. Objectives, Organizations and Attendance

5. 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.
6. The consultation aimed to support champion countries in achieving **GCM Objective 5** “enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration” and **Objective 11** “manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner”.
7. The consultation envisaged to contribute to specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly:
 - **Goal 3** – on good health and well-being given to ensure that the migrants are not left behind in the pandemic responses.
 - **Goal 5** – on gender equality given the exacerbated risks faced by women and girls during the pandemic, including women migrant workers who work mostly in the low-wage sector with less protection and who experience gender disparities and inequalities.
 - **Goal 8** – on decent work and economic growth as the consultation expected to serve as a platform for countries to discuss economic challenges on migrant workers and their families due to the pandemic
 - **Goal 10** – on reducing inequalities as an encompassing goal that includes the facilitation of orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people.
 - **Goal 17** – the consultation contributed to enhanced cooperation and partnerships among champion countries.
8. The expected outcomes were:
 - Produce a set of recommendations to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration including during the COVID-19 pandemic and potential future crises.
 - Good practices and lessons learnt documented to complement the recommendations.
 - Recommendations from the consultation would inform the International Migration Review Forum in May 2022 (IMRF).
9. Over seventy-five multi-stakeholder representatives from GCM Champion Governments, UN agencies, and stakeholders from various sectors related to migration attended the virtual consultation.
10. This report aims to be a non-exhaustive summary of recommendations and key points raised during the meeting.

III. Opening

11. H.E Chou Bun Eng, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior and Permanent Vice Chairperson of the National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) of Cambodia, expressed her gratitude to the UN Network on Migration for Asia and Pacific, especially Dr. Nnette Motus,

Regional Director for International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Regional Coordinator of the Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific (Network), for their facilitation and support in organizing the consultation.

12. H.E Chou Bun Eng highlighted during the past two decades, individual regions in all countries have been significantly hit by the impacts of various economic crises, including the one stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the living conditions of people around the world. She noted the dilemma that governments face between the demand for migrant labour for economic growth and development, and the need for border control to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and illegal border crossings. All governments should discuss and share good practices to solve these issues. H.E Chou Bun Eng expressed that she expected the consultation would contribute to socio-economic COVID-19 recovery and would help in responding to the need for resumption of human mobility with a human rights-based and inclusive approach that addresses needs of countries of origin and destination.

IV. Outcomes of the Meeting

A. The interdependence of integrated border management and labour migration in the socio-economic recovery from COVID-19 impact

13. Rebecca Napier-Moore, Technical Officer from the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the International Labour Organization (ILO), presented on migrant workers' job losses, changes in deployment and in-flows and labor migration governance issues that were highlighted during the pandemic, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness, timeliness, and rights protections of legal pathways and resuming labour migration without additional health related costs borne by migrants.
14. Dr. Asheena Khalakdina, Cambodia Country Team Leader of WHO Health Emergency Program (WHE) shared measures to rehabilitate and reopen points of entry (POE) under the International Health Regulations (IHR) and integrated border management practices. As POE play a huge role in understanding how the diseases spread across countries, WHO aims to continue to work on surveillance at POE.
15. Joyce Chau, Regional Director of global business association amfori, shared insights on migration governance from the perspective of regional and global labour supply chains and made recommendations for states, organizations, and businesses.

i. Challenges

16. In 2022, according to ILO data, eight point two per cent of working hours were lost compared to the last year, where women's employment decreased more than men's by three point eight per cent versus two point nine percent. In 2021, recovery of working hours stalled, with a gap of three point two per cent in the fourth quarter (Q4) to be recovered. Sectors with a high proportion of migrant workers such as oil and gas, seafaring, construction industries, manufacturing and hospitality were the ones hit the hardest by the pandemic. Migrant workers

who were laid off generally struggled to find employment upon returning to their countries of origin.

