

As at 21 April 2011

Dhaka Declaration of Colombo Process Member Countries

WE, THE MINISTERS OF THE COLOMBO PROCESS MEMBER COUNTRIES, GATHERED IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH ON THE 20TH AND 21ST APRIL 2011 IN THE FOURTH LABOUR MIGRATION MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS FOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN ASIA;

Affirming the theme of the Meeting – “Migration with Dignity”, to focus on all related aspects of labour migration that impact on the rights, welfare, dignity and well-being of migrant workers;

Acknowledging that the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families, and improving the welfare, dignity and well-being of migrant workers, especially those of women, remain a constant and formidable challenge;

Recognizing the contribution of migrant workers to the development of both countries of origin and countries of destination;

Also recognizing the contribution of countries of destination to the development of effective approaches to the management of overseas employment;

Acknowledging that the shift in demographic patterns as well as changes in employment structures in many countries create a situation of mutual interest and benefit for labour surplus and deficit countries;

Recognizing that sustained bilateral and regional consultations can significantly contribute to the pursuit of humane and orderly labour migration management;

Reaffirming the importance of further strengthening the engagement and dialogue amongst countries of origin, destination and transit to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers and ensure their welfare, dignity and well-being;

Recognizing that labour migration from Countries of Origin in Asia has been increasingly feminized in recent years, with employment opportunities and number of destinations for women migrant workers increasing worldwide;

Taking note of the adverse impact of the recent global financial and economic crisis on labour migration;

Also taking note with concern of the impact of the recent political unrest and conflicts in certain parts of the world, including in some key destination countries for Asian migrant workers;

Appreciating the efforts by the Colombo Process Member Countries to take forward the consultative process, with continued support from relevant international organizations, particularly the International Organization of Migration (IOM), including for the study entitled

“Labour Migration from Colombo Process Countries: Good Practices, Challenges and Ways Forward”;

MAKE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Promoting Rights, Welfare and Dignity:

- i) To ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of all migrants and their families, including their social and economic rights, as well as improving the welfare, dignity and well-being of all migrant workers, especially women;
- ii) To develop employment and labour market policies and formulate rules, regulations and procedures that are conducive to the pursuit of legal, humane and orderly labour migration;
- iii) To eliminate all forms of occupational and socio-cultural discriminations against migrant workers.
- iv) To promote Decent Work for migrant workers, including in low-skill and low-wage sectors, and to design employment contracts based on existing good practice models;
- v) To develop and streamline policy, legal and institutional mechanisms to eliminate unethical practices concerning migrant workers including deduction/non-payment in violation of contractual provisions rationalize migration costs, promote transparency and openness in recruitment processes, strengthen monitoring and supervision of recruitment practices, and prevent slippage of regular migrant workers into any form of irregularities;
- vi) To effectively address the specific needs and concerns of vulnerable groups of migrant workers, especially women, domestic workers, low-skilled and low-wage workers;
- vii) To promote rest and recreation facilities for migrant workers and their families, increase opportunities for family reunion, and facilitate their access to basic services, particularly education;
- viii) To promote the implementation of migrant-inclusive health policies to ensure equitable access to health care and services as well as occupational safety and health for migrant workers;

2. Services and Capacity Building:

- i) To strengthen information and advocacy campaigns in collaboration with the concerned stakeholders to brief and advise potential migrant workers and their families about safe and legal employment opportunities as well as the risks associated with irregular migration;

- ii) To strengthen information and advocacy campaigns for sensitizing migrant workers about the benefits accruing from formal remittance channels, and develop policy incentives and institutional mechanisms and programmes to streamline the flow of remittances through formal channels, including reducing cost of remittance, and promote their productive use for development gains;
- iii) To invest in skills training and development of potential migrant workers to secure their employment opportunities in occupational areas where such labour and skills are in demand, and to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications and certifications;
- iv) To promote employment and labour markets research capacity, to duly assess the current and projected labour markets' needs as well as the shifting demographic trends and employment structures;
- v) To support capacity building of national partners, including employers' and workers' organizations, non-governmental organizations and migrant workers' organizations to help gather, organize and disseminate relevant legal, procedural, labour market, socio-economic and socio-cultural information to migrant workers;
- vi) To promote establishment of institutional mechanisms such as one-stop migrant workers' resource centres to provide information, orientation courses and services to migrant workers, including in pre-departure and post-arrival situations;
- vii) To continue to build capacity of labour welfare, consular and immigration offices with a view to enhancing provision of needed support services to migrant workers, especially women;
- viii) To encourage mobility in job market, consistent with national regulations.

3. **Emergency Response and Emerging Issues:**

- i) To develop appropriate policy and institutional response capacity to mitigate the impact of emergency situations on migrant workers, including ensuring their safety, security and well-being as well as early evacuation, repatriation, compensation and opportunities to return to their jobs;
- ii) To further explore the possible nexus between environmental degradation and climate change on one hand and human mobility on the other, and its likely implications on labour migration;

4. **Enhanced Dialogue and Cooperation:**

- i) To strengthen information exchange and sharing of best practices on labour migration management among the Colombo Process Member Countries;

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- ii) To promote enhanced dialogue and cooperation among countries of origin, destination and transit to address issues concerning migrant workers;
- iii) To encourage participation in regular bilateral, regional and multilateral consultations on labour migration issues, involving, among others, relevant regional and international organizations;
- iv) To follow up on these recommendations through regular consultations, including at the Ministerial level.

ADOPT THE OPERATING MODALITIES FOR THE COLOMBO PROCESS (ATTACHED);

AGREE THAT THE FIFTH COLOMBO PROCESS MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN IN ASIA (COLOMBO PROCESS) WILL BE HELD IN 2013;

EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FOR CHAIRING THE MEETING AND THE EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDED.

Adopted in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 21 April 2011 by the attending Ministers of the following countries:

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
People's Republic of Bangladesh,
People's Republic of China,
Republic of India,
Republic of Indonesia,
Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal,
Islamic Republic of Pakistan,
Republic of the Philippines,
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka,
Kingdom of Thailand,
Socialist Republic of Vietnam.