

GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE STATEMENT

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION: SIXTH INFORMAL THEMATIC SESSION 13 OCTOBER 2017, GENEVA

Thank you Mr Co-facilitator for giving me the floor.

2 Singapore agrees that migration is an important issue worthy of discussion.

This global phenomenon has grown over the years in scale, complexity and impact.

3 For many, migration has become a matter of necessity rather than a choice.

It is usually not the preferred option as the journey abroad involves a great deal of uncertainty and personal sacrifice. Migrating for work should also be a choice.

The international community needs to work together to invest in sound economic and labour policies that create decent work opportunities for all.

4 Singapore has experienced the effects of labour migration first hand. The size of our foreign workforce now stands at approximately 1,393,000. We value the skills, experiences and knowledge that these labour migrants bring to our country.

5 As a cosmopolitan city-state, Singapore believes that the safe, orderly and regular movement of people, and the manner in which this takes place, must be legal, and it shall take into account specific national circumstances and aspirations. It is critical that States retain their sovereign right to manage their inflow of migrants and determine the conditions in which migrants may enter, reside and take up employment legally. This is the best way of assuring labour migrants of their rights while protecting the interests of individual Member States.

6 We also believe that more can be done to prevent labour migrants from falling prey to those who may seek to exploit workers. The international community, including source, transit and destination countries, must work together to improve the wellbeing of lower-skilled migrant workers during the migration process. This could include exploring how best to facilitate efforts to lower the debt burden the workers incur as a result of migration. For example, in Singapore we limit the fees that Singapore employment agencies can charge workers.

7 Mr Co-facilitators, migration is a complex issue which brings both challenges and opportunities. It is thus timely that this important subject is being discussed in useful consultations such as these. We look forward to our continued participation in the Global Compact proceedings.

Thank you.

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