17. Major countries of origin in Asia were impacted by steep a fall in outgoing deployment in 2020. In the Philippines, there has been a slump of seventy-five per cent in outgoing deployment since 2019. In Indonesia, only forty-one per cent of people were deployed overseas in 2020 compared to 2019. In countries of destination, such as Thailand, there has been a huge decline in labour migration inflows. The admission of e-category visas in the Republic of Korea dropped to almost zero and the same happened in Japan in terms of employment visas. As the abatement of the pandemic is still uncertain, it is not projected that pre-pandemic labour migration levels will be reached in 2022.
18. As COVID-19 spreads easily in work settings with health and safety deficiencies and a lack of employer-provided personal protective equipment (PPE), migrant workers in several 'essential' sectors have been more susceptible to infection. In some ASEAN countries where there were high rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths, migrant workers had no access to quality preventative and responsive health care, including COVID-19 vaccinations and treatment. Similarly, internal migrants did not have access to the same resources as other non-migrant workers in the place of destination.
19. Many migrants were living in overcrowded housing during the pandemic. Even in pre-pandemic days, migrant workers faced sub-standard and crowded housing conditions. Therefore, deficiencies in housing became more acute when people started to go into quarantine. In Singapore, at one point, ninety per cent of COVID infections were in migrant dormitories. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Health acknowledged that cramped living conditions could have exacerbated the spread of COVID-19. In Thailand, studies showed that before the pandemic the sub-standard living conditions were already an issue among construction workers. Similarly, many domestic workers were compelled by law in some countries to live in the residence of their employers which lead to increase of workload along with isolation with their employers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
20. Eighty-seven per cent of the countries in Asia and the Pacific had implemented social protection measures, unemployment insurance and COVID-19 related support as of May 2021. However, migrant workers have been least supported as only five per cent of these measures allowed non-nationals to register. The inequality in treatment could exacerbate other structural inequalities that already exist for migrant workers, especially for women migrants. Access to social protection, which tends to privilege formal sector workers, is rife with gender inequality as a majority of migrant women are employed in the informal sector.
21. ILO revealed in a survey conducted in 2020 that among the migrant workers from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar to Thailand, only thirty-eight per cent entered through the regular channels. Regular channels are considered cumbersome, lengthy, and more costly than irregular channels. While paying less in recruitment costs and fees and being able to migrate faster, irregular migrant workers may earn less and have poorer employment conditions with less protection. Therefore, increasing the effectiveness of legal pathways is key to making regular migration a timely and cost-effective migration choice.

22. During the pandemic, border provinces managing large influxes of returning migrants at POE and quarantine practices were overwhelmed. When there was a high prevalence of infections among returning migrants, there were implications for the health system. Migrant workers faced challenges to access essential health services.
23. As prior investments at POE core capacities primarily focused on air travel, land crossings and ports were not as well prepared as airports.
24. Collecting migrant-specific data to inform decision making is still a challenge. Laboratory forms for isolation or quarantine should capture confidential disaggregated data for vulnerable populations including migrant workers, with privacy mechanisms in place.

ii. Opportunities

25. Although moderate, labour migration flows have started to increase in the region as border restrictions ease and new Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are signed. The practices of quarantine exemptions or stay at home requirements for vaccinated migrant workers are being followed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore.
26. As a response to sub-standard housing conditions, Malaysia revised regulations to improve workers housing standards in 2020. Over twenty-two thousand inspections were carried out in 2021, where about sixty-three point five per cent of the employers were found non-compliant. Similarly, Singapore revised standards for new dormitories in 2021. However, the overall national standards of migrant housing in Asian countries researched by ILO are still low. See: https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_838972/lang--en/index.htm
27. International Health Regulation IHR (2005) is a non-binding international guideline that aims to prevent, protect, control and provide public health responses to prevent the international spread of disease and avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade, so as to balance health, traffic, and trade. Asia and the Pacific strategies for emerging diseases and public health emergencies (APSED), which is guided by IHR, can be a framework for action for countries in this region to implement health standards.
28. In Cambodia, the COVID-19 response at land borders focused on prevention and control at POE and Quarantine Centers, healthcare capacity building in border provinces, key public health and social measures at arrival at land border such as health declaration, testing upon arrival, and either isolation or quarantine, maintain physical distance of at least one meter between persons, managing flows of travelers with separate pathways (those with and without symptoms) and essential health services (pregnancy, mental health and psychosocial support).
29. Organizations with knowledge of local laws of a country can use regional forums like ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) as a channel to bring these laws to the attention of international corporations operating in the country so that they understand better how to

comply with local policies of migrant protection, including providing safe working environment and implementing health standards in work settings.

