

**Remarks by**  
**H.E. Mr. Rongvudhi Virabutr,**  
**Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Chargé d' affaires a.i.,**  
**First Session of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) 2022:**  
***Global Compact for Migration Implementation in Practice: Successes,***  
***Challenges and Innovative Approaches***  
**Panel 2: Enhancing predictability and addressing inequalities for the future**  
**of human mobility in the pandemic era**

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<i>First round – 5 minutes</i>
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Distinguished panel members (Ambassador Donoghue/Dr. Emiroglu) and moderator (Ms. Benton),  
Distinguished participants,  
Colleagues,

- It is my pleasure to be a part of today's discussion on a topic relevant to us all.
- Today, I will try to address two important questions<sup>1</sup> posed by the moderator.
- Based on Thailand's experiences, the key answers are '**migrant inclusive**' and '**cooperation**' which I shall elaborate.
  
- **Migrant workforce** has been one of the indispensable **drivers** of Thailand's **economy**. During the COVID-19 pandemic, their lives have been heavily impacted. Thailand therefore implemented a number of **measures** to **reduce** the **vulnerabilities** and to ensure safe and healthy conditions of migrant workers. We believe that they could serve as **examples** of how to **improve the predictability of human mobility** in times of crisis.
  
- First, **predictability can be increased by creating regular pathways**. **National efforts could be supplemented by bilateral or regional cooperation.**
- Thailand has therefore concluded labour **MoUs** with neighbouring countries as clear demonstration of regular pathways based on **bilateral cooperation**.

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<sup>1</sup> (1) How can States promote safe, healthy and orderly migration in pandemic preparedness and response, in a coordinated manner to ensure equitable inclusion of migrants and to prevent the future of mobility remaining fragmented? and (2) How can we ensure progress on the GCM objectives is embedded in and contributes to reducing inequalities as outlined in the 2030 and how can this connection be strengthened further to ensure that migration governance is considered a global good and a success factor to truly leave no one behind?

- **During the COVID-19** pandemic, the border lockdown prevented the workers' return to their homeland. Thailand **introduced temporary visas or work permit extension** to prevent them from becoming illegal.
- We also allowed for **registration of undocumented workers** from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar who were staying illegally in the country.
- Having migrants on record, helps increase the effectiveness of migration management, and reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants and improve their protection.
- Second, **predictability could be enhanced by efforts to increase access to basic services and social security for migrants.**
- Healthy migrants can better contribute to the society they live and help improve public perception as well as reduce inequality in the society. In line with Objective 15 of the GCM, Thailand is committed to enhancing access to health services for all, including migrants, through the **universal health coverage** policy.
- **Two health coverage schemes are offered to migrants**, including the **Social Security Scheme** for migrant workers in the formal sector and **Migrant's Health Insurance Cards**, available as an option for registered migrant workers in the informal sector, undocumented workers as well as their dependents irrespective of their documentation status, at a very affordable cost of around 40 USD per year.
- To assist migrants in overcoming practical barriers, such as language and lack of information, the Government has further formulated the policy to promote **"migrant friendly health service"**.
- **Migrant health workers and migrant health volunteers** are also the instrumental in providing basic health knowledge and assistance to migrants in their native languages.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, they **had also played an important role in disease prevention and control** by, among others, coordinating active screening test, quarantine and treatment.
- Our **National COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Plan includes everyone** in the country, including migrants irrespective of their status. Migrants are also entitled to obtain **COVID-19 treatment** free of charge.
- All these efforts are key **to promote safe and healthy migration with increased predictability.**
- I look forward to exchange ideas with you all.
- Thank you.

*Final remarks – 1-2 minutes*

Distinguished participants,  
Colleagues,

- We are living in a time where we witnessed for ourselves the extent to which the pandemic has caused **disruption** to our lives, particularly in terms of **human mobility**, and also **exacerbated** the already existing **inequalities**.
- However, we believe that ‘migrant inclusive’ approach, coupled with ‘cooperation’ with other countries, can be an answer for enhancing predictability and addressing inequalities for the future of human mobility in the pandemic era.
- All of our efforts, namely, **creating regular pathways through regularization and through bilateral labour MoUs with neighbouring countries, engaging migrants in the provision of health services** as well as allowing for **universal access to vaccine, treatment and prevention in time of pandemic, constitute key actions to promote safe and healthy migration with increased predictability.**
- In addition, in implementing GCM, one key factor to bear in mind for policymakers is **migrants themselves. Health services, including vaccination, should also be inclusive of migrants** regardless of their status. Only then that the GCM implementation truly contributes to reducing inequalities.
- Thank you.