

Transcript - India:

Director General Ladies and gentlemen. During the last two years, when the COVID-19 pandemic raged across the world, many countries came to realize the value of the migrant workers and their contribution to their societies and to their economies. It is now time to acknowledge the role and contributions of these migrant workers to the mainstreaming of migration policy as a positive element in our development.

We have seen that when global outages take place, the vulnerable are the one who suffered the most in the disruptions that follow with reduced economic activity migrant workers are often the most vulnerable, even those who provide essential services and health care are often faced with negative impact.

Further, the international labour market was adversely impacted by travel restrictions and border closures, as well as disruption in economic activity.

Recognizing the potential health and economic impact of COVID-19, India responded swiftly to protect migrant workers, many of whom were stranded in destination countries across the world.

The government organized the Vande Bharat Mission from the 7th of May 2020 to facilitate their safe repatriation. This was the largest and the most complex exercise undertaken by the government with our embassies working in tandem with host governments and community organisations to support every Indian in distress. More than 2.5 million Indians in distress abroad were repatriated home and over 275,000 Indians overseas were provided assistance. Migrant returnees often require support for livelihood opportunities to sustain themselves and all of government effort was undertaken.

We also launched the SWADES portal. The skill mapping exercise involved the national Skill Development Council and also the information that was collected and was shared with the state governments, employment bureaus as well as Indian and foreign companies to provide a seamless channel for their employment, along with their skill sets.

The COVID experience made it clear that greater coordination and cooperation between the state authorities was necessary for mutually beneficial options in the migration ecosystem.

More stable and transparent mechanisms were needed for our traditional destinations, particularly in the Gulf. With us engaged in our discussions for a new generation labor agreements and also commence work on the integration of our eMigrate platform with those of our GCC partners.

This would provide transparency and power future migrants, stabilize migration flows, and provide safe and legal migration. Further, new migration corridors were emerging in pursuit of better migration management, the government engaged and established institutional arrangements with labor for labor migration and mobility of professionals with new and emerging destinations.

the India-EU Common Agenda on migration and mobility provided much better understanding and led to several mutually beneficial partnerships for mobility with several countries, including Denmark, France, Germany, Portugal and negotiations with many others.

The recent migration and mobility partnership agreement with the United Kingdom also encouraged orderly mobility of skills and talents that provide benefit to both sides.

The Memorandum of Cooperation on specified skilled workers with Japan provides a mechanism for the sending and receiving of Indian skilled workers to Japan in 14 specified sectors in a regulated and safe manner.

We were also cognizant that awareness, generation, and empowerment of prospective migrants was key to the achieving of the goal of safe and legal migration.

Our predeparture orientation training and skills program aimed to seek to have greater awareness and enhance the potential earnings.

Within the country, we simplified the process of e-migration through effective e-governance reaching out to the masses, simplification and digitalization of our passport issuance services, upgrading eMigrate platform – a one stop platform source for information on overseas employment, strengthen grievance redressal and developed welfare mechanisms for the most vulnerable community.

Further, recognizing the future of work would be determined by automation and digital technology. We develop modules to prepare our workforce for the competency demands of the future, both for skills and for destinations.

The pandemic has shown that the world will be safe only when each one of us is safe. India was in the forefront in COVID cooperation measures right from the outset. India provided medical teams, COVID medicines, testing equipment and humanitarian supplies to over 150 countries. We also provided over 70 million vaccine doses to 93 countries and also to UN peacekeepers and UN work health care workers.

Now with a capacity that reaches almost 5 billion vaccine doses depending on the demand, we are ready to be effective suppliers in the coming days.

With the relaxation in travel restrictions, mutual recognition of vaccination certification is necessary as a global endeavor. Our CoWIN vaccination certification, which is based on QR code and secure database, has been recognized by 99 countries.

Migration can only be managed collectively. Multilateral understanding is necessary, and bilateral partnerships are essential.

The Global Compact on Migration and the regional groupings such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and Colombo Process play an important role not only to disseminate awareness but also in identifying and shaping of best practices.

To this end, I wish to mention our collaboration with the International Organization of Migration on a project for the strengthen data management towards evidence-based migration policymaking.

Let me also take this opportunity to acknowledge IOM's efforts over the last 7 decades to make the world a better place for migrant workers. IOM's role in leading the negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration and bringing about a balancing of a broad vision on the rights of migrants while states remain sovereignty over border management also deserves high mention.

I would also wish to congratulate IOM for being a vital source of information for the understanding of the current migration trends and the pressing global issues.

I have the opportunity to address the international dialogue on Migration 2021 when we discuss many of these Issues, including the impact of the pandemic on migration management systems and identify potential areas for future cooperation.

The long-standing consequences of the pandemic necessitated the formulation of fresh alternatives. It is now essential to continue enhancing migration governance through dynamic frameworks as the world moves from the response to the recovery phase. India looks forward to closer engagement and cooperation with IOM and all national partners in this regard, in the days ahead.

Thank you.