30. During the pandemic, amfori introduced the *Guidance for Responsible Purchasing Practice* for top sourcing countries in Asia, encouraging, to maintain business relationships with top sourcing countries and prepare for the potential next wave of COVID-19 or any other future pandemic. amfori also worked with third-party auditing partners to identify problems, such as child and forced labour issues, with buyers and sellers and use continuous improvement approaches instead of penalties to contribute towards fair labour recruitment practices.

iii. Recommendations

31. Health requirements/regulations should be applied equally to all categories of migrants regardless of their purpose of entry or status e.g., work, tourism, business etc.
32. Additional costs associated with COVID-19 such as testing, quarantine and health insurance should not be borne by migrant workers and such regulations should be enforced through a more standardized approach in countries of origin and destination.
33. Fully vaccinated migrant workers (subject to pandemic developments) should be exempted from paid quarantine of more than one day as this significantly increases costs for the migrant worker.
34. Labour mobility may be facilitated in line with labour market requirements, and the formal channels to be stream-lined to reduce time and cost. Without impinging on the rights of States to control their borders, the human and labour rights of all migrant workers, including those who are undocumented should also be upheld. Reference to ILO Convention 143, migrant workers being granted rights to remuneration, social security, and other benefits.
35. Countries to continue strengthening risk management at POE as one of the most important intervention points for COVID-19 response. Collaboration and coordination within provinces, between provinces and across-borders during crises, and strong provincial leadership are critical for effective land border management during crises. Enhance attention to and investment in strengthening POE management beyond COVID-19, including training surge capacity and conducting simulation exercises. Strengthen quarantine systems and standardize the sharing of information on border measures to support decision making.
36. Countries are recommended to lift or ease testing and quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated travelers, consider the local situation and level of risk. Laboratory testing for end of isolation or quarantine may be optional depending upon local policies, the epidemic situation and risk tolerance. It is also recommended to monitor implementation of and continually calibrate international border measures based on the latest information and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination to effectively manage travelers at POE, especially related to quarantine systems and logistics support.

37. Countries of origin and destination to strengthen policy integration on migration governance and communicate legal requirements and labour migration health protection measures in national languages.
38. Implement collective actions to strengthen monitoring of recruitment agencies and, engage with supply chain actors for best practices in enforcement and enhance capacity building for employers and workers.

B. Sharing of experiences (good practices, challenges, and recommendations) on border management and labour migration in the COVID-19 recovery phase by champion countries

39. Representatives of the GCM Champion Countries shared good practices, challenges, and recommendations on border management and protection of migrants' rights. *The GCM Champion Countries addressed here are in alphabetical order below.*

i. Challenges

40. H.E Chou Bun Eng, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior and Permanent Vice Chairperson of the National Committee for Counter Trafficking in persons (NCCT) of Cambodia noted that due to the restriction of border closure caused by the pandemic, some migrants made attempts to circumvent border control and quarantine measures. On the other hand, due to COVID-19, from 2020 up to now, about three hundred thousand Cambodian migrant workers returned to Cambodia from hosting countries.
41. There are cases of Cambodian migrants working in countries of destination that are undocumented. Therefore, it remains a challenge for Cambodian authorities to obtain clear, timely, and disaggregated data of these migrants. This hampers the government's ability to make timely and effective responses.
42. Lynda Wardhani, a representative from Indonesia, noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hampered the global economy and created unprecedented challenges to migrants and their families in both countries of origin and destinations. At the beginning of the pandemic, there were approximately nine million Indonesian migrants overseas according to the World Bank. Indonesia anticipated the return of a large number of migrants due to the conclusion of their contracts and the severance of contracts as the result of the pandemic.
43. Dr. Thaneshwar Bhusal, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal, noted as Nepal shares an open border with India, it is extraordinarily complex to manage, particularly in challenging times like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that causes changes to mobility patterns.
44. Currently, over four million Nepali migrants are working or resettling in India and three million in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries and Malaysia. But due to the open border with India, Nepal has less plausible data of Nepali migrant workers in India than those in GCC countries and Malaysia. Another challenge brought by the pandemic was during the implementation of national lock down due to high COVID-19 infection rates causing many

Nepali migrant workers to be stranded near Indian borders for weeks and vice versa for Indian migrant workers in Nepal.

