

International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
International Partnerships Division (IPD)  
**Assessment of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration**

***Summary of Findings per ISCM***

As part of an assessment of inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), a survey was conducted in 2019. Carried out by IOM among ISCMs, their Member States and relevant inter-governmental organizations, the survey aimed to assess ISCMs' continued relevance and contribution to migration governance at all levels (national, regional and international) and the synergies among ISCMs and with other actors. The findings of this survey were presented at the global gathering of ISCMs in 2019 and were used to develop recommendations to enhance ISCMs' engagement in migration governance.

46 States and 22 ISCMs and 3 inter-governmental organizations provided answers to the questionnaires. The results are to be found in the 2019 assessment report: Advancing a common understanding of migration governance among regions, which provides an overview on ISCMs' organization, engagements, their continued relevance and synergies with relevant actors in the area of migration management. In addition to the report, the information below is meant to outline each individual ISCM's thematic priorities, structure, impact and relevance.

Name of the Inter-state consultation mechanism (ISCM): ***Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process)***

**1. Evolution of programing and thematic focus**

From its inception, the thematic foci of the Colombo Process (CP) have been on "Protection and provision of services to migrant workers; Optimizing benefits of organized labour migration and Capacity building, data collection and inter-state cooperation". CP's key thematic priorities are clustered around five areas: Skills and Qualification Recognition Processes; Fostering Ethical Recruitment; Pre-departure orientation and empowerment; Remittances; Labour market analysis.

In 2018, four additional cross-cutting thematic areas, namely Migrant Health; Operationalization of the Migration related elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Promotion of Equality for Women Migrant Workers; Consular support for migrant workers, have been decided to be incorporated into the five thematic areas above.

**2. Contribution to migration governance at national, (inter)regional and global levels (with examples)**

**National level:** 1. Some of the CP Member States (CPMS) have started including Employer Pays Model in their Bilateral Labour Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with destination countries.

2. The discussion on the possibilities of establishing a Regional Qualification Framework at the Thematic Area Working Group (TAWG) on Skills and Qualifications Recognition

Processes has led to the discussion on National Qualification Framework in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with support from the ILO.

3. The Government of Nepal has signed a MoU with a destination country that includes elements of ethical recruitment practices.

4. The Government of Sri Lanka, through a project on labour migration implemented by IOM, implemented a special programme to professionalize the recruitment industry, with the experiences gained from the TAWG on Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices. The cabinet of Ministers has approved to amend the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act No 21 of 1986 in order to regularize the intermediaries in the recruitment industry. A new mechanism was developed to streamline the process of Sri Lanka's current system of qualifications recognition named Recognition of Prior Learning.

5. Discussions in the CP and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) have directly impacted the Philippines' national policy on pursuing bilateral and regional skills qualification and mutual recognition processes, regulations to ensure ethical recruitment, pre-departure preparations and empowerment of migrants, legislation on the reduction of the costs of deployment, and the implementation of consular and humanitarian assistance for nationals, regardless of status.

**Global level:** The CPMS' Joint Recommendations to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was submitted by Nepal as the Chair to the UN SRSG for International Migration and the co-facilitators Ambassador of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations, ahead of the GCM stocktaking meeting in Mexico in December 2017. CP Chair has participated in regional and global processes/consultation and made statements on behalf of the CPMS. TAWG Chairs participated in the GCM thematic consultations and provided thematic specific inputs. The fully incorporation of the CP recommendations into the GCM document acknowledges the CP contributions.

The CPMS also contributed to the ILO's initiatives of defining recruitment cost and fees by submitting a CP position paper for consideration to the ILO Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Defining Recruitment Fees and Related Costs in November 2018.

### **3. Salient ISCM structures**

The CP Operating Modalities were adopted in the Ministerial Consultation in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2016, and sets following structure: Chairmanship (voluntary rotating), operational and technical support, Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) and Ministerial Meetings, funding, etc.

IOM provides operational and technical support to the Chair, including to the 5 TAWGs through a Technical Support Unit, and the SOM and Ministerial Meetings. The Technical Support Unit is supported through the SDC-funded time-bound project. The SOM and Ministerial Meetings are financed through a self-funding mechanism and Chair-in-Office in-kind contributions. IOM provides additional administrative support to the Chair-in-Office. Regular Ambassadorial-level and Expert-level meetings are convened in Geneva to support the Chair.

### **4. Partnership models by the ISCM**

The CP actively engages with other ISCMs, international organizations, UNESCAP, civil society, private sector and research institutions.

The CP works with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) through Abu Dhabi Dialogue. The CP and the ADD attend each other's meetings on an ad hoc basis. The Nepal Chair participated in United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP's) meeting on the GCM during the consultation phase. The Colombo Process engaged with the European Union (EU). The CP also engages with thematic specialists from ILO, UN Women, IFAD, ADB and the World Bank to share initiatives and good practices from projects implemented by these organizations. Civil society organizations such as Migrant Forum in Asia, the Consumer Goods Forum, Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, International Domestic Workers' Federation are invited to CP thematic events. Overseas employment service providers- Alliance of Asian Associations (OESPAAA), and multi-national companies such as IKEA have participated in CP ethical recruitment-related initiatives. Cooperation with civil society and private sector helps enhance the understanding of recruitment, employment and repatriation from the migrant workers and employers' perspective. The CP meanwhile engages with resource persons from International Institute for Social Law and Policy (IISLP) of the University of Western Australia and the Institute of Human Rights and Business to contribute to thematic discussions on Pre-departure Orientation and Ethical Recruitment.

During the Ministerial Consultations, the CPMS have agreed to enhance the visibility of the CP through its engagement with global, regional and inter-regional forums such as ADD, EU, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID).

#### **5. Added value of Membership in the given ISCM for States and Organizations (with examples)**

Three MSs surveyed (China, Sri Lanka, the Philippines) referred to the CP in their questionnaires. The MSs value CP for trust-building, knowledge sharing, capacity building, technical advice and policy guidance, etc.

The CP and the TAWGs have provided the CPMS a unique platform to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices in the areas of contractual labor migration to identify practical solutions in the interest of migrant workers throughout the migration cycle. It has also helped CPMS with various capacity building initiatives and in enhancing dialogue with destination countries.

The CP has also engaged with other regional and global processes such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, GCM, GFMD and GFRID to contribute to the regional and global dialogue in migration governance, particularly on raising a collective voice on common issues faced by migrant workers from the region.