

2nd Senior Officials Meeting

Closing Remarks of the Chair

22 September 2015

Astana, Kazakhstan

1. National coordinators and Senior officials of the member and observer states of the Almaty process, including the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan, along with the representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), ICMPD in its capacity of the Secretariat of the Prague Process and the Budapest Process, UN Development Program, international experts, China People`s Republic, the Russian Federation and the United States of America participated in the 2nd Senior Officials Meeting.
2. The topic of the Meeting was “Labour Migration Opportunities and Challenges in Central Asia, addressing solutions for migrants and refugees” and the purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the capacity of the Participating States for addressing the complex challenges related to labour migration in Central Asia, and the broader region, through sharing good practices, analyzing emerging trends, identifying gaps and providing recommendations. The meeting also explored labour opportunities as a solution for refugees in Central Asia discussing opportunities, challenges and international good practices that can ensure refugees’ access to employment and, as a result, their self-reliance. The meeting also aimed to agree on the next steps in the Almaty Process.
3. Participating States emphasized the need of measures and revisions of current national legislation so that immigration of priority groups, such as high-skilled migrants and workers with skills in demand, can be facilitated by addressing the costs, duration and complexity of the procedures.
4. Participating States recognized the need to address migrant workers’ rights through managing recruitment activities and improving compliance by employers with the rules for foreign work. Participating States recognized that ensuring the rights of migrant workers are respected is key to maximizing the benefits for both sending and receiving countries’ economies from labour migration.
5. Participants highlighted the importance of providing pathways to regularization of residence and employment of selected groups of immigrants as well as concluding bilateral and multilateral agreements on protection of migrant workers’ rights as well as on combating negative phenomena related to irregular migration.

6. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to implement measures through regional co-operation and coordinated actions in the fight against trafficking and exploitation as well as smuggling of migrants. They reaffirmed the importance of States' power to promoting respect for human rights, raising awareness through information campaigns for preventing trafficking in human beings.

7. Taking into account the best international practices participants agreed to advance their work accordingly and as much as possible so as to enhance their activities in reviewing domestic legislation and procedures on identification, apprehension, transportation, detention and expulsion/return of third-country irregular migrants, taking into account as well the needs of most vulnerable groups and refugee protection safeguards.

8. Participants acknowledged the importance of the effect remittances have upon countries' economies that experience high rates of emigration while noting that actions for utilizing remittances for developmental goals such as investing to education and public health need to be taken through closer cooperation between states.

9. Participants reviewed the issue of Central Asian migrant workers being subjected to re-entry bans, noting the practices elaborated in the region on reducing the scale of the problem and acknowledging the need to step up efforts leading to better informing migrants on risks associated with irregular work, trafficking and smuggling, and raising awareness on protection of their rights to a decent living.

10. Participants agreed that further action is needed in terms of cooperation between migrant sending and host countries in facilitating the proper reintegration of migrants and refugees into the labour market. Participants stressed the urgency of reintegrating migrant workers subject to reentry bans in destination countries into the labour markets in the countries of origin and elsewhere in the Region.

11. Participants recognized the importance of achieving self-reliance and solutions for refugees in Central Asia. Participants recognized that there is room for further exploration and potential in Central Asia to use relevant policies, including migration policy, as an effective way to achieve solutions for refugees in the Region.

12. Participants agreed to advance their work as much as possible and enhance their emergency preparedness so as to enable a more effective operational response to address mixed migration flows in emergencies, and welcomed the support of UNHCR and IOM.

13. Participants reaffirmed the importance of the Almaty Process as a regional consultative process for further dialogue and regional cooperation on mixed migration flows in Central Asia.