45. Hon. Sarah Lou Y. Arriola, Under Secretary for Migrants Workers' Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippines, shared that border management is always at the core of promoting mobility. It has a significant impact on the movement of people, the country's resources, and economic development. Mobility of migrants has been adversely affected since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
46. Border closures and travel restrictions often lead migrants to engage in unscrupulous activities that affect migrants and their families left behind. Filipinos are the largest group of seafarers serving the global maritime shipping industry, hence the importance of protecting their health and ensuring their mobility, play a critical role as essential workers in global trade and economic recovery. The Philippines is an archipelago of seven thousand islands; thus, it faces enormous difficulties in organizing the return of foreign workers to their respective homeland.
47. Pitchayadet Osathanonn from the National Security Council of Thailand recognized the serious impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on millions of vulnerable people across the world, especially migrant workers. The importance of paying attention to health social and economic well-being of migrant workers was highlighted by the speaker. Thailand has been adversely impacted by COVID-19, as in many other countries, but it did not diminish its efforts of implementing the Global Compact for Migration.

ii. Opportunities

48. Despite restriction of border closure, the Cambodian government responded to the arrival of returned workers by receiving and taking care their health, providing basic support, and taking measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
49. The Cambodian government also collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Inter-Pacific Association (UNIPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in monitoring and elevating the living conditions of returned migrants. H.E Chou Bun Eang noted that the Ministry of Health of Cambodia worked with IOM by involving many stakeholders to establish and endorse the Migrant Health Policy and set up a 10-year Strategic Implementation Plan. On the other hand, the Cambodian Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training has also coordinated with other countries to find the appropriate way to manage the flow of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.
50. Indonesia has worked to maintain a delicate balance between protecting the health and safety of its domestic society and prioritizing the safe and dignified return for its migrant workers. At the height of the pandemic, quarantine and PCR tests were made obligatory to people arriving from overseas but the cost of these were borne by the government. Vaccinations prior to placement were also offered free of charge. Indonesia has improved its border regulations by adopting automation and digitization to ensure seamless access for migrant workers. The mandatory app "Portal Peduli Lindungi" was launched to track down and prevent the spread

of the pandemic. An International Standard vaccine certificate was issued which can be recognized by other countries. In addition, the electronic Health Alert Card (e-HAC) was made mandatory for all travelers.

51. Indonesia has enlisted the assistance of regional governments to facilitate migrant workers to return to country of origin. In order to protect migrant workers, Indonesia has temporarily stopped the regular migrant placement overseas and this policy has been gradually eased following the advice of Indonesian missions overseas.
52. Regarding migrant workers' social and economic wellbeing, Indonesia has ensured that social security for migrant workers remain in place. Food and medical assistance are provided to Indonesian workers who remain overseas yet are severely impacted by the pandemic. Indonesia has expanded the number of stakeholders involved to make sure that not only the need of developing migrants' capacity is covered, but also provides further economic opportunities for them. Internally, Indonesia has strengthened collaboration between central and provincial governments down to village authorities. It has also enlisted financial institutions to help migrants develop financial literacy and this collaboration is also geared towards providing comprehensive health insurance to migrants and their families.
53. In addition, Indonesia has also strengthened its cooperation with regional countries. Indonesia and Malaysia have agreed on a single-channel mechanism as the only legal channel for recruitment and placement of Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia. This mechanism ensures that Indonesian migrant workers' placement is recorded in both countries, leading to better protection for migrant workers. Indonesian missions overseas also work with local governments to help ensure the fulfillment of the rights of Indonesian migrant workers. Indonesia has also been actively cooperating with international organizations. Indonesia and IOM have agreed on a Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund to help Indonesia with further capacity-building.
54. The Nepali Government has been working closely with the Indian Government using several national and local mechanisms to curb the challenges generated by open borders. At the national level, high-level policy special committees comprising federal government entities have been established. At the local level, it has been an administrative tradition in both countries that local authorities like district administrators in Nepal and magistrates in India meet on a regular basis. There are also mechanisms within the jurisdictions of Nepal and Indian police that enable deliberations on migration issues.
55. When many Nepali migrant workers remained stranded near Indian borders for weeks, the Indian Government and non-profit organizations provided necessary food, shelter, and travel assistance to stranded Nepali migrant workers. Similar actions were also taken near southern borders of Nepal to support stranded Indian migrant workers.
56. As three million Nepali migrants are working in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries and Malaysia, Nepal has signed bilateral agreements and MOUs with many of these countries to facilitate the mobility of Nepali migrant workers.

