



### **Third Asia-EU Dialogue on Labour Migration**

*“Strengthening Labour Migration Corridors between Asia-EU through Enhanced Migration Governance”*

Colombo, 15-16 October 2014

Chair’s Concluding Statement

1. The Third Asia-EU Dialogue, hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and organized by the International Organization for Migration was held in Colombo from 15-16 October 2014. The theme of the Dialogue was “Strengthening Labour Migration Corridors between Asia and EU through Enhanced Migration Governance”. Participants aimed to enhance understanding of key trends, challenges, opportunities and best practices related to labour migration along the Asia-EU corridor.
2. The Dialogue brought together over 70 participants from Colombo Process and EU Member States, UN and intergovernmental agencies.
3. The Third Asia-EU Dialogue was held as a follow up to the Second Asia-EU Dialogue held in Brussels on 8-9 February 2011. The participants welcomed the progress made in taking forward the joint recommendations from the previous Dialogue and the enhanced understanding and collaboration between Asian and EU Member States.
4. During the course of the two day Dialogue, participants recognized the gradual expansion and diversification of labour migration from Asia to the EU and also acknowledged the increasing number of migrants moving from Europe to Asia. In this regard, the following key issues inter alia were discussed: follow up to the First and Second Asia-EU Dialogue, experiences in the implementation, the challenges and good practices; access to EU markets in semi-skilled and skilled categories; labour market assessments in Europe; policy aspects and regulation of labour migration to Europe; enhancing the employability of Asian skilled labour and professionals in the EU market; practical tools to promote labour migration between Asia and EU; and good practices in Asia-EU Labour Migration.

5. It was noted that the Asia- EU Dialogue contributed to and provided an important platform for enhancing cooperation between countries of origin and destination to make migration mutually beneficial and sustainable for all stakeholders.
6. Participants acknowledged good practices, evolving regulatory frameworks and initiatives for facilitating labour migration and the need for a rights-based labour migration policy in countries of origin and destination to respond to growing challenges, evolving trends, and opportunities arising therefrom.
7. It was recognized that challenges continue to confront labour migration from Asia to the EU, including unethical recruitment practices, human trafficking and smuggling and exploitation, and the emerging migration challenges such as unregulated student mobility, migrants caught in crisis, and climate change.
8. Participants welcomed the various ongoing and future initiatives by the governments in both the regions to promote orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and to ensure the protection of migrants.
9. Participants recalled relevant regional and international legal instruments relating to the rights and welfare of migrants and prevention of trafficking in persons.
10. They acknowledged that migration can be effectively addressed through a comprehensive and balanced approach wherein countries of origin, destination and transit accept their responsibility to promote and protect the human rights of all migrant workers.
11. Participants also recognized the gender-differentiated impact of migration and the potential of women labour migration from Asia to the EU and taking measures to protect them.
12. The Chair noted with appreciation the contribution of the participating governments of Asia and the EU to the Third Asia-EU Dialogue and further noted their commitment to strengthening labour migration governance along the Asia-EU corridor as follows:

*At the National Level (as applicable, to countries of origin and destination):*

- 12.1. Strengthen legal instruments in order to promote social protection of migrants.
- 12.2. Promote the positive social and economic contributions of migrants to countries of destination as well as countries of origin with a view to combat xenophobia and improve the environment for social and labour market integration of migrants in countries of destination. To this end, engage all relevant stakeholders including civil society organizations.

- 12.3. Leverage diaspora linkages for development through skills transfer and investment to countries of origin and apply innovative ways to achieve this.
- 12.4. Enhance the recognition of skills and capacities of workers in specific sectors to prevent brain waste and improve their work conditions and income potential for migrant workers in countries of destination and returning migrant workers in countries of origin.
- 12.5. Develop innovative ways to promote ethical recruitment practices through strengthening public-private partnerships, identifying existing gaps, and introducing voluntary monitoring and accreditation systems that complement national legal frameworks such as IOM's International Recruitment Integrated System (IRIS).
- 12.6. Enhance information services and rights awareness for migrant workers and their families through pre-departure orientation and post-arrival cultural and workplace integration.
- 12.7. Strengthen the capacities of Asian labour attaches in major countries of destination through trainings and creating platforms for information sharing.
- 12.8. Improve information and support services for migrant workers in countries of origin and destination through Migrant Resource Centres and the sharing of best practices.
- 12.9. Enhance the capacities of governments to capture economic trends, and forecast employment opportunities in key sectors in countries of destination, and explore new technological solutions such as setting up dedicated websites, organizing job fairs and employers conferences to share labour market information to potential migrants, with a view to efficiently match employers and job seekers.
- 12.10. Enhance inter-ministerial coordination to integrate migration into national development strategies based on the evidence on labour migration and its impact on various sectors of public policy.
- 12.11. Increase cooperation and collaboration to enhance skills development of Asian migrants through technical and vocational training and joint ventures on education between Asian and EU Member States.
- 12.12. Strengthen cooperation between institutions responsible for border management and other relevant ministries with a view to curb irregular migration and human trafficking.

At the bilateral, international and regional level:

- 12.13. Integrate migration into development strategies at all levels, including the post-2015 development agenda.
- 12.14. Explore opportunities to enhance collaboration and dialogue between governments, regional consultative processes, multilateral forums and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society organizations dealing with migration. Consider establishing an institutional set up where necessary.
- 12.15. Enhance data collection and data sharing on migration, including return migration, disaggregated according to gender, sector and skill levels, with a view to strengthen evidence-based policies, and to assess the impact of migration on development.
- 12.16. Explore ways of enhancing employability of Asian professionals and skilled workers in the EU through improved recognition of qualifications and competences including by enhanced harmonization of qualification frameworks in key sectors.
- 12.17. Strengthen reintegration policies for returning migrant workers to enhance their employability in the labour market.
- 12.18. Reduce barriers to competition and promote alternative formal remittance transfer mechanisms to bring down remittance transfer costs.
- 12.19. Increase cooperation and technical support to improve border management with a view to minimize irregular migration and eliminate human trafficking and smuggling.
- 12.20. Strengthen the regulatory framework related to student mobility between the two regions to combat exploitative and fraudulent practices; regulate unscrupulous agencies; and ensure effective information dissemination to students in order to minimize the risks of abuse and deception.
- 12.21. Explore MOUs and bilateral agreements between Asia and EU Member States to facilitate migration and for effective labour migration governance.

Way Forward

- 12.22. The participants considered establishing a joint working group comprising representatives from Colombo Process and EU Member States to monitor the implementation of recommendations from the Asia-EU Dialogue.

- 12.23. It was also discussed to establish a network of national focal persons from the relevant ministries in the Colombo Process and the EU Member States for information sharing in relation to the Asia-EU Dialogue.
- 12.24. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was commended for its technical support in implementing the recommendations of the Second Asia-EU Dialogue and its contribution to the successful organization of this Third Asia-EU Dialogue. IOM was requested to continue its support to the Asia-EU Dialogue and for the effective implementation of the recommendations from this meeting.
- 12.25. Finally, participants agreed to hold the Asia-EU Dialogue every two years, alternating between Colombo Process and EU Member States; the Fourth Asia-EU Dialogue on Labour Migration to be held in 2017 in Europe/Brussels to continue cooperation and dialogue between the two regions.

Colombo, 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2014