



CLOSING REMARKS *(as delivered)*

HON. ESTEBAN CONEJOS, JR.

Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs

GFMD Manila Regional Thematic Meeting, 21 October 2011

Honourable Carmelita Dimzon, Chair of the Meeting; Secretary Imelda Nicolas, Undersecretary Danilo P. Cruz, Ms. Beata Godenzi, Representative of the Swiss Chair-in-Office, Mr. Ovais Sarmad, Chief of Mission – IOM Philippines, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Philippine Government, I wish to congratulate and thank the organizers, speakers, moderators, and participants for a successful workshop.

I also extend my deep appreciation to the Swiss Chairmanship of the GFMD, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the International Organization for Migration for their invaluable support to the Philippines in hosting this meeting.

When the organizing committee met with the IOM to plan for this conference, we had very modest goals. Aware of the fact that the idea of Migration Profiles is relatively new to many of us, we simply wanted an opportunity to present the concept and, thereafter, elicit some kind of incipient interest from the participants.

Your collective response exceeded our expectations. Yesterday, when our moderator did rounds among the participating countries, everyone expressed a keen interest to pursue Migration Profiles. This interest was later reinforced by your active participation in the discussion and generous sharing of experiences and insights.

The challenge for us now is how to sustain the momentum. The first thing we should do when we return home is to convince our respective ministries that Migration Profiles is the way forward towards greater policy and institutional coherence in the field of migration and development. For as we all know, political will and ownership by our respective governments is crucial for this initiative to succeed.

Beyond securing the commitment of our governments, we will have to link up in the future with IOM, the other members of the GMG, the EU, perhaps, and other interested stakeholders for capacity building and technical assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, next week it will be exactly three years since the Philippines successfully hosted the 2nd GFMD here in Manila. One of the enduring legacies of the Manila GFMD was the establishment of two Working Groups on “Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development” and on “Policy Institutional Coherence, Data and Research”.

I am pleased to say that this two-day workshop on “Migration Profiles as a Tool for Informed Policy Making, Integration and Reintegration, and Emergency Preparedness and Response”, we have advanced considerably our advocacy for more evidenced-based migration and development policy and program.

There is much work ahead of us, but our efforts here on Migration Profiles should be one of the important contributions to the Concluding Debate on the GFMD in Geneva this December.

Maraming salamat, at Mabuhay tayong lahat!