57. The Philippines takes a rights-based and proactive approach in border management, prioritizing the protection of migrants' safety, and makes sure that its borders remain safe and available to Filipino migrants returning to the country and going back to work overseas. It facilitated the repatriation of almost two million Filipinos during this pandemic. It even facilitated the expatriation of foreign nationals in the country who wish to return to their respective homeland, surmounting the inherent obstacle on an archipelago of over seven thousand islands.
58. As the Philippines enters the COVID-19 recovery phase, the government focuses on the efficient rollout of vaccination program. Its official digital vaccination certificate called VaxCertPH is issued to those vaccinated in the Philippines, free of charge and compliant with international standards. The Philippines makes sure that everyone has access to vaccinations regardless of their nationality and status.
59. With the largest group of seafarers serving the world's shipping industry, the Philippines recognizes their critical role as essential workers in global trade and economic recovery. It has developed a new policy for seafarers, allowing them to do crew change in Philippine ports, while minimizing the risk of COVID-19.
60. Thailand has been working closely with its neighboring countries, namely Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia on the MOU on migrant labour to allow migrant workers to complete their working terms and carry on working in Thailand, without having to return to their countries and resubmit request to work in Thailand again.
61. In addition, Thailand also allows irregular migrant workers from Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Cambodia to temporarily stay and work in Thailand during the pandemic. And irregular migrant workers will not be prosecuted under Thai immigration law. The Thai Ministry of Labour is also working to addressing the core factors that compel migrants to cross border illegally, while attracting migrant workers from neighboring countries to ease labour shortage.
62. After the adoption of the GCM, detention of migrant children has been prohibited under Thai law. A MOU on the alternative to detention of children in immigration detention center signed in 2019 stipulates that assistance and services should be provided to migrant children under the age of eighteen, and detention should be the last resort and be used for the shortest possible duration.
63. As the COVID-19 situation is improving in Thailand, it is setting a goal to fully open since it is necessary for national economy and people's well-being. Thailand has decided to lower visa fees and cut short quarantine periods for vaccinated migrants. It has provided vaccination to nearly seven hundred thousand migrant workers. The Ministry of Labour has set up vaccination centers in Bangkok and mobile units in all provinces to provide free vaccines for documented and undocumented migrant workers.

iii. Recommendations

64. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to keep the border open, not only for economic recovery, but also for the protection of migrants. To ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration countries need to strengthen international collaboration by harmonizing migration procedures, stepping up communication between origin and destination countries, sharing information on health-related trends and managing borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinated matter.
65. Countries of origin and destination need to strengthen coordination, as migration is not a one-way movement but works in a two-way manner instead. For example, when Middle East countries, which host many Filipino migrant workers, are reforming the Kafala sponsorship mechanism, they receive support from the government of Philippines to jointly overcome the resistance from the local big businesses and general population in hosting countries.
66. In addition, as important as it is to sign MoUs, it is also important to consider effective implementation, which requires close coordination and cooperation between countries. It is also important to respect national sovereignty, the rule of law, international law and the human rights of migrants regardless of their migration status, and take a non-discriminatory, gender responsive and child-sensitive approach in migration governance.
67. Every country is responsible for providing regular pathways for migration, as well as managing its borders to provide better protection for migrants. In this regard, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is essential. A multi-sectoral and integrated approach to border management is important for different agencies working on migration in one country to work together. More practical and flexible policy responses are required and adjustment of responses when required.
68. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some migrant workers have had to bear extra costs such as PCR tests before departure and after arrival, and mandatory quarantine upon entry. Per the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, adopted by a Tripartite Meeting of Experts, held in Geneva in November 2018, migrant workers shall not be charged directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or related costs for their recruitment. It was suggested that countries in the region could harmonize and streamline health related migration requirements.
69. Both countries of origin and destination should ensure that there are procedures in place for family reunification for migrants of all skill levels and help migrants who are not able to communicate with their families. To better protect migrants from exploitation and violence, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, and time-sensitive approaches should be taken in border management. More importantly, children must come first and foremost. All relevant policies must have the best interest of children, both migrant children and children left behind, as a primary consideration. The promotion of regular pathways of migration is key so that migration can be an opportunity for children and their families.

