

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai,  
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations and  
other International Organizations in Geneva at the 111<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council  
of the IOM**

**24-27 November 2020**

**Agenda Item 11: General debate**

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(650 words)

Mr. Chair,

Mr. Director General,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

1. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and Bureau members on your election. I wish to commend the outgoing Chair for the outstanding contribution made during his chairmanship.
2. My delegation welcomes the Russian Federation as the 175<sup>th</sup> member and Malaysia as an observer of the IOM.
3. We appreciate the Director-General for his active leadership during this extraordinary situation. We welcome his persistent efforts for a consensual adoption of the proposal for strengthening senior leadership structure by the Fourth Special Council. We are very much optimistic that this reform will help address the Organization's expanded roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Chair,

4. Migrants are bearing the brunt of COVID-19 in terms of greater loss of jobs, limited access to employment opportunities, reduced earnings in remittances, constraints in accessing healthcare services, continued isolation and psychological distress. Consequent to various global restrictions, there is a projection of a sharp decline of global remittances flow by one fifth in 2020

leaving many remittances recipient countries at a heightened risk of economic slowdown.

5. From the beginning of the crisis, the Government of Nepal has repatriated more than 140 thousand migrants from destination countries. A number of Nepali labour migrants abroad are still waiting for a return to the workplace or waiting for a flight back home.
6. We understand that the full picture of the COVID-19 impact on labour migration is yet to be assessed; however, our experience suggests that its impact would be enormous on diverse socio-economic spheres. And, effective response is immediately required in providing migrants with support, including through alternative employment opportunities for the returnees within the country.

Mr. Chair,

7. Effective implementation and follow-up of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) continues to remain crucial in making migration work for all. We welcome the noble initiative launched by the United Nations Network on Migration to support national migration priorities towards meeting GCM's objectives.
8. Labour migration is a fundamental aspect of Nepal's socio-economic dimension. Over 4.5 million Nepali nationals are out of the country for overseas employment. Majority of them have either semi-skilled or low-skilled jobs. Their remittances make a significant share of national GDP. Therefore, facilitating safe, orderly, regular and managed migration continues to remain our key concern and priority, as it will also contribute to our efforts for meeting SDGs.
9. Nepal attaches importance to the work of the IOM and to the effective implementation of GCM. I am happy to recall that Nepal has already joined this initiative as a "pilot" or "champion" country on the GCM's objective six – that is to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.

10. Nepal is engaged in an open dialogue with destination countries for safeguarding rights of migrant workers by ensuring ethical recruitment, fairness and justice at workplace. We are also actively engaged in the Colombo Process – a Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia, in exchanging experiences, sharing knowledge, and focusing on areas of regional and multilateral cooperation on migration. We look forward to continued engagement with the spirit of win-win cooperation for safe, regular and managed migration that also embraces full respect of human rights of migrants.
11. In this context, I would appreciate the implementation of IOM technical cooperation projects, specifically on “Promoting Recruitment Industry Reform to Achieve Ethical Recruitment (PROSPER)”, “Diaspora Engagement in the Era of Digitalization (DEED)”, “Developing Government Capacity to Build the Evidence Base on Human Trafficking and Global Technical Guidance for Mainstreaming Protection of Migrant Children into National Child Protection Systems”.
12. We are grateful to the IOM for its readiness, support and facilitation in extending consular assistance and rescue of migrants in vulnerable situations. We count on the continued support and cooperation from IOM at this challenging time and beyond.
13. I thank you.

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