

Statement by

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Security of Nepal and the Chair of Colombo Process**

**at the 8th Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Consultative Processes
on Migration**

Advancing a common understanding of migration governance across regions

Session 3: Structures and Sustainability

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to speak at this event as the Chair of the Colombo Process. I would like to thank the moderator for the comprehensive introduction of the theme of this session, “Structures and Sustainability” so as to share the experience of the Colombo Process and to learn from colleagues’ experiences of your respective processes.

Established in 2003, the Colombo Process is a regional consultative process on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour that aims to provide a forum for 12 Asian labour sending countries to:

- Share experiences, lessons learned and best practices on overseas employment;
- Consult on issues faced by overseas workers, labour sending and receiving states, and propose practical solutions for the well-being of vulnerable overseas workers;
- Optimize development benefits from organized overseas employment, and enhance dialogue with countries of destination; and
- Review and monitor the implementation of the recommendations and identify further steps for action.

While other RCPs also include labour migration in their discussions, the CP is the only one of two RCPs (ADD is the other) to focus exclusively on overseas employment and contractual labour. Though small in number, this group of countries in fact represent half of the global population sending 2.5 million more migrant workers to the global labour markets every year. The Colombo Process strength is in its members coming together with a shared interest to ensure that rights, dignity, and well-being of our migrant workers are upheld in destination countries outside the region – “overseas”.

Enabling such exchanges and progress requires a sustainable structure, one that ensures states’ independent ownership of the deliberations through regular and predictable dialogue, also at the technical level.

The Colombo Process Operating Modalities, first adopted at the Ministerial Consultation under the Bangladesh Chair in 2011, and then amended at the 2016 Ministerial Consultation under the Sri Lanka Chair, consolidate the modus operandi of the CP to ensure its sustainability and predictability, and to provide guidance on the rotation of the Chair to ensure the convening of regular meetings and engagements of its members (support a manageable and sustainable functioning of the process).

Included within these Modalities are:

1. **Rotational Chair:** an intended, two-year Chair term on a voluntary, alphabetical rotation basis among the twelve member countries. The Chair is responsible for: reviewing the CP’s current program of action to identify priority areas and potential new ones in consultation with Member States; facilitating dialogue and consensus building among the members including through the convening of two Senior Officials Meetings and one Ministerial

Consultation at the capital-level during its two-year term as well as expert, working-level meetings in Geneva to further coordinate and facilitate regular dialogue to support consensus building among capital-based, relevant line ministry official representatives. The Chair further represents the Colombo Process at other relevant official events, including with other ISCMs to share information and enhance CP visibility in line with the CP Member States decisions. Finally, but not only, the Chair collects requests for CP membership and observership by States, UN agencies, and other international and regional organizations. More recently, civil society has been given the opportunity to participate and share expertise in selected open sessions during CP official consultations (SOMs and Ministerials, and on the GCM specifically).

2. **Colombo Process Secretariat:** A de-facto Secretariat is provided through IOM at the capital and Geneva levels, at the request of the Chair, to offer technical/substantive and institutional support to the CP at this RCP's various consultations: the Geneva, regional, and country level including SOMs, Ministerials, Thematic Area Working Groups, and Geneva-level consultations; additional fundraising for joint projects and feasibility assessments on advancing thematic priorities; assisting with research and studies, and coordinating Member States' representatives at various levels to facilitate communication among CP Member States.
3. **Financial considerations:** At the 2016 CP Ministerial Consultation, under the Sri Lanka Chair, the CP Member States adopted a 'Self-funding Mechanism' to enhance the predictability and regularity of CP meetings as well as to ensure the independence of the CP and its agreed priorities, whereby each Member State submits an annual contribution to support the costs of

SOM and Ministerial Meetings. IOM administers the contributions at the Chair's instructions on for how these are used and accounted for. The Chair reports to the Member States on the use of their contributions.

- 4. The case of the Colombo Process Technical Support Unit:** Additionally to the stipulations of the Operating Modalities, thematic-related funding has been provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation as an initial project from 2015-2019. This funding finances a Technical Support Unit based in Colombo to facilitate the sharing of good practices, innovative policies and challenges related to the CP's thematic priorities at the expert level. The CPTSU facilitates the convening and reporting on outcomes of CP thematic area working groups and other expert level meetings, symposia and workshops, maintaining an online repository and website, and the commissioning research work to inform policy considerations. Recommendations from the Thematic Area Working Groups and reports on their work feature prominently as a standard item in all agendas and outcome recommendations of higher-level Colombo Process consultations, whether Senior Official or Ministerial level. Although the CP Technical Support Unit has been funded thus far as a time-bound project, the CP Member States agreed at the Ministerial Consultation last November 2018 to explore modalities on how to further sustain this structure so as to facilitate concrete progress on the CP's thematic priorities.

Other funding for thematic related initiatives have included: joint CP-ADD implemented projects, EU-funded research on ethical recruitment and the labour market, and Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) funding to conduct workshops and technology-focused applications to build capacities

on consular support to migrant workers.

The structures described above exemplify the Colombo Process approach to supporting a concerted vision on migration governance. By maintaining an inclusive process where regular dialogue occurs at various levels both in-person and virtually, the Colombo Process has helped to foster common approaches towards labour migration governance within the region, and more concretely, has contributed to global governance through the development of recommendations and their accepted incorporation of the CP's thematic priorities into the Global Compact for Migration. Under the Nepal Chair, through the adoption of the 2018 Ministerial Declaration, The CP now has also committed to contributing to GCM implementation through the activities outlined within its thematic priorities.

I thank you for the opportunity to share the experience of how the Colombo Process has developed structures to enable a more sustainable approach to our work with the ultimate objective to protect our migrant workers. And, I deeply appreciate learning from other ISCMs on your sustainable practices to achieve a shared goal – good migration governance.