C. Summary and way forward

70. Nicola Brandt from UNICEF shared the summary and way forward. Some of the key takeaways in terms of challenges of the consultation include access to health services, severe deficiencies in migrant worker accommodations, discrimination against migrants upon returning home and significant lack of data on migrants, especially of those who are undocumented. However, the crisis can be taken as an opportunity to highlight issues in migrant worker accommodations and advocacy. There was emphasis on the need to include migrants and non-nationals in social protection responses. Development of a code of conduct and guidelines for responsible purchasing practices is crucial.
71. Similarly, some of the lessons learned included the importance of keeping borders open not only for economic recovery but also to protect migrants. One country cannot manage migration on their own, so it was emphasized that multi-sectoral and integrated border management approaches, coordination, and cooperation among countries of origin and destination are crucial to manage flows, especially of undocumented migrants. Enhance the availability, effectiveness, and flexibility of pathways for regular migration to establish procedures to keep families, of migrants of all skill level, together and to ensure the migrants can communicate with their families.
72. Protection from exploitation and violence was also highlighted. Border management policies need to be non-discriminatory, gender responsive and sensitive. Regarding children, all policies must have the best interests of children as a primary consideration, regardless of their migration status. In cross border situations, identification and referrals screening are particularly important to have procedures in place to protect migrants, especially unaccompanied and separated children. The promotion of regular pathways for migration and management of borders are the key so that migration can be an opportunity for children, migrant workers, and their families.
73. More broadly, government policies need to be more practical and flexible. Particularly, countries of origin require flexible labor policies to include health care and other services for migrant workers. Examples shared in terms of digitalization efforts were remarkably effective. For instance, Indonesia launched a mandatory app to track and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, the government of Philippines issued digital vaccination certificates, that are free of charge and compliant with international standards.

D. Closing Remarks

74. The meeting successfully concluded with closing remarks by Dr. Nnette Motus, Regional Director for the International Organization for Migration and Regional Coordinator of the Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific. She thanked all participants for the productive discussions on behalf of the Regional UN Network for Migration in Asia and the Pacific (IOM, ILO, OHCHR, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, ESCAP, UNDRR, UN Women, UNODC, UNEP, UNFCCC, UNESCO, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDCO). She stressed that the event would serve as an important reminder for all of us to continue to work and advocate towards ensuring regular migration pathways and well-equipped border management

mechanisms which have become especially challenging amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcomes of the meeting are envisaged to feed into preparations of Champion Countries for the International Migration Review Forum in New York in May 2022.

AGENDA

Time (GMT+7)	Topic/Speaker
09.00 – 09.05	Welcome and introduction by overall co-moderators H.E Chou Bun Eng, The Royal Government of Cambodia and Kristin Parco, International Organization for Migration and Coordinator of UN Network on Migration in Cambodia
09.05 – 09.10	Opening remarks by H.E Chou Bun Eng, The Royal Government of Cambodia
09.10 – 09.45	<p>Session 1 - The interdependence of integrated border management and labour migration in the socio-economic recovery from COVID-19 impact (15 mins per panelist)</p> <p>Co- Moderated by Geertrui Lanneau and Laura Scorretti, International Organization for Migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Speaker: Rebecca Napier-Moore, International Labour Organization • Panel Speaker: Dr. Asheena Khalakdina, World Health Organization • Panel Speaker: Joyce Chau, amfori
09.45 – 10.15	Q&A and moderated discussion
10.15 – 11.15	<p>Session 2 - Sharing of experiences (good practices, challenges, and recommendations) by champion countries (5-7 mins each)</p> <p>Moderated by H.E Chou Bun Eng, The Royal Government of Cambodia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nepal 2. Indonesia 3. Philippines 4. Thailand
11.15 – 11.45	Q&A
11.45 – 11.55	Summary and way forward: Nicola Brandt, UNICEF
11.55 – 12.00	Closing remarks by Dr. Nnette Motus, Regional Director for International Organization for Migration and Regional Coordinator of UN Network on Migration for Asia and Pacific