

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

Oral Statement: First Informal Thematic Discussion of the Global Compact on Migration

PANEL 3: All forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance

9 May 2017

Speaker: Taisuke KOMATSU

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

We welcome the decision to make the first GCM thematic discussion to address discrimination, in particular racial discrimination. As an international human rights NGO working on this area for 30 years with victims, civil society actors as well as the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), we would like to share following points in addressing racial discrimination which includes discrimination based on nationality.

Firstly, while targeted measures are necessary to tackle specific forms of discrimination against migrants, States should first put human rights protection infrastructures against racial discrimination in place. These include but not limited to: a comprehensive anti-discrimination law covering intersecting discrimination; independent equality body and/or national human rights institution; criminalisation of hate crimes; prohibition of racist hate speech, especially in the political discourse; effective labour inspection system; and human rights trainings and education.

Secondly, in addition to those infrastructures, trust must be built between migrant communities and government agencies, especially with the law enforcement. Low number of complaints on racial discrimination does not necessary indicate that few incidents have taken place, but it rather suggests that victims of racial discrimination are reluctant to report to the authority due to the fear for further human rights violations. Therefore, trust-building measures are necessary including dialogues with civil society and human rights trainings for various State officials such as immigration officers, members of the police and the judiciary.

Thirdly, in order to sufficiently address this global challenge, it is essential to counter the narrow interpretation of racial discrimination. While there should be no question about the serious nature of racial discrimination against migrants in countries of so-called Global North, migrants suffer racial discrimination also within their regions or other countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and Middle East. Moreover, we must not forget that structural discrimination in countries of origin is one of the root causes of migration. Therefore, racial discrimination should be looked through a broader lens.

Lastly, as repeated by many speakers, the existing international human rights framework is sufficient to protect human rights of migrants. In this context, we would like to stress that States should ratify, if it's not done so, and fully implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) guided by the General Recommendations and concluding observations of its treaty body, CERD.

Thank you.