



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

IOM Statement

23rd Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Program Ministerial Conference 17-18 November 2019, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by thanking the Kingdom of Cambodia for hosting this important event.

According to UN data, the Greater Mekong sub-region today hosts an estimated ten million international migrants out of a global total of some 270 million¹. About seven million international migrants in the GMS originate from other Southeast Asian countries².

Their migration is largely driven by private sector demand for their labour in neighbouring GMS states. IOM believes that the protection of their rights is therefore a joint responsibility shared by sending and receiving governments, and by their employers.

IOM, as the UN Migration Agency, works with stakeholders throughout labour supply chains to promote ethical recruitment and protect the rights of migrant workers worldwide.

Here in the GMS region, IOM recognizes the importance of migrant worker contributions through its PROMISE initiative, which focuses on Poverty Reduction

¹ United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), 2019

² UNDESA, 2015



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through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

The initiative seeks to define a clear pathway to promote better employment opportunities and working conditions for migrants, especially women, through safe migration and skills development, in partnership with governments, the private sector, training institutions and civil society.

Its objective is consistent with IOM's global mandate - to promote safe orderly and regular migration for all – and to leave no one behind.

IOM also manages the Corporate Responsibility to Eliminate Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) initiative - a regional partnership that aims to realize the potential of businesses to uphold the human and labour rights of migrant workers in their operations and supply chains.

CREST works together with companies to build a strong commitment to eliminate modern day slavery and implement ethical recruitment standards that address migrant workers' vulnerabilities. It encourages collaboration across industries and stakeholders to achieve sustainable change.

Migration can bring significant benefits, but it can also pose potential challenges. One of these is the health of migrants and host communities. IOM supports governments across the GMS to promote the health of migrants and ensure access to health services along migration pathways.

With support from ADB under the Regional Capacity Development Technical Assistance Project in 2016-2018, IOM implemented three projects to pilot worksite-



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based systems to address malaria among migrant workers in Myanmar, Cambodia and the Lao PDR.

IOM is also supporting and engaged with the GMS Health Cooperation Strategy and is pleased to see recognition of the importance of migrant health within this strategy under pillar 2: health impacts of connectivity and mobility.

With the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration late last year, IOM stands ready to advance our regional cooperation with partners in this region.

I look forward to today's discussions and welcome your thoughts on how IOM can best contribute to the GMS Strategy 2030, and to the GMS Regional Investment Framework 2022.

Thank you for your kind attention.