



## REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

### 111<sup>th</sup> Session of the IOM Council 24-27 November 2020 *Virtual Platform* Agenda 11: General Debate

*Draft Statement to be delivered from the floor by PH delegate*

#### **Pleasantries**

Thank you Chair. The Philippines thanks the Director General for his report, welcomes the membership of the Russian Federation, and the participation of Malaysia as an Observer in the IOM during this session of the Council.

The Philippines' engagement on global migration governance is informed by over four decades of practice and experience to bring coherence to national, bilateral and multilateral migration governance, framing human mobility in the context of human rights, social protection, common understandings on shared responsibility and sustainable development.

#### **Pandemic driven repatriation**

Discussions in various multilateral fora have recognised that migrants are among those most vulnerable in this pandemic, losing lives and livelihood, many on the frontlines of this public health crisis. Majority of Filipino migrant workers are women, in domestic, caregiving and health care settings. When the pandemic froze movements, Filipino migrants were stranded in every corner of the globe. Working with host governments and institutions, we have: provided immediate relief; facilitated repatriation where possible, overcome mobility restrictions and border closures; provided financial assistance, consular services, access to health services, testing, and treatment; and facilitated the extension of temporary residence permits.

The scale of pandemic-driven repatriations is unprecedented. Over 267,000 Filipino nationals so far have been repatriated at the cost of more than 20M USD. This number represents about two-thirds of those who have asked assistance and support. Seafarers on cruise and cargo vessels had been the most immediately

affected by COVID-19. Recognising seafarers as workers essential to maintaining global supply chains, the Philippine government worked with ILO and IMO to craft the “Green Lane” policy for safe crew changes and protect the rights of workers in the global shipping industry amid business disruptions. The large-scale repatriation, medium-term disruptions and uncertainties will bear heavily upon the income of migrant workers and the welfare of their families. These will also weigh heavily on the national economy, remittance accounting for 9.3% of GDP and 7.8% of GNP.

Positive reports on vaccine development, while hopeful, are tempered by the fact that the road to vaccine accessibility may be long. Once we are at the point of administering vaccines, we hope that governments hosting migrants communities will facilitate migrant inclusion. Public health interventions must be inclusive, if they are to be effective. We encourage the IOM to be at the forefront of the discourse on global health security in the context of human mobility.

### **Moving forward**

\*We no longer need to elaborate on the “extraordinariness of 2020” said the DG in his report- we cannot agree more. We look toward the horizon, focus energies on dealing with the short-term and long term impact of lack of mobility on societies and economies; and to commit to recovery and resilience. We remain seized on issues of human rights; focused on addressing the drivers of migration, correcting demographic and income inequalities, rectifying labor market mismatches; and committed to climate action.

### **Climate Action in the context of human mobility**

The complex challenges to the global economy and human mobility also make a compelling case for a stronger resolve for coordinated and sustained climate action. The Philippine archipelago is struck by over 20 cyclones a year. In 2013, typhoon Haiyan struck - a category 5 cyclone that resulted in more than 6,000 deaths. Having awakened to the reality of more vicious and unpredictable weather patterns as a result of global warming, the Philippines has adapted disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the bloodstream of policy-making and governance - a cornerstone of development planning at all levels of government and inclusive of all sectors, especially the vulnerable and marginalized. Learning the lessons of Haiyan, the Philippines has since demonstrated the difference that planning and preparation in

the context of DRR can achieve. The challenges from climate remain sinister, testing both the nation's capabilities and resolve. However the outcomes in lives saved have significantly improved. Typhoon Rolly (Goni) made landfall as a category 5 tropical cyclone on 30 October 2020 with wind speeds eclipsing that of Haiyan. Rolly caused 26 fatalities. Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) followed, the 21<sup>st</sup> cyclone of the year, on 11 November. Ulysses brought the worst flooding in the capital in 10 years, and 74 fatalities.

In line with Agenda 2030, the Philippine Government has worked to align national and local plans with the goals and targets of the SDGs. The Philippine Climate Change Commission is updating the National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028 (NCCAP) to define our path toward low-carbon development, integrate strategies on climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM), DRR, and sustainable development, and provide a viable framework for resilient and sustainable investments. These strategies, in isolation, will not be enough. We need a global commitment to sustained climate action. The IOM's continuing work on migration, climate change and environment is useful in this regard.

### **Continued commitment to the Global compact on safe orderly and regular migration**

Migration is a shared responsibility - no one state can address it alone. In the two years since the adoption of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, the Philippine Government has worked to bring migration governance into alignment with the 23 Objectives of the GCM. The inclusion of a new chapter in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, Chapter 21: Ensuring Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration<sup>1</sup>, is a milestone.

The Philippines supports the work of the UN Migration Network and is a member of the Steering Group for the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. We join the DG's call for support for the Fund, to help build capacities in the five thematic areas: data, human rights, border management, decent work, and social inclusion. The

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter articulates our renewed focus on: internationally-agreed frameworks on migration; bilateral labor agreements, MOUs, protocols for domestic workers, among others; a standardized framework on migration data; access to services for overseas Filipinos; Social protections including universal health coverage, social security agreements; measures to ensure security and safety and platforms for emergency response, legal aide, counselling and guidance; initiatives to make information and communication accessible; reduction of international remittance costs; financial inclusion for migrants in countries of destination; and employment facilitation for returnees.

Philippines is a GCM Champion. Through our advocacy we hope to demonstrate to those who may have lingering doubts that indeed, the GCM is the way forward.

Our President, President Duterte, in his address to the UNGA this September, said that “in these times, we need stronger cooperation in promoting and protecting the rights of migrants, regardless of their migrant status. We must all adhere to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.” Our delegation needs no clearer instruction than that.

Thank you Chair.