

Closing Remarks
by Mr. Ittiporn Boonpracong,
Deputy Director General of the Department of International
Organizations,
at the Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional
Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs)
5 June 2009
The Pullman King Power Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

.....

Excellencies,
 Ladies and gentlemen,
 Dear friends,

It has been an enjoyable and enriching experience to co-chair this meeting along with my colleague, Michelle Klein Solomon.

From the past two days, it has been reinforced that RCPs vary in form, structure or focus. Some are comprehensive; some may concentrate on the issue of labour migration, others on human trafficking and smuggling. However, all RCPs share one important element – that is the fact that States cannot stand alone in managing international migration and minimizing negative sides of human migration. It is only through regional cooperation and partnerships, not only within governments but also involving civil society, such as NGOs, communities at large, which would make regular and safe migration become achievable.

We have heard of the way in which different RCPs work and how they are evolving, I hope the lessons that we have learned from one another would help further develop our RCPs. As I earlier stressed, we are not here to measure or rank RCPs' efficiency, as different regions have different challenges and migratory circumstances which have to be dealt with differently. But some common challenges have been identified such as funding and management issues. Nonetheless, the opportunity given to us, over the past two days, to share experiences and practices has been extremely useful, and it is hoped that each of us can adapt and utilize the ideas to make our RCPs more vibrant and effective in managing migration.

I truly believe that from this meeting and the research to be undertaken by the IOM, the role of RCPs in migration management

is to be validated and recognized. And this, I hope, would encourage more participation from States and more involvement from the civil society. As reflected by our discussion, the sense of ‘ownership’ in RCPs is crucial. Yet, perhaps, one of the challenges RCPs are facing is, apart from States that are acting as chairs, steering groups or secretariats of RCPs, other States may not have that sense of buy-in and ownership. This brings us back to the previous point that I made, the role of RCPs has to be validated as a way in which States can benefit from seeking further bilateral or multi-lateral engagement, if challenges on migration-related issues emerge.

We have extensively explored the link between RCPs and the issue of migration and development. We also discussed how migration and development are inextricably linked. We can never overlook the fact that gaps in development between countries and regions play an important role in influencing people’s decision to migrate. With this in mind, the development lens is utterly essential to deconstruct and further understand the contemporary context of people migratory movements.

When we talk about migration and development, we shall not overlook the fact that ‘people’ are situated at the heart of this discourse. The vital question is how migration can make the life of migrants better? How are they going to fully benefit from their decision to migrate? How this decision would enhance their better livelihoods? And most importantly, how migration can help filling the gaps in development amongst countries and regions? I am aware that these questions cannot be simply answered, yet I hope that partly as an output of this meeting, these questions will be further explored by the RCPs. And our work within the RCPs could be even more meaningful if we do not neglect the life of migrants and take in ‘development’ as a part of the picture of migration management.

Finally, this is all I would like to sum up at this stage. I hope that our fruitful and constructive discussion would be further developed and expanded into constructive partnerships among ourselves. And please rest assured that any further initiatives emerging from this meeting, Thailand would be gladly support and our participation will be as active as always.

In closing, may I end my remarks by once again thanking the IOM and the Australian and US Governments for their great support in making this meeting a reality. It has been truly enjoyable working

with our IOM colleagues here in Bangkok and those from Geneva and elsewhere. And more important of all, thank you to you all for your kind participation throughout these two days. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and they have given us peace of mind that with such commitments from States and RCPs, we would be able to work closely together in both bilateral and multilateral settings.

Thank you very much and I wish you a safe trip home.
