

Opening Address
by
Mr. Panich Vikitsreth,
Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs,
at the Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of
Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs)
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The Pullman King Power Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

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Director – General of the International Organization for Migration,
Mr. William Lacy Swing,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to deliver this opening address at this important event. First of all, I wish take this opportunity to thank the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the support and hard work they have put into organizing this event. This Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration, or RCPs, would not have become a reality without their cooperation. Our deep and sincere appreciation also goes to the Governments of Australia and the United States of America for their kind contributions, without which this event would not have been possible.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Migration is today very much a part of the international landscape. States have realized that it is something that has to be better managed. They have moved to coordinate among one another in the various regions of the world to ensure effective migration management. The RCPs are a result of this important impulse.

Over the last decade, RCPs have emerged as one of the most vital mechanisms at the regional level for States to foster informal and non-binding dialogue on migration issues. Around the world, RCPs provide opportunities for information exchange, the sharing of best practices and perspectives on migration, as well as a channel to facilitate inter-state cooperation on migration issues at the bilateral level. And indeed, while RCPs draw strength from being state-led, the very existence of RCPs reiterates the fact that managing movements of people would benefit from multi-stakeholder cooperation. So we see that various stakeholders have made important contributions to complementing the role of States, particularly in minimizing the negative impacts of migration flows on vulnerable populations.

As for Thailand, we realize all too well how RCPs could play both leading and supporting roles in migration management. Our participation and membership in a number of RCPs, including the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the Inter-governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC) and the Colombo Process, have provided valuable opportunities for Thailand to build upon regional collaboration as well as bilateral partnerships. This engagement has helped us to support our labour overseas and tackle migration-related

problems at home. Given our appreciation of how these processes have contributed to closer regional cooperation on migration, Thailand welcomed the opportunity to further enhance coordination not only at the regional level, but also at the global level.

The Second Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Manila in 2008 provided important impetus for this global coordination. It highlighted the role of RCPs in promoting regional cooperation on migration and their impact in maximizing the benefits of migration on development. And in doing so, it supported the rationale to revitalize cross-regional exchanges among RCPs. While a number of RCPs do not focus on 'development', the analytical discourse examining the linkage between migration to development is useful in today's context. More than ever, States are seeking to strike a balance between the facilitation of regular migration and formulation of measures to counter irregular migration, particularly with respect to human trafficking and people smuggling. So, this Global Meeting of RCPs not only represents an opportunity for the cross-fertilization of ideas between RCPs, but also to reflect on possible further contributions to the migration and development discourse.

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Distinguished Delegates,**

Given the global financial crisis, people are still on the move. However, given the inevitable contraction in employment opportunities, intra-regional migration may yet become a more common phenomenon. The pattern, magnitude, and structure of people movement will become increasingly more complex. Despite past achievements in managing migration and combating human trafficking and smuggling in persons, the complexity of intra-regional migration remains a challenge for Thailand and partners in ASEAN. It also makes us come to a realization that we will continue to need fresh insights.

Thailand, as a country of origin, transit and destination, adheres to a 'comprehensive approach' to migration management. This approach is defined as one that takes into account economic, development and humanitarian objectives, whilst ensuring the integrity of borders and state sovereignty. We also realize that migration management is a complex matter, in which there is **no one-size-fits-all solution**. Thailand is facing fresh challenges with regard to management of migrant labour amidst a difficult economic climate, while we also have to deal with new patterns of irregular movements. Our participation in the Bali Process is helping us to address some of these issues, but we strongly believe that discussions and exchanges amongst RCPs would provide new insights from different regions facing similar problems, and further help to supplement our own comprehensive approach. And we hope that all the participants will benefit from the important element of capacity building as the meeting discusses possible ways in which RCPs could enhance interaction and coordination in the future.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

RCPs have generated extraordinary momentum in our respective regions. This event is designed to allow all participants to benefit from this momentum. On the part of the Royal Thai Government, I do hope that by the end of this event, you will not only benefit from the networking, but also take back concrete ideas for future cooperation.

And on that note, I wish to conclude by wishing you all fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable stay in Bangkok.

Thank you.
