

Republic of Korea

Panel 1

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Let me start by reiterating that effective and well-managed migration governance is important in facilitating regular migration and discouraging the use of irregular pathways. The Republic of Korea is now accommodating more than 2 million foreigners in its territory, which is a substantial increase within a relatively short period. Accordingly, Korea is striving to improve national migration frameworks, while joining other regional and international efforts towards establishing good migration governance.

Looking ahead, we believe that the dialogue and cooperation at both regional and international level is important, as they allow us to fill many gaps that states cannot address alone. In this regard, Korea ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three supplementary protocols (Palermo Protocols) in 2015. In addition, the country, for its part, has been participating in the Bali Process, a forum to raise regional awareness on people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

These frameworks help enhance international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and other related transnational crimes against migrants and protect them, particularly those in vulnerable situations on their journey across international borders.

In closing, we look forward to a fruitful and productive discussion at today's session.

Thank you for your attention.

Panel 2

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

I will be brief by introducing one of the recent programmes that the Korean government has taken, based on the idea that effective national migration systems are the foundations for international migration governance. Let me elaborate it briefly:

To improve national migration framework, the Korean government has made various efforts, including implementation of Smart Entry Service (SES). This service is designed to automate immigration clearance service for both its nationals and immigrants.

The Government introduced the Smart Entry System in 2008 only available for Koreans but later also became available to immigrants in 2010. It expanded the coverage again in 2016 from migrants residing in Korea for more than 3 years after obtaining permanent resident status to all registered migrants of over 17 years of age.

Korea will continue to increase facilities for the Smart Entry System in other airports to further expedite the movement of migrants crossing borders as well as improvement of related policies for further expansion of the service. Thank you.

Panel 3

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Firstly, one of the keys to orderly migration is to foster social inclusion of migrants and this can be achieved by providing migrants with access to information about the opportunities available to them.

The Korean government has actively implemented various policy initiatives in partnership with multi-stake-holders to support social integration of migrants. For instance, education institutes certified by the Government are working together to encourage migrant workers and marriage immigrants to learn about the country and develop their skills.

In addition, universities and local authorities designated by the Government are running 'Initial Adjustment Support Program', which provides migrants with information on basic legal and social system in Korea. Also, we have introduced 'Korea Immigration and Integration Program (KIIP)' to help long-term residents to deepen their understanding on the Korean society and culture.

Secondly, acknowledging that return and re-admission are essential elements to well-managed migration, Korea is committed to realizing safe and speedy return and re-integration of migrants.

We have become more aware that proper re-admission assistance strengthens the linkage between migration and development by enabling migrants to contribute to the development of their home countries with skills and experience they have gained in Korea.

In this spirit, we are planning to introduce a 'Migration and Development Program' through inter-Ministerial cooperation to enhance migrants' sustainable return and re-integration to their home countries.

Lastly, it is a State's right to determine whom to admit to its territory and whom to return to their countries of origin.

However, return must be consistent with our obligations under international law and in compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. States, be it a country of transit or of destination, should not return migrants who are certain to face inhumane treatment when returned.

The Korean government clearly sets out the principle of non-refoulement in the Refugee Act.

In addition, we maintain the system which ensures migrants whose application for asylum is denied after a fair and adequate hearing be returned through due process of law in a transparent and orderly manner.

Thank you for your attention.

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