

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Sixth Informal Thematic Session

Panel 2: Decent Work and Labour Mobility

Statement by the UAE

The UAE is grateful to the moderator for being given the opportunity to speak.

The UAE was delighted to see the work of the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue highlighted in the Issue Brief as examples of best practice by RCPs in fostering international cooperation to protect migrants and develop innovative tools and policies to enable regular migration.

The work of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue is based on recognition of the principle that the protection of vulnerable migrants can only be achieved through strong and comprehensive cooperation between countries of origin and destination. The issue of responsible recruitment is a particular case in point.

Migrants paying for their own recruitment has been an ongoing challenge in the Asia-GCC migration corridors, a challenge which the member states of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue have been working to eliminate. Not only does the practice of paying for recruitment potentially leave migrants vulnerable to cycles of debt repayment, but, as is recognised, it also skews incentives in the labour markets of countries of destination, leading to inefficient skills matching.

The challenge arises from the fact that recruitment typically takes place across borders, with recruiters and employers in countries of origin transacting with recruiters and potential employees in countries of destination, often with insufficient government oversight over the process. Although countries of destination have legislation in place banning payment for recruitment, the cross-border nature of the transaction means that prospective migrants often remain unaware of those regulations and consequently are prone to exploitation.

Recently, the UAE and the Philippines, under the auspices of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, have begun a programme aimed at tackling this issue. The goal of the programme is to strengthen joint government oversight into the recruitment process, to ensure that the employer bears the cost of recruitment. The programme has the potential to be rolled out across all Asia-GCC labour migration corridors, significantly bringing down the cost of migration for millions of people.

The challenge of payment for recruitment also highlights the importance of states working together to develop orientation programming. Again under the oversight of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, the UAE, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Bangladesh are engaged in an IOM-facilitated initiative to develop comprehensive orientation programming that informs potential migrants of the requirement for the employer to bear the cost of recruitment, alongside other key information.

The UAE is committed to working together with our partners in the international community to bring down the cost of recruitment, in line with the 2030 Agenda, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In November of this year, the Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce, in cooperation with the IOM and the UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization will be consulting with employers from across the Gulf region on the Global Compact, and responsible recruitment will be high on the agenda. We will be sharing the results of this consultation in advance of the Mexico stocktaking meeting in December.

By bringing together multiple stakeholders and working with international partners, we are confident that we can tackle this issue.

Thank you.