



CHAIR'S SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS *(as delivered)*

Dr. Carmelita S. Dimzon

Philippines

Chairperson, GFMD Migration Profiles Workshop

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Undersecretary Sonny Conejos, Jr., Undersecretary Danilo P. Cruz, Ms. Beata Godenzi, Director Ovais Sarmad, dear Participants and Observers, Resource Persons and Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen:

At the conclusion of this meeting, we ask: have we achieved a common understanding of Migration Profile? Are we convinced about its usefulness in the context of our respective laws, rules and country requirements? Have we shared views on why it is generally difficult to come up with an integrated, systematic or organized migration data among our countries? Have we identified opportunities so that we can hurdle these difficulties? Were we able to assess whether in Asia the migration information we have is somewhere near the migration profile template? Have we identified ways on how to proceed from here?

Migration Profile Concept, Tools, and Processes

The high level of interaction that followed the presentation of the resource experts on migration profile concept, tools and processes confirms a high level of interest of our government in having an organized, reliable and integrated migration information. Recognizing the peculiar laws, rules and requirement of each country, we upheld the need for flexibility in terms of the information content of each country profile. It is

emphasized that more than the output (or a document that will have to be put on the shelf after it is prepared), migration profile should be as an important process for engaging government agencies to jointly and continuously use migration information for policy making.

We are aware of certain concerns in the implementation of migration profile: transparency could be an issue among sending countries who compete for labor market shares; the readiness of sending and receiving countries to fully disclose migration information; and the capacity of governments to integrate/harmonize their country given the many agencies involved in processing migration information.

Best Practices and Practical Application

We saw that migration profile is useful to governments because it helps us improve long-term policy decisions on the movement of our people vis-à-vis our respective development needs.

We are pleased to report that each country has already achieved to a large extent efforts on migration data collection and application:

- For planning investments and development, such as in **Vietnam, Pakistan and Malaysia**
- For bilateral agreements, such as in **Cambodia**
- For planning the social integration program for citizens resulting from the inter-marriage in **Korea**
- For emergency preparedness and crisis management, as in the case of the **Philippines**
- For reintegration, in the case of **Nepal**
- For affording foreign workers adequate protection through a registration and legislation system, as in the case of **Malaysia** which is a destination country

- For addressing irregular migration and high cost of recruitment and placement as in the case of **Thailand**
- And for tracking overseas workers for long-term development needs thru the development of an ID card with biometrics, as in the case of **Bangladesh**.

The challenge to all countries, as pointed out by **Switzerland**, is that, even with an existing system of collection and integrating migration data, whether the information is actually used or it influences policy.

New Demands and Challenges

We had very candid and open discussions about new demands and challenges in coming up with migration profile. Different forces and pressured today compel us to get our migration data more organize and used for development planning, primarily of which is visa liberalization which has greatly induced labour mobility and ironically made it more difficult to track movements. Development issues such as brain drain/brain gain, social costs of migration, health, protection of migrant workers, remittances channelling, and reintegration of workers are also compelling our governments to have more organized and useful migration data. Within the context of international cooperation, migration profile is very important for negotiations for bilateral agreements, and for funding cooperative projects in the case of international organizations. And finally governance, particularly now that open governments are requiring information to be accessible, available and published to its citizens.

While we are convinced about the importance of migration profile, we also pointed out the challenges namely: capacity in terms of people, budget and technology; lack of structure or mandate on who is primarily accountable for migration data; and inadequacy of data – for some of us data are collected but not processed, and other process them but not disseminate them. Disclosure policy is another concern: the difficulty of

having data on 3rd country movements, trafficked and undocumented workers; the willingness of countries to share information; and issues concerning human rights. Finally, there is lack of priority given by governments to do and finance efforts on migration information and mainstreaming these in development planning. Even when there are laws that mandate systematic migration data management, political will is lacking to enforce it.

The challenge, in very simple term, is how to get our governments, stakeholders and partners get seriously interested in migration information. The opportunities for achieving coherence in policies with organized migration information are immense: we look for international cooperation, public-private partnership and multi-level data collection systems.

Mapping existing migration gaps and needs

With the presentation on country survey and review of existing on migration information systems, we recognize that origin countries tend to have more data on outflows while destination countries appear to be more focused on inflow data. Censuses and national surveys are potential sources of comparable data, but harmonization remains to be a very big challenge. And one important point, the information should go beyond labour migration.

As we consider the integration and sharing of data across countries and within the region, the concerns for standards, coding and comparability come to fore. Existing regional alliances, such as the Colombo Process could be a fertile ground, for starting this kind of cooperation, with the support of the international community on capacity building.

Towards the end of the seminar, each country had reflections and shared briefly the ways they have identified on the way forward. We will be interested to know the outcome of the Action Plan.

Closing

The Chair wishes to acknowledge the very active participation of each country delegate and resource experts, moderators and facilitators, the international organizations and the Philippine observers. I thank everyone for the very engaging and enriching debates that the 2-day meeting had.